







THE WORKS

OF

D'ISRAELI THE YOUNGER

IN ONE VOLUME.

*Review of the Works of Benjamin D'Israeli
1850*

CONTAINING

VIVIAN GREY,
THE YOUNG DUKE,
CONTARINI FLEMING,

THE WONDROUS TALE OF ALROY,
THE RISE OF ISKANDER,
HENRIETTA TEMPLE, AND VENETIA.

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VIVIAN GREY.

"Why then the world's mine oyster,
Which I with sword will open."

VIVIAN GREY.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSULTATION.

I AM not aware that the infancy of Vivian Grey was distinguished by any extraordinary incident. The solicitude of the most affectionate of mothers, and the care of the most attentive of nurses, did their best to injure an excellent constitution. But Vivian was an only child, and these exertions were therefore excusable. For the first five years of his life, Master Vivian, with his curly locks and his fancy dress, was the pride of his own, and the envy of all neighbouring establishments; but in process of time the horrible spirit of *boyism* began to develope itself, and Vivian not only would brush his hair "straight," and rebel against his nurse, but actually insisted upon being—breched! At this crisis it was discovered that he had been *spoiled*, and it was determined that he should be sent to school. Mr. Grey observed, also, that the child was nearly ten years old, and did not know his alphabet, and Mrs. Grey remarked, that he was getting very ugly. The fate of Vivian was decided.

"I am told, my dear," observed Mrs. Grey, one day after dinner to her husband, "I am told, my dear, that Dr. Flummery's would do very well for Vivian. Nothing can exceed the attention which is paid to the pupils. There are sixteen young ladies, all the daughters of clergymen, merely to attend to the morals and the linen—terms very moderate—one hundred guineas per annum, for all under six years of age, and few extras, only for fencing, pure milk, and the guitar. Mrs. Metcalfe has both her boys there, and she says their progress is *astonishing*. Percy Metcalfe, she assures me, was quite as backward as Vivian. Ah! indeed, much backwarder; and so was Dudley Metcalfe, who was taught at home on the new system, by a pictorial alphabet, and who persisted to the last, notwithstanding all the exertions of Miss Barrett, in spelling A-P-E—monkey, merely because over the word there was a monster munching an apple."

"And quite right in the child, my dear—*Pictorial* alphabet!—pictorial fool's head!"

"But what do you say to Flummery's, Grey?"

"My dear, do what you like. I never trouble myself, you know, about these matters;" and Mr. Grey refreshed himself, after this domestic attack, with a glass of claret.

Mr. Grey was a gentleman who had succeeded, when the heat of youth was over, to the enjoy-

ment of a life interest in an estate of about 2000*l.* per annum. He was a man of distinguished literary abilities, and he had hailed with no slight pleasure, his succession to a fortune, which, though limited in its duration, was still a very great thing for a young *litterateur* about town; not only with no profession, but with a mind utterly unfitted for every species of business. Grey, to the astonishment of his former friends, the wits, made an excellent domestic match; and, leaving the whole management of his household to his lady, felt himself as independent in his magnificent library, as if he had never ceased to be that true freeman,

A MAN OF CHAMBERS.

The young Vivian had not, by the cares which fathers are always heirs to, yet reminded his parent that boys were any thing else but playthings. The intercourse between father and son was, of course, extremely limited; for Vivian was, as yet, the mother's child; Mr. Grey's parental duties being confined to giving his son a glass of claret *per diem*, pulling his ears with all the awkwardness of literary affection, and trusting to God "that the urchin would never scribble."

"I won't go to school, mamma," bawled Vivian.

"But you must, my love," answered Mrs. Grey; "all good boys go to school;" and in the plenitude of a mother's love, she tried to make her offspring's hair curl.

"I won't have my hair curl, mamma; the boys will laugh at me," rebawled the beauty.

"Now, who could have told the child that?" monologized mamma, with all a mamma's admiration.

"Charles Appleyard told me so—*his* hair curled, and the boys called him *girl*. Papa, give me some more claret—I won't go to school."

CHAPTER II.

PROGRESS.

THREE or four years passed over, and the mind of Vivian Grey most astonishingly developed itself. He had long ceased to wear frills, had broached the subject of boots three or four times, made a sad inroad during the holidays in Mr. Grey's aforesaid bottle of claret, and was reported as having once sworn at the footman. The young gentleman began also to hint, during every vacation, that the fellows at Flummery's were somewhat too small for his companionship, and (first bud of puppyism!) the former advocate of *straight hair*, now expended a portion of his infant income in the purchase of Macassar oil, and began to cultivate

his curls. Mrs. Grey could not entertain for a moment, the idea of her son's associating with children, the eldest of whom (to adopt his own account) was not above eight years old; so Flummery's, it was determined, he should leave. But where to go? Mr. Grey wished Eton, but his lady was one of those women whom nothing in the world can persuade that a public school is any thing else but a place where boys are roasted alive; and so with tears, and taunts, and supplications, the point of private education was conceded. As for Vivian himself, he was for Eton, and Winchester, and Harrow, and Westminster, all at once; the only point that he made was, "not Rugby, it was so devilish blackguard."

At length it was resolved that *the only hope* should remain at home a season, until some plan should be devised for the cultivation of his promising understanding. During this year, Vivian became a somewhat more constant intruder into the library than heretofore; and living so much among books, he was insensibly attached to those silent companions, that speak so eloquently.

How far the character of the parent may influence the character of the child, I leave the metaphysician to decide. Sure I am, that the character of Vivian Grey underwent, at this period of his life, a sensible, a prodigious change. Doubtless, constant communion with a mind highly refined, severely cultivated, and much experienced, cannot but produce a most beneficial impression, even upon a mind formed, and upon principles developed: how infinitely greater must the influence of such communion be upon a youthful heart, ardent, innocent, and inexperienced! As Vivian was not to figure in the microcosm of a public school, a place for which, from his temper, he was almost better fitted than any young genius whom the "playing fields" of Eton, or "the hills" of Winton, can remember; there was some difficulty in fixing upon his future academus. Mr. Grey's two axioms were, first, that no one so young as his son should settle in the metropolis, and that Vivian must consequently not have a private tutor; and, secondly, that all private schools were quite worthless; and, therefore, there was every probability of Vivian not receiving any education whatever.

At length an exception to axiom second started up in the establishment of the Reverend Everard Dallas. This gentleman was a clergyman of the church of England, a profound Grecian, and a poor man. He had edited the *Alcestis*, and married his laundress—lost money by his edition, and his fellowship by his match. In a few days, the hall of Mr. Grey's London mansion was filled with all sorts of portmanteaus, trunks, and travelling cases, directed in a boy's sprawling hand to "Vivian Grey, Esquire, at the Reverend Everard Dallas, Burnsley Vicarage, Hants."

"God bless you, my boy! write to your mother soon, and remember your journal."

CHAPTER III.

PRIVATE EDUCATION.

THE rumour of the arrival of "a new fellow," circulated with rapidity through the inmates of Burnsley Vicarage, and about fifty young devils

were preparing to quiz the new-comer, when the school-room door opened, and Mr. Dallas, accompanied by Vivian, entered.

"A dandy, by Jove!" whispered St. Leger Smith. "What a knowing set out," squeaked Johnson *secundus*. "Mammy-sick," growled Barlow *primus*. This last exclamation was, however, a most scandalous libel, for certainly no being ever stood in a pedagogue's presence with more perfect *sang froid*, and with a bolder front, than did, at this moment, Vivian Grey.

One principle in Mr. Dallas' *régime*, was always to introduce a new-comer in school hours. He was thus carried immediately *in medias res*, and the curiosity of his comrades being in a great degree satisfied, at a time when that curiosity could not personally annoy him, the new-comer was, of course, much better prepared to make his way, when the absence of the ruler became a signal for *some oral conversation* with "the arrival."

However, in the present instance the young savages at Burnsley Vicarage had caught a tartar; and in a very few days Vivian Grey was decidedly the most popular fellow in the school. He was "so dashing! so devilish good-tempered! so completely up to every thing!" The magnates of the land were certainly rather jealous of his success, but their very sneers bore witness to his popularity. "Cursed puppy," said St. Ledger Smith. "Thinks himself knowing," squeaked Johnson *secundus*. "Thinks himself witty," growled Barlow *primus*.

Notwithstanding this cabal, days rolled on at Burnsley Vicarage only to witness the increase of Vivian's popularity. Although more deficient than most of his own age in accurate classical knowledge, he found himself in talents and various acquirements immeasurably their superior. And singular is it, that at school, distinction in such points is ten thousand times more admired by the multitude, than the most profound knowledge of Greek metres, or the most accurate acquaintance with the value of Roman coins. Vivian Grey's English verses, and Vivian Grey's English themes, were the subject of universal commendation. Some young lads made copies of these productions, to enrich, at the Christmas holidays, their sisters' albums; while the whole school were scribbling embryo prize-poems, epics of twenty lines on "the ruins of Pæstum," and "the temple of Minerva;" "Agrigentum," and "the cascade of Terni."—I suppose that Vivian's productions at this time, would have been rejected by the commonest two-penny publication about town—yet they turned the brain of the whole school; while fellows who were writing Latin dissertations, and Greek odes which might have made the fortune of the *Classical Journal*, were looked on by the multitude as great dunderheads as themselves:—and such is the advantage which, even in this artificial world, every thing that is genuine has over every thing that is false and forced. The dunderheads who wrote "*good Latin*," and "*Attie Greek*," did it by a process, by means of which the youngest fellow in the school was conscious he could, if he chose, attain at the same perfection. Vivian Grey's verses were unlike any thing which had yet appeared in the literary annals of Burnsley Vicarage, and that which was quite novel was naturally thought quite excellent.

There is no place in the world where greater homage is paid to talent than at an English school.

At a public school, indeed, if a youth of great talents is blessed with an amiable and generous disposition, he ought not to envy the minister of England. If any captain of Eton, or præfect of Winchester, is reading these pages, I would most earnestly entreat him dispassionately to consider, in what situation of life he can rationally expect that it will be in his power to exercise such influence, to have such opportunities of obliging others, and be so confident of an *affectionate* and *grateful* return. Ay, there's the rub!—Bitter, bitter thought! that gratitude should cease the moment we become men.

And sure I am, that Vivian Grey was loved as ardently, and as faithfully, as you might expect from innocent young hearts. His slight accomplishments were the standard of all perfection; his sayings were the soul of all good fellowship; and his opinion the guide in any crisis which occurred in the monotonous existence of the little commonwealth. And time flew gayly on.

One winter evening, as Vivian, with some of his particular cronies, was standing round the school-room fire, they began, as all schoolboys do when it grows rather dark, and they grow rather sentimental—to talk of HOME.

"Twelve weeks more," said Augustus Etherege, "twelve weeks more, and we are free! The glorious day shall be celebrated."

"A feast, a feast," exclaimed Poynings.

"A feast is but the work of a night," said Vivian Grey: "something more stirring for me! What say you to private theatricals?"

The proposition was, of course, received with enthusiasm, and it was not until they had unanimously agreed to act, that they universally remembered that acting was *not allowed*. And then they consulted whether they should ask Dallas, and then they remembered that Dallas had been asked fifty times, and then they "supposed they must give it up;" and then Vivian Grey made a proposition which the rest were secretly sighing for, but which they were afraid to make themselves—he proposed that they should act without asking Dallas—"Well, then, we'll do it without asking him," said Vivian;—"nothing is allowed in this life, and every thing is done:—in town there's a thing called the French play, and that's not allowed, yet my aunt has got a private box there. Trust me for acting—but what shall we perform?"

This question was, as usual, the fruitful source of jarring opinions. One proposed Othello, chiefly because it would be so easy to black a face with a burnt cork. Another was for Hamlet solely because he wanted to act the ghost, which he proposed doing in white shorts and a night-cap. A third was for Julius Cæsar, because the murder scene "would be *such* fun."

"No! no!" said Vivian, tired at these various and varying proposals, "this will never do. Out upon tragedies; let's have a comedy!"

"A comedy! a comedy!—O! how delightful!"

CHAPTER IV.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS.

AFTER an immense number of propositions, and an equal number of repetitions, Dr. Hoadley's

bustling drama was fixed upon. Vivian was to act Ranger, Augustus Etherege was to personate Clarinda, because he was a fair boy and always blushing; and the rest of the characters found able representatives. Every half-holiday was devoted to rehearsals, and nothing could exceed the amusement and thorough fun which all the preparations elicited. Every thing went well—Vivian wrote a most pathetic prologue, and a most witty epilogue. Etherege got on capitally in the mask scene, and Poynings was quite perfect in Jack Meggot. There was, of course, some difficulty in keeping all things in order, but then Vivian Grey was such an excellent manager! and then, with infinite tact, the said manager conciliated the *classiques*, for he allowed St. Ledger Smith to select a Greek motto—from the Andromache, if I remember right—for the front of the theatre; and Johnson *secundus* and Barlow *primus* were complimented by being allowed to act the chairmen.

But, alas! in the midst of all this sunshine, the seeds of discord and dissension were fast flourishing. Mr. Dallas himself was always so absorbed in some freshly imported German commentator, that it was a fixed principle with him, never to trouble himself with any thing that concerned his pupils, "out of school-hours." The consequence was, that certain powers were necessarily delegated to a certain set of beings called USHERS. In the necessity of employing this horrible race of human beings, consists, in a great measure, the curse of what is called, *private education*. Those, who, in all the fulness of parental love, guard their offspring from the imagined horrors of a public school, forget that, in having recourse to "an academy for young gentlemen," they are *necessarily* placing their children under the influence of *black-guards*; it is of no use to mince the phrase—such is the case. And is not the contagion of these fellows' low habits and loose principles much more to be feared and shunned, than a system, in which, certainly, greater temptations are offered to an imprudent lad; but under whose influence boys usually become gentlemanly in their habits and generous in their sentiments?

The usherian rule had, however, always been comparatively light at Burnsley Vicarage, for the good Dallas, never for a moment intrusting the duties of tuition to a third person, engaged these deputies merely as a sort of police, to regulate the bodies, rather than the minds of his youthful subjects. One of the first principles of the new theory introduced into the establishment of Burnsley Vicarage by Mr. Vivian Grey, was, that the ushers were to be considered by the boys as a species of upper servants; were to be treated with civility, certainly, as all servants are by gentlemen; but that no further attention was to be paid them, and that any fellow voluntarily conversing with an usher, was to be *cut dead* by the whole school. This pleasant arrangement was no secret to those whom it most immediately concerned, and, of course, rendered Vivian rather a favourite with them. The men, who were sufficiently *vulgars*, had not the tact to conciliate the boy by a little attention, and were both, notwithstanding, too much afraid of his influence in the school to attack him openly; so they waited with that patience which insulted beings can alone endure.

One of these creatures must not be forgotten

his name was Mallet; he was a perfect specimen of the genuine usher. The monster wore a black coat and waistcoat; the residue of his costume was of that mysterious colour known by the name of pepper-and-salt. He was a pallid wretch with a pug nose, white teeth, and marked with the small-pox; and long, greasy, black hair; and small, black, beady eyes. This demon watched the progress of the theatrical company with eyes glistening with vengeance. No attempt had been made to keep the fact of the rehearsal a secret from the police; no objection on their part, had as yet been made; the twelve weeks diminished to six; Ranger had secretly ordered a dress from town, and was to get a steel handled sword from Fentum's for Jack Meggot; and every thing was proceeding with unexpected success, when one morning as Mr. Dallas was apparently about to take his departure, with a volume of Becker's Thucydides under his arm, the respected dominie stopped, and thus harangued: "I am informed that a great deal is going on in this family, with which it is intended that I shall be unacquainted. It is not my intention to name any body or any thing at present; but I must say that of late the temper of this family has sadly changed. Whether there be any *seditions stranger* among you or not, I shall not at present even endeavour to discover, but I will warn my *old* friends of their *new ones*." and so saying, the dominie withdrew.

All eyes were immediately fixed on Vivian, and the faces of the *classiques* were triumphant with smiles; those of the manager's particular friends, the *romantiques*, we may call them, were clouded; but who shall describe the countenance of Mallet? In a moment the school broke up with an agitated and tumultuous uproar. "No stranger!" shouted St. Ledger Smith; "No stranger," vociferated a prepared gang. Vivian's friends were silent, for they hesitated to accept for their leader the insulting title. Those who were neither Vivian's friends, nor in the secret, weak creatures who side always with the strongest, immediately swelled the insulting chorus of Mr. St. Ledger Smith. That worthy, emboldened by his success and the smiles of Mallet, contained himself no longer: "Down with the manager!" he cried. His satellites chorussed. But now Vivian rushed forward—"Mr. Smith, I thank you for being so definite;—take that!" and he struck Smith with such force that the Cleon staggered and fell; but Smith instantly recovered, and a ring was as instantly formed. To a common observer, the combatants were most unequally matched; for Smith was a burley, big-limbed animal, alike superior to Grey in years and strength. But Vivian, though delicate in frame, and more youthful, was full his match in spirit, and thanks to his being a cockney! ten times his match in science. He had not built a white great-coat, nor drunk blue ruin at Ben Burns' for nothing.

O! how beautiful he fought! how admirably straight he hit; and his stops quick as lightning! and his *followings up* confounding his adversary with their painful celerity! Smith, alike puzzled and punished, yet proud in his strength, hit round, and wild, and false, and foamed like a furious elephant. For ten successive rounds the result was dubious; but in the eleventh the strength of Smith began to fail, and the men were more fairly matched. "Go it, Ranger!—go it, Ranger!" hallooed the Greytes. "No stranger!—no stranger!"

eagerly bawled the more numerous party. "Smith's floored, by Jove!" exclaimed Poynings, who was Grey's second. "At it again! at it again!" exclaimed all. And now, when Smith must certainly have given in, suddenly stepped forward Mr. Mallet, accompanied by—Dallas! "How, Mr. Grey! No answer, sir; I understand that *you* have always an answer ready. I do not quote Scripture lightly, Mr. Grey; but 'Take heed that you offend not, even with your tongue.' Now, sir, to your room."

When Vivian Grey again joined his companions, he found himself almost universally shunned. Etherege and Poynings were the only individuals who met him with their former frankness. "A horrible row, Grey," said the latter. "After you went, the doctor harangued the whole school, and swears you have seduced and ruined us all:—every thing was happiness until you came, &c. Mallet is of course at the bottom of the whole business; but what can we do? Dallas says you have the tongue of a serpent, and that he will not trust himself to hear your defence. Infamous shame! I swear! And now, every fellow has got a story against you: some say you are a dandy—others want to know, whether the next piece performed at your theatre will be '*the Stranger*;'—as for myself and Etherege, we shall leave in a few weeks, and it does not signify to us; but what the devil you're to do next half, by Jove, I can't say.—If I were you, I would not return." "Not return, eh? but that will I, though; and we shall see who, in future, can complain of the sweetness of my voice! Ungrateful fools!"

CHAPTER V.

A NEW FRIEND.

THE vacation was over, and Vivian returned to Burnsley Vicarage. He bowed cavalierly to Mr. Dallas on his arrival, and immediately sauntered up into the school-room, where he found a tolerable quantity of wretches, looking as miserable as schoolboys, who have left their pleasant homes, generally do for some four-and-twenty hours. "How d'ye do, Grey?" "How d'ye do, Grey?" burst from a knot of unhappy fellows, who would have felt quite delighted, had their newly arrived comate condescended to entertain them, as usual, with some capital good story fresh from town. But they were disappointed.

"We can make room for you at the fire, Grey," said Theophilus King.

"I thank you, I am not cold."

"I suppose you know that Poynings and Etherege don't come back, Grey?"

"Everybody knew that last half;" and so he walked on.

"Grey, Grey!" halloed King, "don't go in the dining-room; Mallet's there alone, and told us not to disturb him. By Jove, the fellow's going in: there'll be a greater row this half, between Grey and Mallet, than ever."

Days—the heavy first days of the half, rolled on, and all the citizens of the little commonwealth had returned.

"What a dull half this will be!" said Eardly, "how one misses Grey's set!—After all they kept

the school alive. Poynings was a first-rate fellow; and Etherage so deused good-natured! I wonder whom Grey will *crony* with this half! Have you seen him and Dallas speak together yet? He cut the doctor quite dead at Greek to-day."

"Why, Eardly! Eardly! there's Grey walking round playing fields with Mallet!" hallooed a sawney who was killing the half holiday by looking out of the window.

"The devil! I say, Mathews, whose flute is that? It's a devilish handsome one!"

"It's Grey's! I clean it for him," squeaked a little boy. "He gives me sixpence a week!"

"O, you sneak!" said one.

"Cut him over!" said another.

"Roast him!" cried a third.

"Whom are you going to take the flute to?" asked a fourth.

"To Mallet," squeaked the little fellow; "Grey lends his flute to Mallet every day."

"Grey lend his flute to Mallet! the deuse he does! So Grey and Mallet are going to *crony*?"

A wild exclamation burst forth from the little party; and away each of them ran to spread in all directions the astounding intelligence.

If the rule of the ushers had hitherto been light at Burnsley Vicarage, its character was materially changed during this half year. The vexatious and tyrannical influence of Mallet was now experienced in all directions; meeting and interfering with the comfort of the boys, in every possible manner. His malice accompanied too by a *lact*, which could not have been expected from his vulgar mind, and which, at the same time, could not have been produced by the experience of one in his situation. It was quite evident to the whole community that his conduct was dictated by another mind, and that that mind was once versed in all the secrets of a schoolboy's life, and acquainted with all the workings of a schoolboy's mind: a species of knowledge which no pedagogue in the world ever yet attained. There was no difficulty in discovering whose was the power behind the throne. Vivian Grey was the perpetual companion of Mallet in his walks, and even in the school; he shunned also the converse of every one of the boys, and did not affect to conceal that his quarrel was *universal*. Superior power, exercised by a superior mind, was for a long time too much even for the united exertions of the whole school. If any one complained, Mallet's written answer (and such Dallas always required) was immediately ready, explaining every thing in the most satisfactory manner, and refuting every complaint with the most triumphant spirit. Dallas, of course, supported his deputy, and was soon equally detested. This tyranny had continued through a great part of the long half year, and the spirit of the school was almost broken, when a fresh outrage occurred, of such a nature, that the nearly enslaved multitude conspired.

The plot was admirably formed. On the first bell ringing for school, the door was to be immediately barred, to prevent the entrance of Dallas. Instant vengeance was then to be taken on Mallet and his companion—the *sneak!* the *spy!* the *traitor!*—The bell rang: the door was barred; four stout fellows seized on Mallet; four rushed to Vivian Grey; but stop! he sprang upon his desk, and, placing his back against the wall, held a pistol at the foremost! "Not an inch nearer, Smith,

or—I fire. Let me not, however, balk your vengeance on yonder hound: If I could suggest any refinements in torture, they would be at your service." Vivian Grey smiled, while the horrid cries of Mallet indicated that the boys were "*roasting*" him. He then walked to the door, and admitted the barred-out dominie. Silence was restored. There was an explanation, and no defence: and Vivian Grey was—expelled.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CLASSICS.

VIVIAN GREY was now seventeen; and, the system of private education having so decidedly failed, it was resolved that he should spend the years antecedent to his going to Oxford at home. Nothing could be a greater failure than the first weeks of his "*course of study*." He was perpetually violating the sanctity of the drawing-room by the presence of scapulas and hederics, and outraging the propriety of morning visitors, by bursting into his mother's boudoir with lexicons and green slippers.

"Vivian, my dear," said his father to him, "this will never do; you must adopt some system for your studies, and some locality for your reading. Have a room to yourself; set apart certain hours in the day for your books, and allow no consideration on earth to influence you to violate their sacredness; and above all, my dear boy, keep your papers in order. I find a dissertation on 'the commerce of Carthage,' stuck in my large paper copy of 'Dihdin's Decameron,' and an 'Essay on the Metaphysics of Music' (pray, my dear fellow, beware of magazine scribbling) cracking the back of Montfaucon's Monarchie."

Vivian apologized, promised, protested, and finally sat down "TO READ." He had laid the first foundations of accurate classical knowledge under the tuition of the learned Dallas; and twelve hours a day, and self-banishment from society, overcame, in twelve months, the ill effects of his imperfect education. The result of this extraordinary exertion may easily be conceived. At the end of twelve months, Vivian, like many other young enthusiasts, had discovered that all the wit and wisdom of the world were concentrated in some fifty antique volumes, and he treated the unlucky moderns with the most sublime spirit of *hauteur* imaginable. A chorus in the Medea, that painted the radiant sky of Attica, disgusted him with the foggy atmosphere of Great Britain; and while Mrs. Grey was meditating a *sejour* at Brighton, her son was dreaming of the gulf of Salamis. The spectre in the Persæ was his only model for a ghost, and the furies in the Agamemnon were his perfection of tragical machinery.

Most ingenious and educated youths have fallen into the same error; but few, I trust, have ever carried such feelings to the excess that Vivian Grey did; for while his mind was daily becoming more enervated under the beautiful but baneful influence of CLASSIC REVERIE, the youth lighted upon PLATO

Wonderful is it, that while the whole soul of Vivian Grey seemed concentrated and wrapped up in the glorious pages of the Athenian—while with

keen and almost inspired curiosity, he searched, and followed up, and meditated upon, the definite mystery, the indefinite development,—while his spirit alternately bowed in trembling and in admiration, as he seemed to be listening to the secrets of the universe revealed in the glorious melodies of an immortal voice;—wonderful is it, I say, that the writer, the study of whose works appeared to the young scholar, in the revelling of his enthusiasm, to be the sole object for which man was born and had his being, was the cause by which Vivian Grey was saved from being all his life a dreaming scholar.

Determined to spare no exertions, and to neglect no means, by which he might enter into the very *penetralia* of his mighty master's meaning, Vivian determined to attack the latter Platonists. These were a race of men with whom he was perfectly unacquainted, and of whose existence he knew merely by the references to their productions, which were sprinkled in the commentaries of his "best editions." In the pride of boyish learning, Vivian had limited his library to classics, and the proud leaders of the latter schools did not consequently grace his diminutive bookcase. In this dilemma he flew to his father, and confessed by his request that his favourites were not all-sufficient.

"Father! I wish to make myself master of the latter Platonists. I want Plotinus, and Porphyry, and Iamblichus, and Syrianus, and Maximus Tyrius, and Proclus, and Hierocles, and Sallustius, and Damascius."

Mr. Grey stared at his son, and burst into a fit of laughter.

"My dear Vivian! are you quite convinced that the authors you ask for are all *pure* Platonists? or have not some of them placed the great end rather in *practical* than *theoretic* virtue, and thereby violated the first principles of your master, which would be very shocking! Are you sure, too, that these gentlemen have actually 'withdrawn the sacred veil which covers from profane eyes the luminous spectacles?' Are you quite convinced that every one of these worthies lived at least five hundred years after the great master; for I need not tell so profound a Platonist as yourself, that it was not till that period that even glimpses of the great master's meaning were discovered. Strange! that *TIME* should alike favour the philosophy of theory, and the philosophy of facts. Mr. Vivian Grey, benefiting, I presume, by the lapse of further centuries, is about to complete the great work which Proclus and Porphyry commenced."

"My dear sir, you are pleased to be very amusing this morning."

"My dear boy! I smile, but not with joy. Sit down, and let us have a little conversation together: father and son, and father and son on such terms as we are, should really communicate oftener together than we do. It has been, perhaps, *my* fault; it shall not be so again."

"My dear sir!"

"Nay, nay, it *shall* be my fault *now*. Whose it shall be in *future*, Vivian, time will show. My dear Vivian, you have now spent upwards of a year under this roof, and your conduct has been as correct as the most rigid parent might require. I have not wished to interfere with the progress of your mind, and I regret it. I have been negligent, but not wilfully so. I *do* regret it; because,

whatever may be your powers, Vivian, I at least have the advantage of *experience*. I see you smile at a word which I so often use. Well, well, were I to talk to you forever, you would not understand what I mean by that *single word*. The time *will* come, when you will deem that *single word—every thing*. Ardent young men in their closets, Vivian, too often fancy that they are peculiar beings; and I have no reason to believe that you are an exception to the general rule. In passing one whole year of your life, as you have done, you doubtless imagine that you have been spending your hours in a manner which no others have done before. Trust me, my boy, thousands have done the same; and what is of still more importance, thousands *are doing*, and *will do* the same. Take the advice of one who has committed as many, ay, more follies than yourself; but who would bless the hour that he had been a fool, if his experience might be of benefit to his beloved son."

"My father!"

"Nay, nay, don't agitate yourself; we are consulting together. Let us see what is to be done. Endeavour to discover, when you are alone, what are the chief objects of your existence in this world. I want you to take no theological dogmas for granted, nor to satisfy your doubts by ceasing to think; but, whether we are in this world in a state of probation for another, or whether we cease altogether when we cease to breathe, human feelings tell me that we have some duties to perform,—to our fellow creatures—to our friends—to ourselves. Pray, tell me, my dear boy, what possible good your perusal of the latter Platonists can produce to either of these three interests? I trust that *my* child is not one of those who look with a glazed eye on the welfare of their fellow-men; and who would dream away a useless life by idle puzzles of the brain; creatures who consider their existence as an unprofitable mystery, and yet are afraid to die. You will find Plotinus in the fourth shelf of the next room, Vivian. Good morning to you."

CHAPTER VII.

THE CLASSICS.

THE communications between father and son after this day were very constant; and for some weeks Vivian employed his time rather in conversing with his father than with *books*. It must not be concealed (and when the fact is stated, it must not be conceived that Vivian's mind was a weak one) that his *fixed principles* became daily loosened, and that his opinions were very soon considerably modified. He speedily began to discover that there were *classics* in other languages besides Greek and Latin, and patient inquiry and dispassionate examination soon convinced him of the futility of that mass of insanity and imposture—the Greek philosophy. Introduced to that band of noble spirits, the great poets, and legislators, and philosophers of modern Europe, the mind of Vivian Grey recovered, in a study of their immortal writings, a great portion of its original freshness and primal vigour. Nor in his new worship did he blaspheme against the former objects of his adoration. He likened the ancient and new litera-

tures to the two dispensations of Holy Writ:—the one arose to complete the other. Æschylus was to him not less divine, because Shakspeare was immortal; nor did he deny the inspiration of Demosthenes because he recognised in Burke the divine *afflatus*. The ancient literature, lost in corruption, degraded, and forgotten, ceased to benefit society; the new literature arose. It hurled from “the high places,” the idols of corrupt understandings and perverted taste; but while “it purified the altars of the Lord,” while it commanded our reverence and our gratitude, the new literature itself veiled to the first gray fathers of the human mind.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOCIETY.

IN England, personal distinction is the only passport to the society of the great. Whether this distinction arise from fortune, family, or talent, is immaterial; but certain it is, to enter into high society, a man must either have blood, a million, or a genius.

Neither the fortune nor the family of Mr. Grey entitled him to mix in any other society than that of what is in common parlance termed the middling classes; but from his distinguished literary abilities he had always found himself an honoured guest among the powerful and the great. It was for this reason that he had always been anxious that his son should be at home as little as possible; for he feared for a youth the fascination of London society. Although busied with his studies, and professing “not to visit,” Vivian could not avoid occasionally finding himself in company in which *boys* should never be seen; and what was still worse, from a certain *esprit de société*, an indefinable *tact* with which nature had endowed him, this boy of nineteen began to think this society very delightful. Most persons of his age would have passed through the ordeal with perfect safety: they would have entered certain rooms, at certain hours, with stiff cravats, and nugee coats, and black velvet waistcoats; and after having annoyed all those who condescended to know of their existence, with their red hands, and their white kid gloves, they would have retired to a corner of the room, and conversationized with any stray four-year-older not yet sent to bed.

But Vivian Grey was an elegant, lively lad, with just enough of dandyism to preserve him from committing *gaucheries*, and with a devil of a tongue. All men, I am sure, will agree with me when I say, that the only rival to be feared by a man of spirit is—a clever boy. What makes them so popular with the women, it is not for me to explain; however, Lady Julia Knighton, and Mrs. Frank Delmington, and half a score of dames of fashion, (and some of them very pretty,) were always patronising our hero, who really found an evening spent in their company not altogether dull; for there is no fascination so irresistible to a boy, as the smile of a married woman. Vivian had really passed such a recluse life for the last two years and a half, that he had quite forgotten that he was once considered a very fascinating fellow; and so, determined to discover what right

he ever had to such a reputation, Master Vivian entered into all those amourettes in very beautiful style.

But Vivian Grey was a young and tender plant in a moral hot-house. His character was developing itself too soon. Although his evenings were now generally passed in the manner we have alluded to, this boy was, during the rest of the day, a hard and indefatigable student; and having now got through an immense series of historical reading, he had stumbled upon a branch of study certainly the most delightful in the world,—but, for a boy, as certainly the most pernicious—**THE STUDY OF POLITICS.**

And now every thing was solved! the inexplicable longings of his soul, which had so often perplexed him, were at length explained. The *want*, the indefinable *want*, which he had so constantly experienced, was at last supplied; the great object on which to bring the powers of his mind to bear and work was at last provided. He paced his chamber in an agitated spirit, and panted for the senate.

It will be asked, what was the evil of all this? and the reader will, perhaps, murmur something about an honourable spirit and youthful ambition. Ah! I once thought so myself—but the evil is *too* apparent. The time drew nigh for Vivian to leave for Oxford—that is, for him to *commence* his preparation for entering on his career in life. And now this person, who was about to be a *pupil*—this boy, this stripling, who was going to begin his education, had all the feelings of a matured mind—of an experienced man; and was already a cunning reader of human hearts; and felt conscious, from experience, that his was a tongue which was born to guide human beings. The idea of Oxford to such an individual was an insult!

CHAPTER IX.

THE NEW THEORY.

I MUST endeavour to trace, if possible, more accurately the workings of Vivian Grey's mind at this period of his existence. In the plenitude of his ambition, he stopped one day to inquire in what manner he could obtain his magnificent ends.

“**THE BAR**—pooh! law and bad jokes till we are forty; and then, with the most brilliant success, the prospect of gout and a coronet. Besides, to succeed as an advocate, I must be a great lawyer, and to be a great lawyer I must give up my chance of being a great man. **THE SERVICES** in war time are fit only for desperadoes, (and that truly am I.) but, in peace, are fit only for fools. **THE CHURCH** is more rational. Let me see; I should certainly like to act Wolsey; but the thousand and one chances against me! And truly I feel *my* destiny should not be on a chance. Were I the son of a millionaire, or a noble, I might have *all*. Curse on my lot! that the want of a few rascal counters, and the possession of a little rascal blood, should mar my fortunes!”

Such was the general tenor of Vivian's thoughts, until, musing himself almost into madness, he at last made, as he conceived, the **GRAND DISCOVERY**. “*Riches are power*, says the economist:—and is not *intellect*?” asks the philosopher. And yet,

while the influence of the millionaire is instantly felt in all classes of society, how is it that 'noble mind' so often leaves us unknown and unhonoured? Why have there been statesmen who have never ruled, and heroes who have never conquered? Why have glorious philosophers died in a garret? and why have there been poets whose only admirer has been nature in her echoes! It must be that these beings have thought only of themselves, and, constant and elaborate students of their own glorious natures, have forgotten or disdained the study of all others. Yes; we must mix with the herd; we must enter into their feelings; we must humour their weaknesses; we must sympathize with the sorrows that we do not feel; and share the merriment of fools. O, yes! to *rule* men, we must *be* men; to prove that we are strong, we must be weak; to prove that we are giants, we must be dwarfs; even as the eastern genie was hid in the charmed bottle. Our wisdom must be concealed under folly, and our constancy under caprice.

"I have been often struck by the ancient tales of Jupiter's visits to the earth. In these fanciful adventures, the god bore no indication of the thunderer's glory; but was a man of low estate, a herdsman, or other hind; and often even an animal. A mighty spirit has in *tradition*, time's great moralist, perused 'the wisdom of the ancients.' Even in the same spirit, I would explain Jove's terrestrial visitings. For to govern man, even the god appeared to feel as a man; and sometimes, as a beast, was apparently influenced by their vilest passions. Mankind, then, is my great game.

"At this moment how many a powerful noble wants only wit to be a minister; and what wants Vivian Grey to attain the same end? That noble's influence. When two persons can so materially assist each other, why are they not brought together? Shall I, because my birth balks my fancy—shall I pass my life a moping misanthrope in an old chateau? Supposing I am in contact with this magnifico, am I prepared? Now let me probe my very soul. Does my cheek blanch? I have the mind for the conception; and I can perform right skilfully upon the most splendid of musical instruments—the human voice—to make those conceptions beloved by others. There wants but one thing more—*courage*, pure, perfect courage;—and does Vivian Grey know fear?" He laughed an answer of bitterest derision.

CHAPTER X.

A LOUNGE.

Is any one surprised that Vivian Grey, with a mind teeming with such feelings, should view the approach of the season for his departure to Oxford, with sentiments of thorough disgust? After many hours of bitter meditation, he sought his father; he made him acquainted with his feelings, but concealed from him his actual views, and dwelt on the misery of being thrown back in life, at a period when society seemed instinct with a spirit peculiarly active, and when so many openings were daily offered to the adventurous and the bold.

"Vivian," said Mr. Grey, "beware of endea-

vouring to be a great man in a hurry. One such attempt in ten thousand may succeed: these are fearful odds. Admirer as you are of Lord Bacon, you may perhaps remember a certain parable of his, called 'Memnon, or a youth too forward.' I hope you are not going to be one of those sons of Aurora, 'who, puffed up with the glittering show of vanity and ostentation, attempt actions above their strength.'

"You talk to me about the peculiarly active spirit of society: if the spirit of society be so peculiarly active, Mr. Vivian Grey should beware lest it outstrip him. Is neglecting to mature your mind, my boy, exactly the way to win the race? This is an age of unsettled opinions and contested principles:—in the very measures of our administration, the speculative spirit of the present day is, to say the least, not impalpable. Nay, don't start, my dear fellow, and look the very prosopoeia of political economy! I know exactly what you're going to say; but if you please we'll leave Turgot and Galileo to Mr. Canning and the House of Commons, or your cousin Hargrave and his debating society. However, jesting apart, get your hat, and walk with me as far as Evan's; where I have promised to look in, to see the Mazarin Bible, and we'll talk this affair over as we go along.

"I am no bigot, you know, Vivian. I am not one of those who wish to oppose the application of refined philosophy to the common business of life. We are, I hope, an improving race; there is room, I am sure, for great improvement, and the perfectibility of man is certainly a very pretty dream. (How well that Union Club House comes out now, since they have made the opening.) But, although we may have steam kitchens, human nature is, I imagine, much the same this moment that we are walking in Pall-Mall East, as it was some thousands of years ago, when as wise men were walking on the banks of the Ilyssus. When our moral powers increase in proportion to our physical ones, then huzza for the perfectibility of man! and respectable, idle loungers, like you and I, Vivian, may then have a chance of walking in the streets of London without having their heels trodden upon; a ceremony which I have this moment undergone. In the present day we are all studying science, and none of us are studying ourselves. This is not exactly the Socratic process; and as for the *γαρι σευτερον* of the more ancient Athenian, that principle is quite out of fashion in the *nineteenth century*. (I believe that's the phrase.) Self is the only person whom we know nothing about.

"But, my dear Vivian, as to the immediate point of our consideration:—In my library, uninfluenced and uncontrolled by passion or by party, I cannot but see that it is utterly impossible that all that we are wishing and striving for can take place, without some—without much evil. In ten years' time, perhaps, or less, the fever will have subsided, and in ten years' time, or less, your intellect will be matured. Now, my good sir, instead of talking about the active spirit of the age, and the opportunities offered to the adventurous and the bold, ought you not rather to congratulate yourself, that a great change is being effected, at a period of your life when you need not, individually, be subjected to the possibility of being injured by its operation; and when you are preparing

your mind to take advantage of the system, when that system is matured and organized?

"As to your request, it assuredly is one of the most modest, and the most rational, that I have lately been favoured with. Although I would much rather that any influence that I may exercise over your mind, should be the effect of my advice as your friend, than of my authority as your father; till I really feel it my duty, parentally, to protest against this very crude proposition of yours. However, if you choose to lose a term or two, do. Don't blame me, you know, if afterwards you repent it."

Here dashed by the gorgeous equipage of Mrs. Ormolu, the wife of a man who was working all the gold and silver mines in Christendom. "Ah! my dear Vivian," said Mr. Grey, "it is *this* which has turned all your brains. In this age every one is striving to make an immense fortune, and what is more terrific, at the same time, a speedy one. This thirst for sudden wealth it is, which engenders the extravagant conceptions, and fosters that wild spirit of speculation which is now stalking abroad; and which like the *dæmon* in Frankenstein, not only fearfully wanders over the whole wide face of nature, but grins in the imagined solitude of our secret chambers. O! my son, it is for the young men of the present day that I tremble—seduced by a temporary success of a few children of fortune, I have observed that their minds recoil from the prospects which are held forth by the ordinary, and, mark me—by the *only* modes of acquiring property—fair trade, and honourable professions. It is for you and your companions that I fear. God grant! that there may not be a moral as well as political disorganization! God grant! that our youth, the hope of our state, may not be lost to us! For, O! my son, the wisest has said—'He that maketh haste to be rich, shall not be innocent.' Let us step into Clark's and take an ice."

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARQUESS OF CARABAS.

THE Marquess of Carabas started in life as the cadet of a noble family. The earl, his father, like the woodman in the fairy tale, was blessed with tree sons—the first was an idiot, and was destined for the coronet; the second was a man of business, and was educated for the commons; the third was a *roué*, and was shipped to the colonies.

The present marquess, then the Honourable Sidney Lorraine, prospered in his political career. He was servile and pompous, and indefatigable, and talkative—so whispered the world:—his friends hailed him as at once, a courtier and a sage, a man of business, and an orator. After revelling in his fair proportion of commissionerships, and under secretaryships, and the rest of the milk and honey of the political Canaan, the apex of the pyramid of his ambition was at length visible, for Sidney Lorraine became president of a board, and *wriggled* into the adylum of the cabinet

At this moment his idiot brother died. To compensate for his loss of office, and to secure his vote, the Earl of Carabas was promoted in the peerage, and was presented with some magnificent office—meaning nothing, swelling with dignity, and void of duties. As years rolled on, various changes took place in the administration, of which his lordship was once a component part; and the ministry, to their surprise, getting popular, found that the command of the Carabas interest was not of such vital importance to them as heretofore, and so his lordship was voted a bore, and got shelved. Not that his lordship was bereaved of his splendid office, or that any thing occurred, indeed, by which the *uninitiated* might have been led to suppose that the beams of his lordship's consequence were shorn; but the marquess's secret applications at the treasury were no longer listened to; and pert under secretaries settled their cravats, and whispered "that the Carabas interest was gone by."

The most noble marquess was not insensible to his situation, for he was what the world calls *ambitious*; but the vigour of his faculties had vanished beneath the united influence of years and indolence and ill-humour; for his lordship, to avoid *ennui*, had quarrelled with his son, and then having lost his only friend, had quarrelled with himself.

Such was the distinguished individual who graced, one day at the latter end of the season of 18—, the classic board of Horace Grey, Esquire. The reader will, perhaps, be astonished, that such a man as his lordship, should be the guest of such a man as our hero's father; but the truth is, the Marquess of Carabas had just been disappointed in an attempt on the chair of the president of the Royal Society; which, for want of something better to do, he was ambitious of filling, and this was a conciliatory visit to one of the most distinguished members of that body, and one who had voted against him with particular enthusiasm. The marquess, still a politician, was now as he imagined, securing his host's vote for a future St. George's day.

The *cuisine* of Mr. Grey was *superbe*; for although an enthusiastic advocate for the cultivation of the mind, he was an equally ardent supporter of the cultivation of the body. Indeed, the necessary dependence of the sanity of the one on the good keeping of the other, was one of his most favourite theories, and one which this day he was supporting with very pleasant and facetious reasonings. His lordship was delighted with his new friend, and still more delighted with his new friend's theory. The marquess himself was, indeed, quite of the same opinion as Mr. Grey; for he never made a speech without previously taking a sandwich, and would have sunk under the estimates a thousand times, had it not been for the juicy friendship of the fruit of Portugal.

The guests were not numerous. A regius professor of Greek; an officer just escaped from Sockatoo; a man of science, and two M. P.s, with his lordship, the host, and Mr. Vivian Grey, constituted the party. O, no! there were two others. There was a Mr. John Brown, a fashionable poet, and who, ashamed of his own name, published his melodies under the more euphonious and romantic title of "*Clarence Devonshire*," and there was a Mr. Thomas Smith, a fashionable

novelist; that is to say, a person who occasionally publishes three volumes, one half of which contain the adventures of a young gentleman in the country; and the other volume and a half the adventures of the same young gentleman in the metropolis;—a sort of writer, whose constant tattle about beer and billiards, and eating soup, and the horribility of “*committing*” puns, gives truly a most admirable and accurate idea of the conversation of the refined society of the refined metropolis of Great Britain. These two last gentlemen were “*pets*” of Mrs. Grey.

The conversation may be conceived. Each person was of course prepared with a certain quota of information, without which no name in London is morally entitled to *dine out*; and when the quota was expended, the amiable host took the burden upon his own shoulders, and endeavoured, as the phrase goes, “*to draw out!*” his guests.

O, London dinners! empty artificial nothings! and that beings can be found, and those too the flower of the land, who, day after day and day after day, can act the same parts in the same dull, dreary farce! The officer had discoursed sufficiently about “his intimate friend, the Soudan,” and about the chain armour of the Sockatoo cuirassiers; and one of the M. P.s, who was in the guards, had been defeated in a ridiculous attempt to prove, that the rest-plates of the household troops of Great Britain were superior to those of the household troops of Tintomtamtomtoo. Mrs. Grey, to whose opinion both parties deferred, gave it in favour of the Soudan. And the man of science had lectured about a machine which might destroy fifteen square feet of human beings in a second, and yet be carried in the waistcoat pocket. And the *classique*, who, for a professor, was quite a man of the world, had the latest news of the new Herculaneum process, and was of opinion that, if they could but succeed in unrolling a certain suspicious-looking scroll, we might be so fortunate as to possess a minute treatise on &c., &c. In short, all had said their say. There was a dead pause, and Mrs. Grey looked at her husband and rose.

How singular it is, that when this move takes place every one appears to be relieved, and yet every one of any experience, must be aware that the *dead bore* work is only about to commence. Howbeit, all filled their glasses, and the peer at the top of the table, began to talk politics. I am sure that I cannot tell what the weighty subject was that was broached by the ex-minister; for I did not dine with Grey that day; and had I done so, I should have been equally ignorant; for I'm a dull man, and always sleep at dinner. However the subject was political, the claret flew round, and a stormy argument commenced. The marquess was decidedly wrong, and was sadly badgered by the civil M. P. and the professor. The host, who was of no party, supported his guest as long as possible, and then left him to his fate. The military M. P. fled to the drawing-room to phiauder with Mrs. Grey; and the man of science and the African had already retired to the intellectual idiomism of a May fair “at home.” The novelist was silent, for he was studying a scene—and the poet was absent, for he was *musng* a sonnet.

The marquess refuted, had recourse to contradiction, and was too acute a man to be insensible to the forlornness of his situation; when, at this

moment, a voice proceeded from the end of the table, from a young gentleman, who had hitherto preserved a profound silence, but whose silence, if the company were to have judged from the tones of his voice, and the matter of his communication, did not altogether proceed from a want of confidence in his own abilities. “In my opinion,” said Mr. Vivian Grey, as he sat lounging in his father’s vacated seat—“in my opinion, his lordship has been misunderstood; and it is, as is generally the case, from a slight verbal misconception in the commencement of this argument, that the whole of this difference arises.”

The eyes of the marquess sparkled—and the mouth of the marquess was closed. He was delighted that his reputation might yet be saved; but as he was not perfectly acquainted how that salvation was to be effected, he prudently left the battle to his youthful companion.

Mr. Vivian Grey proceeded with the utmost *sang froid*: he commented upon expressions, split and subtilized words, insinuated opinions, and finally quoted a whole passage of Bolingbroke to prove that the opinion of the most noble the Marquess of Carabas was one of the soundest, wisest, and most convincing of opinions that ever was promulgated by mortal man. The tables were turned, the guests looked astounded, the marquess settled his ruffles, and perpetually exclaimed, “*Exactly what I meant!*” and his opponents, full of wine and quite puzzled, gave up.

It was a rule with Vivian Grey, never to advance any opinion *as his own*. He had been too deep a student of human nature, not to be aware that the opinions of a boy of twenty, however sound, and however correct, stood but a poor chance of being adopted by his elder, though feebler, fellow-creatures. In attaining any end, it was therefore his system always to advance his opinion as that of some eminent and considerable personage; and when, under the sanction of this name, the opinion or advice was entertained and listened to, Vivian Grey had no fear that he could prove its correctness and its expediency. He possessed also the singular faculty of being able to *improvise quotations*, that is, he could unpremeditatedly clothe his conceptions in language characteristic of the style of any particular author; and Vivian Grey was reputed in the world as having the most astonishing memory that ever existed; for there was scarcely a subject of discussion in which he did not gain the victory, by the great names he enlisted on his side of the argument. His father was aware of the existence of this dangerous faculty, and had often remonstrated with his son on the use of it. On the present occasion, when the buzz had somewhat subsided, Mr. Grey looked smiling to his son, and said: “Vivian, my dear, can you tell me in what work of Bolingbroke I can find the eloquent passage you have just quoted?”—“Ask Mr. Hargrave, sir,” replied the son, with the most perfect coolness; then turning to the member: “You know, Mr. Hargrave, you are reputed the most profound political student in the House, and more intimately acquainted than any other person with the works of Bolingbroke.”

Mr. Hargrave knew no such thing;—but he was a weak man, and seduced by the compliment, he was afraid to prove himself unworthy of it by confessing his ignorance of the passage.

finished, I'll first give orders that we may not be disturbed! and then we'll proceed immediately. Come, now, your manner takes me, and we will converse in the spirit of the most perfect confidence."

Here as the marquess settled at the same time his chair and his countenance, and looked as anxious as if majesty itself was consulting him on the formation of a ministry, in burst the marchioness, notwithstanding all the remonstrances, entreaties, threats, and supplications of Mr. Sadler.

Her ladyship had been what they style a *splendid woman*; she was now *pasata*, although with the aid of cashemeres, diamonds, turbans, her *tout ensemble* was still very striking. Her ladyship was not remarkable for any thing; save a correct taste for poodles, parrots, and bijouterie; and a proper admiration of Theodore Hook and John Bull.

"O! marquess," exclaimed her ladyship—and a favourite green parrot, which came flying in after its accustomed perch, her ladyship's left shoulder, shrieked at the same time in concert—"O! marquess, my poor Julie! You know we've noticed how nervous she has been for some days past, and I had just given her a saucer of arrow-root and milk, and she seemed a little easier, and I said to Miss Graves, 'I really do think she is a *little* better,' and Miss Graves said, 'Yes, my lady, I hope she is;' when just as we flattered ourselves that the dear little creature was enjoying a quiet sleep, Miss Graves called out, 'O, my lady! my lady! Julie's in a fit!' and when I turned round she was lying on her back, kicking, with her eyes shut." And here the marchioness detected Mr. Grey, and gave him as fashionable a stare as might be expected from a lady patroness of Almacks'.

"The marchioness—Mr. Vivian Grey—my love, I assure you we're engaged in a most important, a most——"

"O! my life, I wouldn't disturb you for the world, only if you will just tell me what you think ought to be done; leeches, or a warm bath, or shall I send for Doctor Blue Pill?"

The marquess looked a little annoyed, as if he grieved her ladyship—in her own room again. He was almost meditating a general reprimand, vexed that his grave young friend should have witnessed this frivolous intrusion, when that accomplished stripling, to the astonishment of the future minister, immediately recommended "the warm bath," and a few grains of "mustard seed," and then lectured with equal rapidity and erudition, on dogs and all diseases in general.

The marchioness retired, "easier in her mind about Julie than she had been for some days," as Vivian assured her "that it was not apoplexy, but only the first symptom of an epidemic." And as she retired, she murmured her gratitude most gracefully to Julie's young physician; and her prime minister, the parrot, on her left shoulder, at the same time cackled a compliment.

"Now, Mr. Grey," said his lordship, endeavouring to recover his dignity, "we were discussing the public sentiments, you know, on a certain point, when this unfortunate interruption——"

Vivian had not much difficulty in collecting his ideas, and he proceeded, not as displeased as his lordship with the domestic *scena*.

"I need not remind your lordship, that the two great parties into which this state is divided, are apparently very unequally proportioned. Your

lordship well knows how the party to which your lordship is *said* to belong, your lordship knows, I imagine, how that is constituted. We have nothing to do with the *other*. My lord, I must speak out. No thinking man—and such, I trust, Vivian Grey is.—no *thinking* man can for a moment suppose, that your lordship's heart is *very warm* in the cause of a party which—for I will not mince my words—*has betrayed you*. How is it, it is asked by *thinking* men, how is it that the Marquess of Carabas is—the *tool* of a faction?"

The marquess breathed lead; "They say *so*, do they?"

"Why, my lord, listen even to your servants in your own hall—need I say more? How then! is this opinion true? Let us look to your conduct to the party to which you are *said* to belong. Your votes are theirs, your influence is theirs; and for all this, what return, my lord marquess, what return? My lord, I am not rash enough to suppose that your lordship, *alone and unsupported*, can make yourself the arbiter of this country's destinies. It would be ridiculous to entertain such an idea for a second. The existence of such a man would not be endured by the nation for a *second*. But, my lord, *union is strength*. Nay, my lord, start not—I am not going to advise you to throw yourself into the arms of opposition; leave such advice for greenhorns. I am not going to advise you to adopt a line of conduct, which would for a moment compromise the consistency of your high character; leave such advice for fools. My lord, it is to preserve your consistency, it is to vindicate your high character, it is to make the Marquess of Carabas perform the duties which society requires from him, that I, Vivian Grey, a member of that society, and an humble friend of your lordship, speak so boldly."

"My friend," said the agitated peer, "you cannot speak *too* boldly. My mind opens to you. I have felt, I have long felt, that I was not what I ought to be, that I was not what society requires me to be:—but where is your remedy, what is the line of conduct that I should pursue?"

"The remedy, my lord! I never conceived for a moment, that there was any doubt of the existence of means to attain *all and every thing*. I think that was your lordship's phrase. I only hesitated as to the existence of the *inclination* on the part of your lordship."

"You cannot doubt it *now*," said the peer in a low voice; and then his lordship looked anxiously round the room, as if he feared that there had been some mysterious witness to his whisper.

"My lord," said Vivian, and he drew his chair close to the marquess, "the plan is shortly this. There are others in a similar situation with yourself. All *thinking* men know—your lordship knows still better—that there are others equally influential—equally ill treated. How is it that I see no concert among these individuals? How is it that, jealous of each other, or each trusting that he may ultimately prove an exception to the system of which he is a victim; how is it, I say, that you look with cold hearts on each other's situations? My lord r— these that I would would have act wit which is strength."

"You are right, you but we do not speak we are not intimate,

"My lord, you must not be daunted at a few difficulties, or at a little exertion. But as for Courtown or Beaconsfield, or fifty other offended men; if it can be shown to them that their interest is to be your lordship's friend, trust me, that ere six months are over, they will have pledged their troth. Leave all this to me—give me your lordship's name," said Vivian, whispering most earnestly in the marquess's ear, and laying his hand upon his lordship's arm—"give me your lordship's name, and your lordship's influence, and I will take upon myself the whole organization of the CARABAS' PARTY."

"The Carabas party!—Ah! we must think more of this."

The marquess's eyes smiled with triumph, as he shook Vivian cordially by the hand, and begged him to call upon him on the morrow.

CHAPTER III.

THE MOTTO.

THE intercourse between the marquess and Vivian, after this interview, was constant. No dinner party was thought perfect at Carabas House, without the presence of the young gentleman; and as the marchioness was delighted with the perpetual presence of an individual whom she could always consult about Julie, there was apparently no domestic obstacle to Vivian's remaining in high favour.

The Earl of Eglamour, the only child, in whom were concentrated all the hopes of the illustrious house of Lorraine, was in Italy. The only remaining member of the domestic circle who was wanting, was the Honourable Mrs. Felix Lorraine, the wife of the marquess's younger brother. This lady, exhausted by the gayety of the season, had left town somewhat earlier than she usually did, and was inhaling fresh air, and of course studying botany, at the magnificent seat of the Carabas family, CHATEAU DESIR, at which splendid place Vivian was to pass the summer.

Mr. Grey watched the movements of his son with an anxious, but apparently with no curious eye. "If the marquess will give my son a good place, why Master Vivian's new system works rather better than I conceived it would, but how the young knave hath so—managed. shall I say?—the old fool, does, I profess, puzzle my philosophy."

Alas! when Mr. Grey jocosely used the phrase, "*new system*," he was little aware of the workings of his son's mind. But so it is in life; a father is, perhaps, the worst judge of his son's capacity. He knows too much—and too little.

In the mean time, as we before stated, all was sunshine with Vivian Grey. His noble friend and himself were in perpetual converse, and constantly engaged in deep consultation. As yet, the world knew nothing, except that, according to the Marquess of Carabas, "Vivian Grey was the most astonishingly clever and prodigiously accomplished fellow that ever breathed." And as the marquess always added, "resembled himself very much when he was young."

But it must not be supposed, that Vivian was all the world the fascinating creature that he

was to the Marquess of Carabas. Many complained that he was reserved, silent, satirical, and haughty. But the truth was, Vivian Grey often asked himself, "who is to be my enemy to-morrow?" He was too cunning a master of the human mind, not to be aware of the quicksands upon which all greenhorns strike; he knew too well the danger of *unnecessary intimacy*. A SMILE FOR A FRIEND, AND A SNEER FOR THE WORLD, is the way to govern mankind, and such was the motto of Vivian Grey.

CHAPTER IV.

CHATEAU DESIR.

How shall I describe CHATEAU DESIR, that place fit for all princes? In the midst of a park of great extent, and eminent for scenery, as varied as might please nature's most capricious lover; in the midst of green lawns, and deep winding glens, and cooling streams, and wild forests, and soft woodland, there was gradually formed an elevation, on which was situate a mansion of great size, and of that bastard, but picturesque style of architecture, called the Italian Gothic. The date of its erection was about the middle of the sixteenth century. You entered by a noble gateway, in which the pointed style still predominated, but in various parts of which, the Ionic column, and the prominent keystone, and other creations of Roman architecture, intermingled with the expiring Gothic, into a large quadrangle, to which the square casement windows, and the triangular pediments or gable ends, supplying the place of battlements, gave a varied and Italian feature. In the centre of the court, from an immense marble basin, the rim of which was enriched by a splendid sculptured lotus border, rose a marble group, representing Amphitrite with her marine attendants, whose sounding shells, and coral sceptres sent forth their subject element in sparkling showers. This work, the *chef d'œuvre* of a celebrated artist of Vicenza, had been purchased by Valerian, first Lord Carabas, who having spent the greater part of his life as the representative of his monarch at the ducal court of Venice, at length returned to his native country; and in the creation of Chateau Desir, endeavoured to find some consolation for the loss of his gay palazzo on the banks of the Adige.

Over the gateway there rose a turreted tower, the small square window of which, notwithstanding its stout stanchions, illumined the muniment room of the House of Carabas. In the spandrels of the gateway, and in many other parts of the building, might be seen the arms of the family, while the innumerable stacks of chimneys, which appeared to spring from all parts of the roof, were carved and built in such curious and quaint devices, that they were rather an ornament than an excrescence. When you entered the quadrangle, you found one side solely occupied by the old hall, the immense carved rafters of whose oaken roof rested on corbels of the family supporters, against the walls.

The walls of the hall were of stone, but these were covered halfway from the ground with a panelling of curiously carved oak: whence were suspended the family portraits in massy frames, painted partly by Dutch, and partly by Italian

artists. Near the *dais*, or upper part of the hall, there projected an oriel window, which, as you beheld, you scarcely knew what most to admire, the radiancy of its painted panes, or the fantastic richness of Gothic ornament, which was profusely lavished in every part of its masonry. Here, too, the Gothic pendant, and the Gothic fanwork, were intermingled with the Italian arabesques, which, at the time of the building of the chateau, had been recently introduced into England by Hans Holbein and John of Padua.

How wild and fanciful are those ancient arabesques! Here at Chateau Desir, in the panelling of the old hall, might you see fantastic scrolls, separated by bodies ending in *termini*, and whose heads supported the Ionic volute, while the arch, which appeared to spring from these capitals, had, for a keystone, heads more monstrous than those of the fabled animals of Ctesias; or so ludicrous, that you forgot the classic griffin in the grotesque conception of the Italian artist. Here was a gibbering monkey, there a grinning pulcinello; now you viewed a chattering devil, which might have figured in the temptation of St. Anthony; and now a mournful, mystic, bearded countenance, which might have fitted in the back scene of a Witch's Sabbath.

A long gallery wound through the upper story of two other sides of the quadrangle, and beneath were the show suite of apartments, with a sight of which the admiring eyes of curious tourists were occasionally delighted.

The gray stone walls of this antique edifice were, in many places, thickly covered with ivy, and other parasitical plants, the deep green of whose verdure beautifully contrasted with the scarlet glories of the papyrus japonica, which gracefully clustered round the windows of the lower chambers. The mansion itself was immediately surrounded by numerous ancient forest trees. There was the elm with its rich branches, bending down like clustering grapes; there was the wide-spreading oak, with its roots fantastically gnarled; there was the ash, with its smooth bark and elegant leaf; and the silver beech, and the gracile birch, and the dark fir, affording, with its rough foliage, a contrast to the trunks of its more beautiful companions, or shooting far above their branches with the spirit of freedom worthy of a rough child of the mountains.

Around the castle were extensive pleasure-grounds, which realized the romance of the gardens of Verulam. And truly, as you wandered through their enchanting paths, there seemed no end to their various beauties, and no exhaustion of their perpetual novelty. Green retreats succeeded to winding walks; from the shady *bereau*, you vaulted on the noble terrace; and, if for an instant you felt wearied by treading the velvet lawn, you might rest in a mossy cell, while your mind was soothed by the soft music of falling waters. Now your curious eyes were greeted by oriental animals, basking in a sunny paddock; and when you turned from the white-footed antelope, and the dark-eyed gazelle, you viewed an aviary of such extent, that within its trellised walls the imprisoned songsters could build in the free branches of a tree, their natural nests.

"O, fair scene!" thought Vivian Grey, as he approached on a fine summer's afternoon, the splendid chateau. "O, fair scene! doubly fair to

those who quit for *you* the thronged and agitated city. And can it be, that those who exist within this enchanted domain, can think of any thing but sweet air, and do ought but revel in the breath of perfumed flowers?" And here he gained the garden gate: so he stopped his soliloquy and gave his horse to his groom.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW CHARACTER.

THE marquess had preceded Vivian in his arrival about three or four days, and of course, to use the common phrase, the establishment "was quite settled." It was, indeed, to avoid the possibility of witnessing the domestic arrangements of a nobleman in any other point of view save that of perfection, that Vivian had declined accompanying his noble friend to the chateau. Mr. Grey, junior, was an epicurean, and all epicureans will quite agree with me, that his conduct on this head was extremely wise. I am not very nice myself about these matters; but there are, we all know, a thousand little things that go wrong on the *arrivals* of even the best regulated families, and to mention no others, for any rational being voluntarily to encounter the awful gaping of an English family, who have travelled one hundred miles in ten successive hours, appears to me to be little short of madness.

"Grey, my boy, quite happy to see ye!—later than I expected; first bell rings in five minutes—Sadler will show you my room—father, I hope, quite well."

Such was the salutation of the marquess; and Vivian accordingly retired to arrange his toilet.

The first bell rang, and the second bell rang, and Vivian was seated at the dinner table. He bowed to the marchioness, and asked after her poodle, and gazed with some little curiosity at the vacant chair opposite him.

"Mrs. Felix Lorraine—Mr. Vivian Grey," said the marquess, as a lady entered the room.

Now, although I am one of those historians who are of opinion that the nature of the personages they celebrate, should be developed rather by a recital of their conduct, than by a set character *au commencement*; I feel it, nevertheless, incumbent on me to devote a few lines to the lady that has just entered, which the reader will be so good as to get through, while she is accepting an offer of some white soup: by this means he will lose none of the conversation.

The Honourable Felix Lorraine, we have before laconically described as a *roué*. To the initiated I need say no more; they will all know what sort of a person a *roué* must be, who has the honour of being the son of an English earl. To the uninitiated, I shall only observe, that after having passed through a career with tolerable credit, which would have blasted the character of any common personage, Felix Lorraine ended by pigeoning a young nobleman, whom for that purpose he had made his intimate friend. The affair got wind; after due examination, was proclaimed "too bad," and the guilty personage was visited with the heaviest vengeance of modern society—he was expelled his club. By this unfortunate exposure, Mr. Felix Lorraine was obliged to give

in a match, which was on the *tapis*, with the celebrated Miss Mexico, on whose million he had determined to set up a character and a chariot, and at the same time pension his mistress, and subscribe to the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Felix left for the continent, and in due time was made drum-major at Barbadoes, or fiscal at Ceylon, or something of that kind; I forget which. While he loitered in Europe, he made a conquest of the heart of the daughter of some German baron, who was ambassador extraordinary from his Serene Highness the Palsgrave of * * * * to his most Supreme Excellency the Landgrave of * * * * and after six weeks passed in the most affectionate manner, each of the happy couple performing their respective duties with perfect propriety, Felix left for his colonial appointment, and also left—his lady behind him.

Mr. Lorraine had duly and dutifully informed his family of his marriage, and they as amiably and affectionately, had never answered his letters, which he never expected they would. Profiting by their example, he never answered his wife's, who, in due time, to the horror of the marquess, landed in England, and claimed the protection of her "beloved husband's family." The marquess vowed he would never see her; the lady, however, one morning gained admittance, and from that moment she had never quitted her brother-in-law's roof, and not only had never quitted it, but now made the greatest favour of her staying.

The extraordinary influence which Mrs. Felix Lorraine possessed, was certainly not owing to her beauty, for the lady opposite Vivian Grey had apparently no claims to admiration, on the score of her personal qualifications. Her complexion was bad, and her features were indifferent, and these characteristics were not rendered less uninterestingly conspicuous, by what makes an otherwise ugly woman *toute au contraire*, namely, a pair of expressive eyes; for certainly this epithet could not be applied to those of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, which gazed in all the vacancy of German listlessness.

The lady *did* bow to Mr. Grey, and that was all; and then she negligently spooned her soup, and then, after much parade, sent it away untouched. As Vivian wined with the marchioness, he was not under the necessity of paying any courtesy to his opposite neighbour, whose silence he plainly perceived was for the nonce, and consequently for him. But the day was hot, and Vivian had been fatigued by his ride, and the marquess's champagne was excellent; and so, at last, the floodgates of his speech burst, and talk he *did*. He complimented her ladyship's poodle, quoted German to Mrs. Felix Lorraine, and taught the marquess to eat cabinet pudding with Curacoa sauce, (a custom which, by-the-by, I recommend to all;) and then his stories, and his scandal, and his sentiment;—stories for the marquess, scandal for the marchioness, and sentiment for the marquess's sister! That lady, who began to find out her man, had no mind to be longer silent, and although a perfect mistress of the English language, began to articulate a horrible *patois*, that she might not be mistaken for an English woman, a thing which she particularly dreaded. But now came her punishment, for Vivian saw the effect which he had produced on Mrs. Felix Lorraine, and that Mrs. Felix Lorraine now wished to produce a corresponding effect upon him, and this he was determined she

should not do; so new stories followed, and new compliments ensued, and finally he anticipated her sentences, and sometimes her thoughts. The lady sat silent and admiring! At last the important meal was finished, and the time came when good dull English dames retire; but of this habit Mrs. Felix Lorraine did not approve; and although she had not yet prevailed upon Lady Carabas to adopt her ideas on field days, still *en domestique*, the good-natured marchioness had given in, and to save herself from hearing the din of male voices at a time at which during her whole life she had been unaccustomed to them, the Marchioness of Carabas—dozed. Her worthy spouse, who was prevented by the presence of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, from talking politics with Vivian, passed the bottle pretty briskly, and then conjecturing that "from the sunset we should have a fine day to-morrow," fell back in his easy chair, and—snored.

Mrs. Felix Lorraine looked at her noble relatives, and shrugged up her shoulders with an air which baffled all description. "Mr. Grey, I congratulate you on this hospitable reception; you see we treat you quite *en famille*. Come! 'tis a fine evening, you have seen, as yet, but little of Chateau Desir: we may as well enjoy the fine air on the terrace."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TERRACE.

"You must know, Mr. Grey, that this is my favourite walk, and I therefore expect that it will be yours."

"It cannot indeed fail to be such, the favourite as it alike is, of nature, and Mrs. Felix Lorraine."

"On my word, a very pretty sentence!—and who taught you, young gentleman, to bandy words so fairly?"

"I never can open my mouth, except in the presence of a woman," bolted out Vivian, with the most impudent mendacity, and he looked interesting and innocent.

"Indeed!—and what do you know about such wicked work as *talking to women*?" and here Mrs. Felix Lorraine imitated Vivian's sentimental voice. "Do you know," she continued, "I feel quite happy that you have come down here;—I begin to think that we shall be very great friends."

"Nothing appears to be more evident," said Vivian.

"How delicious is friendship," exclaimed Mrs. Felix Lorraine: "delightful sentiment, that prevents life from being a curse! Have you a friend, Mr. Vivian Grey?"

"Before I answer that question, I should like to know what meaning Mrs. Felix Lorraine attaches to that important monosyllable, *friend*."

"O, you want a definition! I hate definitions; and of all the definitions in the world, the one I've been most unfortunate in, has been a definition of friendship—I might say,"—and here her voice sunk,—"*I might say, of all the sentiments in the world, friendship is the one which has been most fatal to me; but I must not inoculate you with my bad spirits; bad spirits are not for young blood like yours, leave them to old persons like myself.*"

"Old!" said Vivian, in a proper tone of surprise.

"Old! ay *old*;—how old do you think I am?"

"You may have seen twenty summers," gallantly conjectured Vivian.

The lady looked pleased, and almost insinuated that she had seen one or two more. Mrs. Felix Lorraine was about thirty.

"A clever woman," thought Vivian, "but vain; I hardly know what to think of her."

"Mr. Grey, I fear you find me in bad spirits to-day; but, alas! I—I have cause. Although we see each other to-day for the first time, yet there is something in your manner, something in the expression of your eyes, that make me believe *my* happiness is not altogether a matter of indifference to *you*." These words, uttered in one of the sweetest voices by which ever human being was fascinated, were slowly and deliberately spoken, as if it was intended that they should rest on the ear of the object to whom they were addressed.

"My dear Mrs. Lorraine! it is impossible that I can have but one sentiment with regard to you, that of—"

"Of *what*, Mr. Grey?"

"Of *solicitude* for your welfare."

The lady gently took the arm of the young man, and then with an agitated voice, and a troubled spirit, dwelt upon the unhappiness of her lot, and the cruelty of her fortunes. Her husband's indifference was the sorrowful theme of her lamentations, and she ended by asking Mr. Vivian Grey's advice, as to the line of conduct which she should pursue with regard to him; first duly informing Vivian, that this was the *only* time, and he the *only* person, to whom this subject had been ever mentioned.

"And why should I mention it here—and to whom? The marquess is the best of men, but—" and here she looked up in Vivian's face, and spoke volumes, "and the marchioness is the most amiable of women—at least, I suppose her lap-dog thinks so."

The advice of Vivian was very concise. He sent the husband to the devil in two seconds, and insisted upon the wife's not thinking of him for another moment, and then the lady dried her eyes, and promised to do her best.

"And now," said Mrs. Felix Lorraine, "I must talk about your own affairs—I think your plan *excellent*."

"Plan! madam?"

"Yes, *plan*, sir! The marquess has told me *all*. I have no head for politics, Mr. Grey; but if I cannot assist you in managing the nation, I perhaps *may* in managing the family, and my services are at your command. Believe me, you'll have enough to do; there, I pledge you my troth. Do you think it a pretty hand?"

Vivian did think it a very pretty hand, and he performed due courtesies in a very gallant style.

"And now, good even to you," said the lady; "this little gate leads to my apartments. You'll have no difficulty in finding your way back;"—so saying, she disappeared.

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY RISING.

WHEN Vivian retired to his room, he found a toilette on his dressing-case, which contained

two lines. They were as follows:—"A walk on the terrace before breakfast, is the fashion at Chateau Desir." The *esprit* of the note sufficiently indicated the authoress, even if the perfumed paper, and the diminutive French gem, with its piquant and *peculiar* motto, had allowed him for an instant to hesitate.

In spite of his travelling, and his champagne, and his sound sleep, Vivian rose early, and was on the terrace at a most reasonable hour, at least for him: Mrs. Felix Lorraine was already there.

"I congratulate Mr. Grey," said the lady, as she extended him a finger, "on being an early riser. Nothing is so vulgar as getting up late. O! what a pretty morning gown that is! and how nice your hair curls! and that velvet stock! why I declare you've quite a taste in *costume*! but it does not set quite right. *There*, that's better," said Mrs. Lorraine, adjusting the stock for him, "not much heard yet I see; you must take care to have one before you're a—*prize* *counsellor*."

"I rejoice," said Vivian, "that I can in return sincerely compliment you on your *own* good taste in costume. That buckle is, of course, fresh from Berlin, or—Birmingham—it's all the same you know at least at Howell and James's; and of all things in the world, what I must admire are your black velvet slippers! But where's the marquess?"

"O! we're not very early honoured with the presence of the Marquess of Carabas in his own house."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"O! I mean nothing, except that the future minister never rises till noon—bad habits, Mr. Grey, for a man of business!"

"Bad habits, indeed! we must endeavour to cure him, now that he is going, as you say, to be a man of business."

"O, certainly! cure him by all means. He'll give you, I don't doubt, plenty of occupation. I advise you regularly to reform the whole house. Your influence is so great, that you can do any thing with the marquess. Well, I hope he'll behave better in *future*, for the castle will be full in a few days. There are the Courtowns coming, and Sir Berdmore and Lady Scrope, and the Beaconsfields—all next week; and crowds of all sorts of people, whose names I forget, pawns in the great game of chess which is to be played by Vivian Grey, Esq. and the most noble Marquess of Carabas—against all England. There, there's the breakfast bell; I hope your appetite's good."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST WEEK.

THE first week at Chateau Desir passed pleasantly enough. Vivian's morning was amply occupied in maturing with the marquess the grand principles of the new political system: in weighing interests, in balancing connexions and settling "what side was to be taken on the *great questions*?" O! politics, thou splendid juggle!—The whole business, although so magnificent in its result, appeared very easy to the two counsellors, for it was one of the first principles of Mr. Vivian Grey, "that *every thing was possible*." Men did fall in life to be sure, and after all, very little *was*

done by the generality; but still all these failures, and all this inefficiency might be traced to a want of physical and mental courage. Some men were bold in their conceptions, and splendid heads at a grand system, but then, when the day of battle came, they turned out very cowards; while others, who had nerve enough to stand the brunt of the hottest fire, were utterly ignorant of military tactics, and fell before the destroyer, like the brave untutored Indians before the civilized European. Now Vivian Grey was conscious, that there was at least *one* person in the world who was no craven either in body or in mind, and so he had long come to the comfortable conclusion, that it was impossible that his career could be any thing but the most brilliant. And truly, employed as he now was, with a peer of the realm, in a solemn consultation on that realm's most important interests, at a time when creatures of his age were moping in halls and colleges, is it to be wondered at, that he began to imagine that his theory was borne out by experience and by fact? Not that it must be supposed, even for a moment, that Vivian Grey was what the world calls *conceited*. O, no! he knew the measure of his own mind, and had fathomed the depth of his powers with equal skill and impartiality; but in the process he could not but feel, that he *could* conceive *much*, and *dare* do *more*.

I said the first week at Chateau Desir passed pleasantly enough, and so it did, for Vivian's soul revelled in the morning councils on his future fortunes, with as much eager joy, as a young courser trying the turf preliminary to running for the plate. And then, in the evening, were moon-lit walks with Mrs. Felix Lorraine! and then the lady abused England so prettily, and initiated her companion into all the secrets of German courts, and sang beautiful French songs, and then she would take him beside the luminous lake in the park, and vow it looked just like the dark blue Rhine! and then she remembered Germany, and grew sad, and abused her husband; and then she taught Vivian the guitar, and—some other fooleries besides.

CHAPTER IX.

TACTICS.

THE second week of Vivian's visit had come round, and the flag waved proudly on the proud tower of Chateau Desir, indicating to the admiring country, that the most noble Sidney, Marquess of Carabas, held public days twice a week at his grand castle. And now came the neighbouring peer, full of grace and gravity, and the mellow baronet, with his hearty laugh, and the jolly country squire, and the middling gentry, and the jobbing country attorney, and the flourishing country surveyor. Some honouring by their presence, some who felt the obligation equal, and others bending before the noble host, as if paying him adoration was almost an equal pleasure with that of guzzling his venison pasties and quaffing his bright wines.

Independent of all these periodical visitors, the house was full of permanent ones. There was the Viscount and Viscountess Courtown, and their three daughters, and Lord and Lady Beaconsfield,

and their three sons, and Sir Berdmore and Lady Scrope, and Colonel Delmington of the guards, and Lady Louisa Manvers, and her sister Julia. Lady Louisa was the only sister of the marquess—a widow, proud and penniless.

To all these distinguished personages, Vivian was introduced by the marquess as a "monstrous clever young man, and his lordship's most particular friend"—and then the noble Carabas left the game in his young friend's hands.

And right well Vivian did his duty. In a week's time it would have been hard to decide with whom of the family of the Courtowns Vivian was the greatest favourite. He rode with the viscount, who was a good horseman, and was driven by his lady, who was a good whip; and when he had sufficiently admired the *tout ensemble* of her ladyship's pony phaeton, he intrusted her, "*in confidence*," with some ideas of his own about martingales, a subject which he assured her ladyship "had been the object of his mature consideration." The three honourable misses were the most difficult part of the business; but he talked sentiment with the first, sketched with the second, and romped with the third.

Ere the Beaconsfields could be jealous of the influence of the Courtowns, Mr. Vivian Grey had promised his lordship, who was a collector of medals, a unique, which had never yet been heard of; and her ladyship, who was a collector of autographs, the private letters of every man of genius who ever had been heard of. In this division of the Carabas' guests, he was not bored with a family, for *sons* he always made it a rule to cut dead; they are the members of a family who, on an average, are generally very unimportant, for, on an average, they are fools enough to think it very knowing to be very disagreeable. So the wise man but little loves them; but wo to the fool who neglects the daughters!

Sir Berdmore Scrope, Vivian found a more unmanageable personage; for the baronet was confoundedly shrewd, and without a particle of sentiment in his composition. It was a great thing, however, to gain him; for Sir Berdmore was a leading country gentleman, and having quarrelled with ministers about the corn laws, had been accounted disaffected ever since. The baronet, however, although a bold man to the world, was luckily henpecked; so Vivian made love to the wife, and secured the husband.

CHAPTER X.

MARRIAGE.

I THINK that Julia Manvers was really the most beautiful creature that ever smiled in this fair world. Such a symmetrically formed shape, such perfect features, such a radiant complexion, such luxuriant auburn hair, and such blue eyes, lit up by a smile of such mind and meaning, have seldom blessed the gaze of admiring man! Vivian Grey, fresh as he was, was not exactly the creature to lose his heart very speedily. He looked upon marriage as a certain farce, in which, sooner or later, he was, as a well-paid actor, to play his part; and could it have advanced his views one jot, he would have married the Princess Caraboo to-morrow. Bu

of all wives in the world, a young and handsome one was that which he most dreaded, and how a statesman who was wedded to a beautiful woman, could possibly perform his duties to the public, did most exceedingly puzzle him. Notwithstanding, however, these sentiments, Vivian began to think that there really could be no harm in talking to so beautiful a creature as Julia, and a little conversation with her, he felt, would be no unpleasing relief to the difficult duties in which he was involved.

To the astonishment of the Honourable Buckhurst Stanhope, eldest son of Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Vivian Grey, who had never yet condescended to acknowledge his existence, asked him one morning, with the most fascinating of smiles, and with the most conciliating voice, "whether they should ride together?" The young heir apparent looked stiff and assented. He arrived again at Chateau Desir in a couple of hours, desperately enamoured of the eldest Miss Courtown. The sacrifice of two mornings to the Honourable Dormer Stanhope, and the Honourable Gregory Stanhope, sent them home equally *au desespoir* as to the remaining sisters. Having thus, like a man of honour, provided for the amusement of his former friends, the three Miss Courtowns, Vivian left Mrs. Felix Lorraine to the colonel, whose mustache, by-the-by, that lady considerably patronised, and then, having excited a universal feeling of gallantry among the elders, Vivian found his whole day at the service of Julia Manvers.

"Miss Manvers, I think that you and I are the only faithful subjects in this castle of indolence. Here am I lounging on an ottoman, my ambition reaching only so far as the possession of a cigar, whose aromatic and circling wreaths, I candidly confess, I dare not here excite; and you, of course, much too knowing to be doing any thing on the first of August, save dreaming of races, archery feats, and county balls—the three most delightful things which the country can boast, either for man, woman, or child."

"Of course, you except sporting for yourself—shooting especially, I suppose."

"Shooting! O! ah! there is such a thing. No, I am no shot;—not that I have not in my time cultivated a Manton; but the truth is, having at an early age mistaken my most intimate friend for a cock pheasant, I sent a whole crowd of 'fours' into his face, and thereby spoilt one of the prettiest countenances in Christendom; so I gave up the field. Besides, as Tom Moore says, I have so much to do in the country, that, for my part, I really have no time for killing birds and jumping over ditches. good work enough for country squires, who must, like all others, have their hours of excitement. Mine are of a different nature, and boast a different locality; and so when I come into the country, 'tis for pleasant air, and beautiful trees, and winding streams, things which, of course, those who live all the year round among, do not suspect to be lovely and adorable creations. Don't you agree with Tom Moore, Miss Manvers?"

"O, of course! but I think it's very improper, that habit, that every one has, of calling a man of such eminence as the author of 'Lalla Rookh,' Tom Moore."

"I wish he could but hear you! But, suppose I were to quote Mr. Moore, or Mr. Thomas Moore,

would you have the most distant conception whom I meant? No, no, certainly not. By-the-by, did you ever hear the pretty name they gave him at Paris?"

"No! what was it?"

"One day, Moore and Rogers went to call on Denon. Rogers gave their names to the Swiss, *Monsieur Rogers et Monsieur Moore*. The Swiss dashed open the library door, and to the great surprise of the illustrious antiquary, announced *Monsieur l'Amour!* While Denon was doubting whether the god of love was really paying him a visit or not, Rogers entered. I should like to have seen Denon's face."

"And Monsieur Denon did take a portrait of Mr. Rogers as Cupid, I believe, Mr. Grey."

"Come, madam, no scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope. Mr. Rogers is one of the most elegant-minded men in the country."

"Nay! don't lecture me with such a *riant* face, or else all your *morale* will be utterly thrown away."

"Ah! you have Retsch's Faust there. I did not expect on a drawing-room table at Chateau Desir, to see any thing so old, and so excellent. I thought the third edition of Tremaine would be a very fair specimen of your ancient literature, and Major Denham's hair-breadth escapes of your modern. There was an excellent story *a'* town, on the return of Denham and Clapperton. The travellers took different routes, in order to arrive at the same point of destination. In his wanderings, the major came to an unheard-of lake, which, with a spirit which they of the Guards surely approved, he christened '*Lake Waterloo*.' Clapperton arrived a few days after him; and the pool was immediately re-baptized '*Lake Trafalgar*.' There was a hot quarrel in consequence. Now, if I had been there, I would have arranged matters, by proposing as a title to meet the views of all parties, '*The United Service Lake*.'"

"That would certainly have been very happy."

"How beautiful Margaret is!" said Vivian, rising from his ottoman, and seating himself on the sofa by the lady. "I always think that this is the only personification where art has not rendered innocence insipid."

"Do you think so?"

"Why, take Una in the Wilderness, or Goody Two Shoes. These, I believe, were the most innocent persons that ever existed, and I'm sure you will agree with me, they always look the most insipid. Nay, perhaps, I was wrong in what I said; perhaps it is insipidity that always looks innocent, not innocence always insipid."

"How can you refine so, Mr. Grey, when the thermometer is at 250°! Pray, tell me some more stories."

"I cannot, I'm in a refining humour: I could almost lecture to-day at the Royal Institution. You would not call these exactly *prospopeias* of innocence?" said Vivian, turning over a bundle of Stewart Newton's beauties, languishing, and lithographed. "Newton, I suppose, like Lady Wortley Montague, is of opinion that the face is not the most beautiful part of woman; at least, if I am to judge from these elaborate ankles. Now the countenance of this donna, forsooth, has a drowsy placidity worthy of the easy chair she is lolling in, and yet her ankle would not disgrace the contorted frame of the most pious Faquir."

"Well! I am an admirer of Newton's paintings."

"O! so am I. He's certainly a cleverish fellow, but rather too much among the blues; a set, of whom, I would venture to say, Miss Manvers knoweth little about."

"O, not the least! Mamma does not visit that way. What are they?"

"O, very powerful people! though *'Mamma does not visit that way.'* They live chiefly about Cumberland Gate. Their words are Ukases as far as Curzon street, and very Decretals in the general vicinity of May fair; but you shall have a further description another time. How those rooks bore! I hate staying with ancient families; you're always *caved* to death. If ever you write a novel, Miss Manvers, mind you have a rookery in it. Since Tremaine, and Washington Irving, nothing will go down without."

"O! by-the-by, Mr. Grey, who is the author of Tremaine?"

"I'll tell you who is *not*?"

"Who?"

"Mr. Ogle."

"But really, who is the author?"

"O, I'll tell you in a moment. It's either Mr. Ryder, or Mr. Spencer Percival, or Mr. Dyson, or Miss Dyson, or Mr. Bowles, or the Duke of Buckingham, or Mr. Ward, or a young officer in the Guards, or an old clergyman in the north of England, or a middle-aged barrister on the Midland circuit."

"You're really so giddy, Mr. Grey.—I wish you could get me an autograph of Mr. Washington Irving; I want it for a particular friend."

"Give me a pen and ink; I'll write you one immediately."

"O! Mr. Grey."

"There, now you've made me blot Faustus."

At this moment the room door suddenly opened and as suddenly shut.

"Who was that, Mr. Grey?"

"Mephistophiles, or Mrs. Felix Lorraine; one or the other—perhaps *both*."

"Mr. Grey!"

"What do you think of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, Miss Manvers?"

"O! I think her a very amusing woman, a very clever woman, a very—but—"

"But what?"

"But I can't exactly make her out."

"Nor I—nor I; she's a dark riddle; and although I am a very Œdipus, I confess I have not yet unravelled it. Come, there's Washington Irving's autograph for you; read it, isn't it quite in character? Shall I write any more? One of Sir Walter's, or Mr. Southey's, or Mr. Milman's, or Mr. D'Israeli's? or shall I sprawl a Byron?"

"Mr. Grey! I really cannot patronise such unprincipled conduct. You may make me one of Sir Walter's, however."

"Poor Washington, poor Washington!" said Vivian, writing; "I knew him well in London. He always slept at dinner. One day as he was dining at Mr. Hallam's, they took him, when asleep, to Lady Jersey's rout; and to see the Sieur Geoffrey, when he opened his eyes in the illuminated saloons, was really quite admirable! quite an Arabian tale."

"O, how delightful! I should have so liked to have seen him! He seems quite forgotten now in England. How came we to talk of him?"

"Forgotten—O! he spoilt his elegant talents in writing German and Italian twaddle with all the rawness of a Yankee. He ought never to have left America, at least in literature:—there was an uncontested and glorious field for him. He should have been managing director of the Hudson Bay Company; and lived all his life among the beavers."

"I think there is nothing more pleasant, Mr. Grey, than talking over the season in the country, in August."

"Nothing more agreeable. It was dull, though, last season, very dull; I think the game cannot be kept going another year. If it wasn't for the general election, we really must have a war for variety's sake. Peace gets quite a bore. Everybody you dine with commands a good *cuisine*, and gives you twelve different wines, all perfect. And as for Dr. Henderson, he is the amateur importer for the whole nation. We cannot bear this any longer; all the lights and shadows of life are lost. The only good thing I heard this year, was an ancient gentleman going up to Gunter, and asking him for 'the receipt for that white stuff,' pointing to his Roman punch. I, who am a great man for receipts, gave it her immediately:—*'One hod of mortar to one bottle of Noyau.'*"

"O, that was too bad! and did she thank you."

"Thank me! ay, truly; and pushed a card into my hand, so thick and sharp that it cut through my glove. I wore my arm in a sling for a month afterwards."

"And what was the card?"

"O you need not look so arch! The old lady was not even a faithless duenna. It was an invitation to an assembly, or something of the kind, at a *locale*, somewhere, as Theodore Hook or John Wilson Croker would say, 'between Mesopotamia and Russell Square.'"

"Do you know Mr. Croker, Mr. Grey?"

"Not in the least. I look upon Mr. Croker and myself as the two sublimest men in the United Kingdom. When we do meet, the interview will be interesting."

"Pray, Mr. Grey, is it true that all the houses in Russell-square are tenantless?"

"Quite true; the Marquess of Tavistock has given up the country in consequence. A perfect shame—is it not? Let's write it up."

"An admirable plan! but we'll take the houses first; of course we can get them at a pepper-corn rent."

"What a pity, Miss Manvers, the fashion has gone out of selling oneself to the devil."

"Good gracious, Mr. Grey!"

"On my honour, I am quite serious. It *does* appear to me to be a very great pity. What a capital plan for younger brothers! It's a kind of thing I've been trying to do all my life, and never could succeed. I began at school with toast and cheese and a pitchfork; and since then I've invoked, with all the eloquence of Goethe, the evil one in the solitude of the Hartz; but without success. I think I should make an excellent bargain, with him: of course, I don't mean that ugly vulgar savage with a fiery tale. O, no! Satan himself for me, a perfect gentleman! Or Belial—Belial would be the most delightful. He's the fine genius of the inferno, I imagine, the Beranger of Pandemonium."

"Mr. Grey, I really cannot listen to such non

sense one moment longer. What would you have if Belial were here?"

"Let us see. Now, you shall act the spirit, and I Vivian Grey. I wish we had a shorthand writer here to take down the incantation scene. We'd send it to Arnold.—*Commengons*—Spirit! I'll have a fair castle."

The lady bowed.

"I'll have a palace in town."

The lady bowed.

"I'll have lots of the best Havanna cigars."

The lady bowed.

"I'll have a fair wife.—Why, Miss Manvers, you forget to bow!"

"O, dear! Mr. Grey, I really beg your pardon!"

"Come, this is a novel way of making an offer, and, I hope, a successful one."

"Julia, my dear," cried a voice in the veranda; "Julia, my dear, I want you to walk with me."

"Say you are engaged with the marchioness," whispered Vivian, with a low but distinct voice; his eyes fixed on the table, and his lips not appearing to move.

"Mamma, I'm——"

"I want you immediately and *particularly*," Julia, cried Lady Louisa, with an earnest voice.

"I'm coming, I'm coming.—You see I *must* go, Mr. Grey."

CHAPTER XI.

THE PARK.

"CONFUSION on that old hag! Her eye looked evil on me, at the very moment! Although a pretty wife is really the destruction of a young man's prospects, still, in the present case, the niece of my friend, my *patron*—high family—perfectly unexceptionable, &c. &c. &c. Such blue eyes! upon my honour, this must be an exception to the general rule." Here a light step attracted his attention, and, on turning round, he found Mrs. Felix Lorraine at his elbow.

"O! you're *here*! Mr. Grey, acting the solitaire in the park. I want your opinion about a passage in 'Herman and Dorothea.'"

"My opinion is always at your service; but if the passage is not perfectly clear to Mrs. Felix Lorraine, it will be perfectly obscure, I am convinced, to me."

"O, dear! after all my trouble, I've forgotten my book. How mortifying! Well, I'll show it you after dinner: adieu!—and, by-the-by, Mr. Grey, as I am here, I may as well advise you not to spoil all the marquess's timber, by carving a certain person's name on his park trees. I think your plans in that quarter are admirable. I've been walking with Lady Louisa the whole morning, and you can't think how I pulled you! *Courage, cavalier*, and we shall soon be connected, not only in friendship but in blood."

The next morning at breakfast, Vivian was surprised to find that the Manvers party was suddenly about to leave the castle. All were disconsolate at their departure, for there was to be a grand entertainment at Chateau Desir that very day; but particularly Mrs. Felix Lorraine, and Mr. Vivian Grey. The sudden departure was accounted for by the arrival of "unexpected," &c. &c. There was no hope—the green post-chariot was at the door—

a feeble promise of a speedy return! Julia's eyes were filled with tears.—Vivian was springing forward to press her hand, and bear her to the carriage, when Mrs. Felix Lorraine seized his arm—vowed she was going to faint, and, ere she could recover herself, or loosen her grasp, the Manvers—were gone.

CHAPTER XII.

A MORNING VISIT.

THE gloom which the parting had diffused over all countenances, was quite dispelled when the marquess entered.

"Lady Carabas," said he, "you must prepare for crowds of visitors to-day. There are the Amer-shams, and Lord Alhambra, and Earnest Clay, and twenty other young heroes, who, duly informed that the Miss Courtowns were honouring us with their presence, are pouring in from all quarters—Isn't it so, Juliana?" gallantly asked the marquess of Miss Courtown: "but who do you think is coming besides?"

"Who, who?" exclaimed all.

"Nay, you all guess," said the peer.

"The Duke of Waterloo?" guessed Cynthia Courtown, the romp.

"Prince Hungary?" asked her sister Laura.

"Is it a gentleman?" asked Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

"No, no, you're all wrong, and all very stupid. It's Mrs. Million."

"O, how delightful," said Cynthia.

"O, how annoying!" said the marchioness.

"You need not look so agitated, my love," said the marquess; "I have written to Mrs. Million, to say that we shall be most happy to see her; but, as the castle is very full, she must not come with fifty carriages and four, as she did last year."

"And will Mrs. Million dine with us in the hall, marquess?" asked Cynthia Courtown.

"Mrs. Million will do what she likes; I only know that I shall dine in the hall, whatever happens, and whoever comes; and so, I suppose, will Miss Cynthia Courtown."

Vivian rode out alone immediately after breakfast, to cure his melancholy by a hard gallop. He left his horse to choose his own road; and, at length, he found himself plunged in a cornfield.

"Hallo, sir! beg pardon; but your horse's feet will do no good to that standing corn; for when there's plenty of roads to ride over—my maxim is keep out of enclosures."

Vivian turned round, and recognised a friend in the person of a substantial and neighbouring farmer.

Daniel Groves, or as he was commonly called, *Mr. Groves*, was one of those singular personages, whose eccentricities procure them, from all the surrounding neighbourhood, the reputation of being "quite a character." Daniel was a stout built, athletic man, with a fine florid countenance, and a few gray hairs straggling over his forehead, and beautifully contrasting with his carnationed complexion. His hazel eyes were very small, but they twinkled with perpetual action. A turned-up nose gave his countenance a somewhat conceited expression; and as he was in the habit of being *consulted* by the whole country, this expression be

came so habitual, that Mr. Groves always looked as if he himself quite agreed with the general opinion—that he was “one of the most long-headed fellows in these parts,” and “quite a character.” Daniel was not only opulent, but flourishing; but he was not above attending to all the details of his farm, though frequently admitted to the tables of the principal neighbouring gentry.

But by this time Mister Groves, with a particularly large pet pitchfork over one shoulder, and a handful of corn in the other hand, with which he occasionally nourished his ample frame in his toilsome march over the stubble, has reached the trespasser.

“What! is it you, Mr. Grey? who thought of seeing you here?”

“O Mr. Groves, I wasn’t aware I was trespassing on your corn.”

“O! no matter, no matter, friends are always welcome, that’s my maxim. But if you could keep a *little* nearer to the hedge.”

“O! I’ll come out immediately. Which way are you going? I’ve been thinking of calling on you.”

“Well now, do, sir; ride home with me and take a bit of something to eat. My mistress will be remarkable glad to see you. There’s some nice cold pickled pork—we’ve an excellent cheese in cut; and a fine barrel of ale in broach as you ever tasted.”

“Why, Groves! really I can’t turn back to-day; for I want to look in at Conyers’s, and ask him about that trout stream.”

“Well, sir, I’m sorry you’re so pushed, but I do wish you’d come in some day quite promiscuous. You said you would, for I want your opinion of some port wine I’m going to take with a friend.”

“So I will with the greatest pleasure, but I’m not at all a good judge of port, it’s too heavy for me; I’d sooner taste your ale.”

“Ah! it’s the fashion of you young squires to cry down port wine, but depend upon’t it’s the *real* stuff. We never should have beat the French, if it hadn’t been for their poor sour wines. That’s my maxim.”

“Shall you dine at the chateau to-day?”

“Why you see the marquess makes such a point of it, that I can’t well be off. And the country should be kept together sometimes.—That’s the ground I go upon.”

“O! do come—you must come—we can’t do without you; it’s nothing without you, Groves.”

“Well, really, you’re very good to say so, so I can’t say but what I will; but I hope there’ll be something to eat and drink, which I know the name of, for the last time I ’tended there, there was nothing but kickshaws; my stomach’s not used to such Frenchified messes, and I was altogether *no-hovish* by the time I got home. I said to my mistress, ‘really,’ says I, ‘I don’t know what’s the matter with me, but my stomach’s going remarkable wrong;’ so she advised me to take a good still glass of brandy and water, while she got a couple of ducks roasted for supper, for pease were just in; sure enough that’s all I wanted, for I slept well after it, and got up quite my own man again. There’s nothing like a glass of brandy and water, cold, without sugar, when you’re out of sorts. That’s my maxim.”

“And a very good maxim too, Mr. Groves. I wish I could get you one of these mornings to look at a horse for me.”

“I shall be very glad. The one you’re on seems rather weak in the fore legs: I should blister him, if he belonged to me. But as to getting you a horse, why, it’s the wrong time of the year; and I’m so remarkably pushed on that point, that I hardly know what to say, but still I always like to do a good turn for a friend, that’s my maxim, so I can’t say but what I’ll see about it. There’s Harry Mouteney now, he wants me to ride over to Woodbury, to look at a brown mare; Stapylton Toad too, he says he’s never satisfied without my opinion, though he generally takes his own in the long run. Ah! those Londoners know nothing about horseflesh. Well, any day you’ll call, I’m your man.”

“Well, thank you, thank you, I shall keep you to your promise.”

“Well sir! good morning, pleasant ride to you. You’ll keep to the roads, I’m sure, till harvest’s in: though they mayn’t be over good for a carriage, they’re very fair for a bridle. That’s the ground I stand upon.”

As Vivian was returning home, he intended to look in at a pretty cottage near the park, where lived one John Conyers, an honest husbandman, and a great friend of Vivian’s. This man had, about a fortnight ago, been of essential service to our hero, when a vicious horse, which he was endeavouring to cure of some ugly tricks, had nearly terminated his mortal career.

“Why are you crying so, my boy?” asked Vivian of a little Conyers, who was sobbing bitterly at the cottage door. He was answered only with desperate sobs. “Is your father at home?”

“O ’tis your honour!” said a decent-looking woman, who came out of the cottage, “I thought they had come back again.”

“Come back again! why, what’s the matter, dame?”

“O! your honour, we’re in sad distress; there’s been a seizure this morning, and I’m mortal fear’d the good man’s beside himself!”

“Good heavens! why didn’t you come to the castle! The marquess surdly never gave orders for the infliction of this misery.”

“O, your honour, we a’n’t his lordship’s tenants no longer; there’s been a change for Purley Mead, and now we’re Lord Mouteney’s people. John Conyers has been behindhand ever since he had the fever, but Mr. Sedgwick always gave time, but Lord Mouteney’s geman says the system’s bad, and so he’ll put an end to it; and so all’s gone, your honour, all’s gone, and I’m mortal fear’d the good man’s beside himself.”

“And who’s Lord Mouteney’s man of business?”

“Mr. Stapylton Toad,” sobbed the good dame.

“Here, boy, leave off crying, and hold my horse; quiet your hold tight, but give him rein, he’ll be quiet enough then. I’ll see honest John, dame Conyers.”

“I’m sure your honour’s very kind, but I’m mortal fear’d the good man’s beside himself, and he’s apt to do very violent things when the fit’s on him. He hasn’t been so bad since young Barton behaved so wickedly to his sister.”

“Never mind! I’ll see him; there’s nothing like a friend’s face in the hour of sorrow.”

“I wouldn’t advise your honour,” said the good dame, with a fearful expression of countenance. “It’s an awful hour when the fit’s on him; ne

knows not friend or foe, and scarcely seems to know me, your honour."

"Never mind, never mind, I'll see him."

Vivian entered the cottage—but O! the scene of desolation, who shall describe? The room was entirely stripped, literally, of every thing; there was nothing left, save the bare white-washed walls, and the red tiled flooring. The room was darkened; and seated on an old block of wood, which had been pulled out of the orchard since the bailiff had left, was John Conyers. The fire was out, but his feet were still among the ashes. His head was buried in his hands, and bowed down nearly to his knees. The eldest girl, a fine sensible child of about thirteen, was sitting with two brothers on the floor, in a corner of the room, motionless, their faces grave and still as death, but tearless. Three young children, of an age too tender to know grief, were acting unmeaning gambols near the door.

"O! pray beware, your honour," earnestly whispered the poor dame, as she entered the cottage with the visitor.

Vivian walked up with a silent step to the end of the room, where John Conyers was sitting. He remembered this little room, when he thought it the very model of the abode of an English husbandman. The neat row of plates, and the well-scoured utensils, and the fine old Dutch clock, and the ancient and amusing ballad, purchased at some neighbouring fair, or of some itinerant bibliopole, and pinned against the wall—all, all were gone!

"John Conyers!" exclaimed Vivian.

There was no answer, nor did the miserable man appear in the slightest degree to be sensible of Vivian's presence.

"My good John Conyers!"

The man raised his head from his resting-place, and turned to the spot whence the voice proceeded. There was such an unnatural fire in his eyes, that Vivian's spirit almost quailed. Any one but Vivian Grey would have fled the house. His alarm was not decreased when he perceived that the master of the cottage did not recognise him. The fearful stare was, however, short, and again the sufferer's face was hid.

The wife was advancing, but Vivian waved his hand to her to withdraw, and she accordingly fled into the background, but her fixed eye did not leave her husband for a second.

"John Conyers, it is your friend, Mr. Vivian Grey, who is here," said Vivian.

"Grey!" moaned the husbandman, "Grey, who is he?"

"Your friend, John Conyers. Do you quite forget me?" said Vivian, advancing, and with a tone which Vivian Grey could alone assume.

"I think I have seen you, and you were kind," and the face was again hid.

"And always will be kind, John Conyers. I have come to comfort you. I thought that a friend's voice would do you good in this hour of your affliction. Come, come, my good Conyers, cheer up, my man!" and Vivian dared to touch him. His hand was not repulsed. "Do you remember what good service you did me when I rode white-footed Moll? O! John Conyers, when the mare was plunging on the hill-top, I was much worse off than you are now; and yet, you see, a friend came and saved me. You must not give way so, my good fellow. After all, a little management will set every thing right," and he took

the husbandman's sturdy hand. John Conyers looked wildly round, but the unnatural fire that had glistened in his eyes was extinguished.

"I do remember you," he faintly cried; "I do remember you. You were always very kind."

"And always will be, I repeat, John Conyers; at least to friends like you. Come, come, there's a man, cheer up and look about you, and let the sun-beams enter your cottage!" and Vivian beckoned to the wife to open the closed shutter.

Conyers stared around him, but his eye rested only on bare walls, and the big tear coursed down his hardy cheek.

"Nay, never mind, man!" said Vivian, "we'll soon have chairs and tables again. And as for the rent, think no more about that at present."

The husbandman looked up to heaven, and then burst into the most violent hysterics. Vivian could scarcely hold down the powerful and convulsed frame of Conyers on his rugged seat; but the wife advanced from the back of the room, and her husband's head rested against her bosom. Vivian held his honest hand, and the eldest girl rose unbidden from her silent sorrow, and clung to her father's knee.

"The fit is over," whispered his wife.

"There, there, there's a man, all is now well;" and Vivian left him resting on his wife's bosom.

"Here, you curly-headed rascal, scamper down to the village immediately, and bring up a basket of something to eat; and tell Morgan Price that Mr. Grey says he's to send up a couple of beds, and some chairs here immediately, and some plates and dishes, and every thing else, and don't forget a bottle of wine!" so saying, Vivian flung the urchin a sovereign.

"And now, dame Conyers, for heaven's sake! light the fire. As for the rent, John Conyers, do not waste this trifle on *that*," whispered Vivian, slipping his purse into his hand, "for I'll see Stappylton Toad, and get time. Why, woman, you'll never strike a light if your tears drop so fast into the tinder-box. Here give it me. You're not fit for work to-day. And how's the trout in Ravelly Mead, John, this hot weather? You know you never kept your promise with me. O, you're a sad fellow! There, there's a spark! I wonder why old Toad didn't take the tinder-box. It's a very valuable piece of property, at least, to us. Run and get me some wood, that's a good boy. And so white-footed Moll's past all recovery? Well, she was a pretty creature! There, that will do famously," said Vivian, fanning the flames with his hat. "See, it mounts well! And now, God bless you all! for I'm an hour too late, and must scamper for my very life."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARRIVAL.

MRS. MILLION arrived and kept her promise; only three carriages and four! Out of the first descended the mighty lady herself, with some noble friends, who formed the most distinguished part of her suite: out of the second came her physician, Dr. Sly; her toad-eater, Miss Gusset; her secretary, and her page. The third carriage bore her groom of the chambers, and three female attendants

There were only two men servants to each equipage; nothing could be more moderate, or, as Miss Gusset said, "in better taste."

Mrs. Million, after having granted the marquess a private interview in her private apartments, signified her imperial intention of dining in public, which, as she had arrived late, she trusted she might do in her travelling dress. The marquess *kaloed* like a first-rate mandarin, and vowed "that her will was his conduct."

The whole suite of apartments was thrown open, and was crowded with guests. Mrs. Million entered; she was leaning on the marquess's arm, and in a travelling dress, namely, a crimson silk pelisse, hat and feathers, with diamond earrings, and a rope of gold around her neck. A train of about twelve persons, consisting of her noble fellow-travellers, toad-eaters, physicians, secretaries, &c. &c. &c., followed. The entree of his majesty could not have created a greater sensation, than did that of Mrs. Million. All fell back. Gartered peers, and starred ambassadors, and baronets with titles older than the creation, and squires, to the antiquity of whose blood chaos was a novelty; all retreated, with eyes that scarcely dared to leave the ground—even Sir Plantagenet Pure, whose family had refused a peerage regularly every century, now, for the first time in his life, seemed *cowed*, and in an awkward retreat to make way for the approaching presence, got entangled with the Mameluke boots of my Lord Alhambra.

At last a sofa was gained, and the great lady was seated; and the sensation having somewhat subsided, conversation was resumed; and the mighty Mrs. Million was not slightly abused, particularly by those who had bowed lowest at her entree; and now the Marquess of Carabas, as was wittingly observed by Mr. Septimus Sessions, a pert young barrister, "went the circuit," that is to say, made the grand tour of the suite of apartments, making remarks to every one of his guests, and keeping up his influence in the country.

"Ah, my Lord Alhambra! this is too kind: and how is your excellent father, and my good friend? Sir Plantagenet, yours most sincerely; we shall have no difficulty about that right of common.—Mr. Leverton, I hope you find the new plough work well—your son, sir, will do the county honour.—Sir Godfrey, I saw Barton upon that point, as I promised.—Lady Julia, I'm rejoiced to see you at Chateau Desir, more blooming than ever!—Good Mr. Stapylton Toad, so that little change was effected!—My Lord Devildrain, this is a pleasure indeed!"

"Why, Ernest Clay," said Mr. Buckhurst Stanhope, "I thought Alhambra wore a turban—I'm quite disappointed."

"Not in the country, Stanhope; here he only sits cross-legged on an atomun, and carves his venison with an ataghan."

"Well, I'm glad he doesn't wear a turban—that would be *bad taste*, I think," said fool Stanhope. "Have you read his poem?"

"A little. He sent me a copy, and as I'm in the habit of lighting my cigar or so occasionally with a leaf, why I can't help occasionally seeing a line—it seems quite first-rate."

"Indeed!" said fool Stanhope, "I must get it."

"My dear Puff! I'm quite glad to find you here," said Mr. Cayenne, a celebrated reviewer, to Mr. Parthenopex Puff, a small literateur and

smaller wit. "Have you seen Middle Ages lately?"

"Not very lately," drawled Mr. Parthenopex. "I breakfasted with him before I left town, and met a professor Bopp there, a very interesting man, and principal of the celebrated university of Heli-goland, the model of the London."

"Ah! indeed! talking of the London, is Foaming Fudge to come in for Westmoreland?"

"Doubtless! O! he's a prodigious fellow! What do you think Booby says? he says that Foaming Fudge can do more than any man in Great Britain: that he had one day to plead in the king's bench, spout at a tavern, speak in the house, and fight a duel—and that he found time for every thing but the *last*."

"Excellent," laughed Mr. Cayenne.

Mr. Parthenopex Puff was reputed in a certain set, a sayer of good things, but he was a modest wit, and generally fathered his *bon mots* on his valet Booby, his monkey, or his parrot.

"I saw you in the last number," said Cayenne.

"From the quotations from your own works, I imagine the review of your own book was by yourself?"

"What do you think Booby said?"

"Mr. Puff, allow me to introduce you to Lord Alhambra," said Ernest Clay, by which means Mr. Puff's servant's last good thing was lost.

"Mr. Clay, are you an archer?" asked Cynthia Courtown.

"No, fair Dian, but I can act Endymion."

"I don't know what you mean—go away."

"Aubrey Vere, welcome to—shire. Have you seen Prima Donna?"

"No, is he here! How did you like his last song in the Age!"

"His last song! Pooh! he only supplies the scandal."

"Groves," said Sir Hanway Etherington, "have you seen the newspaper this morning? Baron Crupper has tried fifteen men for horsestealing at York, and acquitted every one."

"Well then, Sir Hanway, I think his lordship's remarkably wrong: for when a man gets a horse to suit him, if he loses it, 'tisn't so easy to suit himself again. That's the ground I stand upon."

"Well, there's a good deal in what you say, Groves. By-the-by, have you let that nice house which your father used to live in?"

"No, Sir Hanway, no! I keep it in case any thing should happen to Tom, for he's getting a very likely young man, and he'll be fittish to marry soon. That's the ground I stand upon."

All this time the Marquess of Carabas had wanted Vivian Grey twenty times, but that gentleman had not appeared. The important moment arrived, and his lordship offered his arm to Mrs. Million, who, as the Gotha Almanack says, "takes precedence of all archduchesses, grandduchesses, duchesses, princesses, landgravines, margravines, palsgravines, &c. &c. &c."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE HALL

In their passage to the hall, the marquess and Mrs. Million met Vivian Grey, booted and spurred, and covered with mud.

"O!—Mrs. Million—Mr. Vivian Grey. How's that, my dear fellow? you'll be too late."

"Immense honour!" said Vivian, bowing to the ground to the lady. "O! my lord, I was late, and made a short cut over Fernley Bog. It has proved a very Moscow expedition. However, I'm keeping you. I shall be in time for the guava and liqueurs, and you know that's the only refreshment I ever take."

"Who is that, marquess?" asked Mrs. Million.

"That is Mr. Vivian Grey, the most monstrous clever young man, and nicest fellow I know."

"He does indeed seem a very nice young man," said Mrs. Million; for she rather admired Vivian's precocious taste for liqueurs.

I wish some steam process could be invented for arranging guests when they are above five hundred. In the present instance all went wrong when they entered the hall; but, at last, the arrangements, which, by-the-by, were of the simplest nature, were comprehended, and the guests were seated. There were three tables, each stretching down the hall; the dais was occupied by a military band. The number of guests, the contrast between the antique chamber and the modern costumes, the music, the various liveried menials, all combined to produce a *tout ensemble*, which at the same time was very striking, and "*in remarkable good taste.*"

In process of time Mr. Vivian Grey made his entree. There were a few vacant seats at the bottom of the table, "luckily for him," as kindly remarked Mr. Grumbleton. To the astonishment and indignation, however, of this worthy squire, the late comer passed by the unoccupied position, and proceeded onward with the most undaunted coolness, until he came to about the middle of the middle table, and which was nearly the best situation in the hall.

"Beautiful Cynthia," said Vivian Grey, softly and sweetly, whispering in Miss Courtown's ear, "I'm sure you will give up your place to me; you have nerve enough, you know, for *any thing*, and would no more care for standing *out*, than I for sitting *in*."

There's nothing like giving a romp credit for a little boldness. To keep up her character she will outherod Herod.

"O! Grey, is it you? certainly, you shall have my place immediately—but I'm not sure that we cannot make room for you. Dormer Stanhope, room must be made for Grey, or I shall leave the table immediately;—you men!" said the hoyden, turning round to a set of surrounding servants, "push this form down, and put a chair between." The men obeyed. All who sat lower in the table on Miss Cynthia Courtown's side, than that lady, were suddenly propelled downwards about the distance of two feet. Dr. Sly, who was flourishing an immense carving-knife and fork preparatory to dissecting a very gorgeous haunch, had these fearful instruments suddenly precipitated into a trifle, from whose sugared trellise-work, he found great difficulty in extricating them; while Miss Gusset, who was on the point of cooling herself with some exquisite iced jelly, found her frigid portion as suddenly transformed into a plate of peculiarly ardent curry, the property, but a moment before, of old Colonel Rangoon. Every thing, however, receives a civil reception from a toad-eater, so Miss Gusset burnt herself to death by

devouring a composition which would have reduced any one to ashes who had not fought against Bandoolah.

"Now, that's what I call a very sensible arrangement;—what could go off better?" said Vivian.

"You may think so, sir," said Mr. Boreall, a sharp-nosed and conceited-looking man, who, having got among a set whom he didn't the least understand, was determined to take up Dr. Sly's quarrel, merely for the sake of conversation. "You, I say, sir, may think it so, but I rather imagine that the ladies and gentlemen lower down, can hardly think it a *very sensible arrangement*;" and here Boreall looked as if he had done his duty, in giving a young man a proper reproof.

Vivian glanced a look, which would have been annihilation to any one not a freeholder of five hundred acres. "I had reckoned upon two deaths, sir, when I entered the hall, and finding, as I do, that the whole business has apparently gone off without any fatal accident, why I think the circumstances bear me out in my expression."

Mr. Boreall was one of those unfortunate men who always take things *au pied de lettre*: he consequently looked amazed, and exclaimed, "Two deaths, sir?"

"Yes, sir, two deaths; I reckoned, of course, on some corpulent parent being crushed to death in the scuffle, and then I should have had to shoot his son through the head for his filial satisfaction. Dormer Stanhope, I never thanked you for exerting yourself; send me that fricandeau you have just helped yourself to."

Dormer, who was, as Vivian well knew, something of an epicure, looked rather annoyed, but by this time he was accustomed to Vivian Grey, and sent him the portion he had intended for himself—could epicure do more?

"Who are we among, bright Cynthia?" asked Vivian.

"O! an odd set," said the lady, taking dignity; "but you know we can be *exclusive*."

"*Exclusive!* pooh! trash—talk to everybody; it looks as if you were going to stand for the county. Have we any of the Millionaires near us?"

"The doctor and Toadey are lower down."

"Where's Mrs. Felix Lorraine?"

"At the opposite table, with Ernest Clay."

"O! there's Alhambra next to Dormer Stanhope. Lord Alhambra, I'm quite rejoiced to see you."

"Ah! Mr. Grey—I'm quite rejoiced to see you. How's your father?"

"Extremely well—he's at Paris—I heard from him yesterday. Do you ever see the Weimar Literary Gazette, my lord?"

"No;—why?"

"There's a most admirable review of your poem in the last number I've received."

The young nobleman looked agitated. "I think, by the style," continued Vivian, "that it's by Goethe. It is really quite delightful to see the oldest poet in Europe dilating on the brilliancy of a new star in the poetical horizon."

This was uttered with a perfectly grave voice, and now the young nobleman blushed. "Who is *Geuter*?" asked Mr. Boreall, who possessed such a thirst for knowledge, that he never allowed an opportunity to escape him of displaying his ignorance.

"A celebrated German writer," lisped the modest Miss Macdonald, who was, of course, *beginning German*.

"I never heard his name," persevered the indefatigable Boreall;—"how do you spell it?"

"GOETHE," replied modestly.

"O! *Goty!*" exclaimed the querist—"I know him well: he wrote the Sorrows of Werter."

"Did he indeed, sir?" asked Vivian, with the most innocent and inquiring face.

"O! don't you know that?" said Boreall;—"and poor stuff it is!" and here the worthy and vulgar landholder laughed loud and long.

"Lord Alhambra! I'll take a glass of Johannisberg with you, if the marquess's wines are in the state they *should* be—

! 'The Crescent warriors sipp'd their sherbet spiced,
For Christian men the various wines were iced.'

I always think that those are the two most admirable lines in your lordship's poem."

His lordship did not exactly remember them: it would have been a wonder if he had:—but he thought Vivian Grey the most delightful fellow he ever met, and determined to ask him to Helicon Castle, for the Christmas holidays.

"Flat! flat!" said Vivian, as he dwelt upon the flavour of the Rhine's glory. "Not exactly from the favourite bin of Prince Metternich, I think. By-the-by, Dormer Stanhope, you've a taste that way; I'll tell you two secrets, which never forget: decant your Johannisberg, and ice your Maraschino. Ay, don't stare, my dear gastronome, but do it."

"O, Vivian Grey, you little love! why didn't you come and speak to me?" exclaimed a lady who was sitting at the side opposite Vivian, but much higher in the table.

"Ah! adorable Lady Julia! and so you were *done* on the gray fly!"

"*Done!*" said the sporting beauty with pouting lips;—"but it's a long story, and I'll tell it you another time."

"Ah! do. How's Sir Peter?"

"O! he's had a fit or two since you saw him last."

"Poor old gentleman! let's drink his health;" and the baronet's recovery was qualified by the lady and Vivian with a very piquant expression of countenance.

"Do you know Lady Julia Knighton?" asked Vivian of his neighbour. Before he could receive an answer, he was again rattling on:—"This hall is bearable to dine in; but I once breakfasted here, and I never shall forget the ludicrous effect produced by the sun through the oriel window. Such complexions! Every one looked like a prize-fighter ten days after a battle. After all, painted glass is a bore. I wish the marquess would have it knocked out, and have plated."

"Knock out the painted glass!" said Mr. Boreall; "well, I must confess I cannot agree with you."

"I should have been extremely surprised if you could. If you don't insult that man, Miss Courtown, in ten minutes I shall be no more; I've already a nervous fever."

"May I have the honour of taking a glass of champagne with you, Mr. Grey?" said Boreall.

"*Mr. Grey*, indeed!" muttered Vivian: "sir, I never drink any thing but brandy."

"Allow me to give *you* some champagne," resumed Boreall, as he attacked the modest Miss Macdonald; "champagne, you know," continued he, with a smile of agonizing courtesy, "is quite the ladies' wine."

"Cynthia Courtown," whispered Vivian with a sepulchral voice, "'tis all over with me—I've been thinking what could come next. This is too much—I'm already dead—have Boreall arrested; the chain of circumstantial evidence is very strong."

"Baker!" said Vivian, turning to a servant, "Go, and inquire if Mr. Stapyhton Toad dines at the castle to-day."

A flourish of trumpets announced the rise of the Marchioness of Carabas, and in a few minutes the most ornamental portion of the guests had disappeared. The gentlemen made a general "move up," and Vivian found himself opposite his friend, Mr. Hargrave.

"Ah! Mr. Hargrave, how d'ye do? What do you think of the secretary's state paper?"

"A magnificent composition, and quite unanswerable. I was just speaking of it to my friend here, Mr. Metternich Scribe. Allow me to introduce you to—Mr. Metternich Scribe."

"Mr. Metternich Scribe—Mr. Vivian Grey!" and here Mr. Hargrave introduced Vivian to an effeminate-looking, perfumed young man, with a handsome, unmeaning face, and very white hands. In short, as dapper a little diplomatist as ever tattered about the Congress of Verona, smirked at lady Almack's supper after the opera, or vowed "that Richmond Terrace was a most convenient situation for official men."

"We have had it with us many weeks, before the public received it," said the future under-secretary, with a look at once condescending and excited.

"Have you?" said Vivian: "well, it does your office credit. It's a singular thing, that Canning and Croker are the only official men who can write grammar."

The dismayed young gentleman of the Foreign Office was about to mince a repartee, when Vivian left his seat, for he had a great deal of business to transact. "Mr. Leverton," said he, accosting a flourishing grazier, "I have received a letter from my friend, M. de Noc. He is desirous of purchasing some Leicestershires for his estate in Burgundy. Pray, may I take the liberty of introducing his agent to you?"

Mr. Leverton was delighted.

"I also want to see you about some other little business. Let me see, what was it! Never mind, I'll take my wine here, if you can make room for me; I shall remember it, I dare say, soon. O! by-the-by—ah! that was it. Stapyhton Toad—Mr. Stapyhton Toad; I want to know all about Mr. Stapyhton Toad—I dare say you can tell me. A friend of mine intends to consult him on a little parliamentary business, and he wishes to know something about him before he calls."

As I am a great lover of conciseness, I shall *resumer*,* for the benefit of the reader, the information of Mr. Leverton.

*I have ventured on using this word, in spite of the plaintive remonstrances contained in a pretty little article in the last number of the Quarterly Review. I deprecate equally with the reviewer, "the *hoige podge* of languages," now so much in vogue; and although I am not quite prepared to say that I consider this practice "as nauseous as wearing perfumes," I must exceedingly regret that such

Stapylton Toad had not the honour of being acquainted with his father's name, but as the son found himself, at an early age, apprenticed to a solicitor of eminence, he was of opinion that his parent must have been respectable. *Respectable!* mysterious word! Stapylton was a very diligent and faithful clerk, but was not as fortunate in his apprenticeship as the celebrated Whittington, for his master had no daughter and many sons; in consequence of which Stapylton, not being able to become his master's partner, became his master's rival.

On the door of one of the shabbiest houses in Jermyn-street, the name of Mr. Stapylton Toad for a long time figured, magnificently engraved on a broad brass plate. There was nothing however, otherwise, in the appearance of the establishment, which indicated that Mr. Toad's progress was very rapid, or his professional career extraordinarily prosperous. In an outward office one solitary clerk was seen, oftener stirring his office fire than wasting his master's ink; and Mr. Toad was known by his brother attorneys, as a gentleman who was not recorded in the courts as ever having conducted a single cause. In a few years, however, a story was added to the Jermyn-street abode, which, new pointed, and new painted, began to assume a most mansion-like appearance. The house-door was also thrown open, for the solitary clerk no longer found time to answer the often agitated bell; and the eyes of the entering client were now saluted by a gorgeous green baize office door; the imposing appearance of which was only equalled by Mr. Toad's new private portal, splendored with a brass knocker and patent varnish. And now his brother attorneys began to wonder, "How Toad got on! and who Toad's clients were!"

A few more years rolled over, and Mr. Toad was seen riding in the park at a most classical hour, attended by a groom in a most classical livery. And now "the profession" wondered still more, and significant looks were interchanged by "the respectable houses;" and flourishing practitioners in the city shrugged up their shoulders, and talked mysteriously of "money business," and "some odd work in annuities." In spite, however, of the charitable surmises of his brother lawyers, it must be confessed that nothing of even an *equivocal* nature ever transpired against the character of the flourishing Mr. Toad, who, to complete the mortification of his less successful rivals, married, and at the same time moved from Jermyn-street to Cavendish-square. The new residence of Mr. Toad had previously been the mansion of a noble client, and one whom, as the world said, Mr. Toad "had got out of difficulties." This significant phrase will probably throw some light upon the nature of the mysterious business of our prosperous practitioner. Noble lords who have been in difficulties, will not much wonder at the prosperity of those who get them out.

About this time Mr. Toad became acquainted with Lord Mounteney, a nobleman in great distress, with fifty thousand per annum. His lordship "really did not know how he got *involved*; he never gamed, he was not married, and his con-

sequent expenses had never been unreasonable; he was not extraordinarily negligent—quite the reverse, was something of a man of business, remembered once looking over his accounts; and yet in spite of this regular and correct career, found himself quite *involved*, and must leave England."

The arrangement of the *Mounteney property* was the *coup finale* of Mr. Stapylton Toad's professional celebrity. His lordship was *not* under the necessity of quitting England; and found himself, in the course of five years, in the receipt of a clear rental of five-and-twenty thousand per annum. His lordship was in raptures; and Stapylton Toad purchased an elegant villa in Surrey, and became a member of parliament. Goodburn Park, such was the name of Mr. Toad's country residence, in spite of its double lodges and patent park paling, was not, to Mr. Toad, a very expensive purchase; for he "took it off the hands" of a distressed client, who wanted an immediate supply, "merely to convenience him," and, consequently, became the purchaser at about half its real value. "Attorneys," as Bustle the auctioneer says, "have *such opportunities!*"

Mr. Toad's career in the House was as correct as his conduct out of it. After ten years' regular attendance, the boldest conjecturer would not have dared to define his political principles. It was a rule with Stapylton Toad, *never to commit himself*. Once, indeed, he wrote an able pamphlet on the Corn Laws, which excited the dire indignation of that egregious body, the Political Economy Club. But Stapylton cared little for their subtle confutations, and their loudly expressed contempt. He had obliged the country gentlemen of England, and ensured the return, at the next election, of Lord Mounteney's brother for the county. At this general election, also, Stapylton Toad's purpose in entering the House became rather more manifest; for it was found, to the surprise of the whole country, that there was scarcely a place in England—county, city, town or borough—in which Mr. Stapylton Toad did not possess some influence. In short, it was discovered that Mr. Toad had "a first-rate parliamentary business;" that nothing could be done without his co-operation, and every thing with it. In spite of his prosperity, Stapylton had the good sense never to retire from business, and even to refuse a baronetcy, on condition, however, that it should be offered to his son.

Stapylton, like the rest of mankind, had his weak points. The late Marquess of Almack's was wont to manage him very happily, and Toad was always introducing that minister's opinion of his importance. "My time is quite at your service, general, although the poor dear marquess used to say, 'Mr. Stapylton Toad, *your time is mine*.' He knew the business I had to get through!" The family portraits, also, in most ostentatious frames, now adorned the dining-room of his London mansion; and it was amusing to hear the worthy M. P. dilate upon his likeness to his respected father.

"You see, my lord," Stapylton would say, pointing to a dark, dingy picture of a gentleman in a court dress, "you see, my lord, it is not a very good light, and it certainly is a very dark picture—by Hudson; all Hudson's pictures were dark. But if I were six inches taller, and could hold the light just *there*, I think your lordship would be astonished at the resemblance; but it's a dark picture, certainly it's dark—all Hudson's pictures were."

an authority as the Quarterly Review, and so strenuous an advocate for "keeping our pure well of English undefiled," as this Quarterly Reviewer, should interlard his sentences with the tritest Latin quotations, with a classical enthusiasm worthy of a very young schoolboy, or a very ancient schoolmaster.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

THE cavaliers have left the ancient hall, and the old pictures frown only upon empty tables. The marquess immediately gained a seat by Mrs. Million, and was soon engrossed in deep converse with that illustrious lady. In one room, the most eminent and exclusive, headed by Mrs. Felix Lorraine, were now winding through the soothing mazes of a slow waltz, and now whirling, with all the rapidity of eastern dervishes, to true double Wien time. In another saloon, the tedious tactics of quadrilles commanded the exertions of less civilized beings; here Liberal Snake, the celebrated political economist, was lecturing to a knot of terrified country gentlemen, and there a celebrated Italian improvisatore poured forth to an ignorant and admiring audience, all the dulness of his inspiration. Vivian Grey was holding an earnest conversation in one of the recesses with Mr. Stapylton Toad. He had already charmed that worthy, by the deep interest which he took in every thing relating to elections and the House of Commons, and now they were hard to work on the corn laws. Although they agreed upon the main points, and Vivian's ideas upon this important subject had, of course, been adopted after studying with intensesness Mr. Toad's "most luminous and convincing pamphlet," still there were a few minor points, on which Vivian "was obliged to confess," that he did not exactly see his way. Mr. Toad was astonished, but argumentative, and of course, in due time, had made a convert of his companion; "a young man," as he afterwards remarked to Lord Mounteney, "in whom he knew not which most to admire, the soundness of his own views, or the candour with which he treated those of others." If you wish to win a man's heart, allow him to confute you.

"I think, Mr. Grey, you must admit, that that definition of *labour* is the correct one!" said Mr. Toad, looking earnestly in Vivian's face, his finger just presuming to feel a button.

"That exertion of mind or body, which is not the involuntary effect of the influence of natural sensations," slowly repeated Vivian, as if his whole soul was concentrated in each monosyllable—"Y-e-s, Mr. Toad, I do admit it."

"Then, my dear sir, the rest follows of course," triumphantly exclaimed the member. "Don't you see it?"

"Although I admit the correctness of your definition, Mr. Toad, I am not free to confess, that I am ex-act-ly convinced of the soundness of your conclusion," said Vivian, in a very musing mood.

"But, my dear sir, I am surprised that you don't see, that—"

"Stop, Mr. Toad," eagerly exclaimed Vivian, "I see my error. I misconceived your meaning; you *are* right, sir, your definition is correct."

"I was confident that I should convince you, Mr. Grey."

"This conversation, I assure you, Mr. Toad, has been to me a peculiarly satisfactory one. Indeed, sir, I have long wished to have the honour of making your acquaintance. When but a boy, I remember at my father's table, the late Marquess of Almacks—"

"Yes, Mr. Grey."

"One of the ablest men, Mr. Toad, after all, that this country ever produced."

"O, poor, dear man!"

"I remember him observing to a friend of mine, who was at that time desirous of getting into the House,—'Hargrave,' said his lordship, 'if you want any information upon points of *practical politics*'—that was his phrase; you remember, Mr. Toad, that his lordship was peculiar in his phrases?"

"O! yes, poor dear man; but you were observing, Mr. Grey—"

"Ay, ay! 'If you want any information,' said his lordship, 'on such points, there is *only one* man in the kingdom whom you should consult, and he's one of the soundest heads I know, and that's Stapylton Toad, the member for Mounteney; you know you were in for Mounteney then, Mr. Toad."

"I was, I was, and accepted the Chilterns to make room for Augustus Clay, Ernest Clay's brother; who was so involved, that the only way to keep him out of the house of correction, was to get him into the House of Commons. But the marquess said so, eh!"

"Ay, and much more, which I scarcely can remember;" and then followed a long dissertation on the character of the noble statesman, and his views as to the agricultural interest; and the importance of the agricultural interest; and then a delicate hint was thrown out, as to "how delightful it would be to write a pamphlet together," on this mighty agricultural interest, and then came an *éloge* on the character of country gentlemen, and English yeomen, and the importance of keeping up the old English spirit in the peasantry, &c., &c.; and then, when Vivian had lead Mr. Toad to deliver a most splendid and patriotic oration on this point, he "just remembered, (quite *appropos* to the sentiments which Mr. Toad had just delivered, and which he did not hesitate to say, 'did equal honour to his head and heart,') that there was a little point which, if it was not trespassing too much on Mr. Toad's attention, he would just submit to him;" and then he mentioned poor John Conyer's case, although "he felt convinced from Mr. Toad's well known benevolent character, that it was quite unnecessary for him to do so, as he felt assured that it would be remedied immediately if it fell under his cognizance, but then Mr. Toad had really so much business to transact, that perhaps these light matters might occasionally not be submitted to him," &c., &c.

What could Stapylton Toad do but, after a little amiable grumbling about "bad system and bad precedent," promise every thing that Vivian Grey required.

"Mr. Vivian Grey," said Mrs. Felix Lorraine, "I cannot understand why you've been talking to Mr. Toad so long; will you waltz?"

Before Vivian could answer, a tittering, so audible that, considering the rank of the parties, it might almost be termed a loud shout, burst forth from the whole room. Cynthia Courtown had stolen behind Lord Alhambra, as he was sitting on an ottoman *à la Turque*, and had folded a cachemere shawl round his head with a most oriental tie. His lordship, who, notwithstanding his eccentricities, was really a most amiable man, bore his blushing honours with a gracious dignity, worthy of a descendant of the Abencerrages. The

sensation which this incident occasioned, favoured Vivian's escape from Mrs. Felix, for he had not left Mr. Stappylton Toad with any intention of waltzing.

But he had hardly escaped from the waltzers, ere he found himself in danger of being involved in a much more laborious duty: for now he stumbled on the political economist, and he was earnestly requested by the contending theorists, to assume the office of moderator. Emboldened by his success, Liberal Snake had had the hardihood to attack a personage of whose character he was not utterly ignorant, but on whom he was extremely desirous of "making an impression." This important person was Sir Christopher Mowbray, who, upon the lecturer presuming to inform him "what *rent* was," damned himself if he didn't know what *rent* was a damned deal better than any damnationed French smuggler. I don't wish to be coarse, but Sir Christopher is a great man, and the sayings of great men, particularly when they are representative of the sentiment of a species, should not pass unrecorded.

Sir Christopher Mowbray is member for the county of —shire; and member for the county he intends to be next election, although he is in his seventy-ninth year, for he can still follow a fox, with as pluck a heart, and with as stout a voice as any squire in Christendom. Sir Christopher, it must be confessed, is rather peculiar in his ideas. His grandson, Peregrine Mowbray, who is as pert a genius as the applause of a common-room ever yet spoiled, and as sublime an orator as the cheerings of the union even yet inspired, says, "the baronet is not up to the nineteenth century;" and perhaps this very significant phrase will give the reader a more significant idea of Sir Christopher Mowbray, than a character as long and as laboured as the most perfect of my Lord Clarendon's. The truth is, the good baronet had no idea of "liberal principles," or any thing else of that school. His most peculiar characteristic, is a singular habit which he has got of styling political economists, *French Smugglers*. Nobody has ever yet succeeded in extracting a reason from him for this singular appellation, and even if you angle with the most exquisite skill for the desired definition, Sir Christopher immediately salutes you with a volley of oaths, and damns French wines, Bible societies, and Mr. Huskisson. Sir Christopher for half a century has supported in the senate, with equal sedulousness and silence, the constitution and the corn laws; he is perfectly aware of the "present perilous state of the country," and watches with great interest all "the plans and plots" of this enlightened age. The only thing which he does not exactly comprehend, is the London university. This affair really puzzles the worthy gentleman, who could as easily fancy a county member not being a freeholder, as a university not being at Oxford or Cambridge. Indeed, to this hour the old gentleman believes that the whole business is "a damnationed hoax;" and if you tell him, that, far from the plan partaking of the visionary nature he conceives, there are actually four acres of very valuable land purchased near White Conduit House for the erection; and that there is little apprehension, that in the course of a century, the wooden poles which are now stuck about the ground, will be fair and flourishing, as

the most leafy bowers of New College Gardens, the old gentleman looks up to heaven, as if determined not to be taken in, and leaning back in his chair, sends forth a sceptical and smiling "No! no! no! that won't do."

Vivian extricated himself with as much grace as possible from the toils of the economist, and indeed, like a skilful general, turned this little rencounter to account, in accomplishing the very end, for the attainment of which he had declined waltzing with Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

"My lord," said Vivian, addressing the marquess, who was still by the side of Mrs. Million, "I am going to commit a most ungallant act; but you great men must pay a tax for your dignity. I am going to disturb you. You are wanted by half the county! What could possibly induce you ever to allow a political economist to enter Chateau Desir? There are, at least, three baronets and four squires in despair, writhing under the tortures of Liberal Snake. They have deputed me to request your assistance, to save them from being defeated in the presence of half their tenantry; and I think, my lord," said Vivian, with a very serious voice, "if you could possibly contrive to interfere, it would be desirable. That lecturing knave never knows when to stop, and he's actually insulting men before whom, after all, he ought not dare to open his lips. I see that your lordship is naturally not very much inclined to quit your present occupation, in order to act moderator to a set of political brawlers; but come, you shall not be quite sacrificed to the county—I will give up the waltz in which I was engaged, and keep your seat until your return."

The marquess, who was always "keeping up county influence," was very much shocked at the obstreperous conduct of Liberal Snake. Indeed he had viewed the arrival of this worthy with no smiling countenance, but what could he say, as he came in the suite of Lord Pert, who was writing, with the lecturer's assistance, a pretty little pamphlet on the currency; apologizing to Mrs. Million, and promising to return as soon as possible, and lead her to the music room, the marquess retired with the determination of annihilating one of the stoutest members of the Political Economy Club.

Vivian began by apologizing to Mrs. Million for disturbing her progress to the hall, by his sudden arrival before dinner; and then for a quarter of an hour was poured forth the usual quantity of piquant anecdotes, and insidious compliments. Mrs. Million found Vivian's conversation no disagreeable relief to the pompous prosiness of the late *attaché*, and, although no brilliant star dangled at his breast, she could not refrain from feeling extremely pleased.

And now, having succeeded in commanding Mrs. Million's attention by that general art of pleasing, which was for all the world, and which was, of course, formed upon his general experience of human nature,—Vivian began to make his advances to Mrs. Million's feelings, by a particular art of pleasing; that is, an art which was for the particular person alone whom he was at any time addressing, and which was founded on his particular knowledge of that person's character.

"How beautiful the old hall looked to-day! It is a scene which can only be met with in ancient families."

"Ah! there is nothing like old families!" remarked Mrs. Million, with all the awkward feelings of a *nouveau riche*.

"Do you think so?" said Vivian, "I once thought so myself, but I confess that my opinion is greatly changed.—After all, what is noble blood? My eye is now resting on a crowd of honourables, and yet being among them, do we treat them in a manner differing in any way from that which we should employ to any individuals of a lower *caste*, who were equally uninteresting?"

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Million.

"The height of the ambition of the less exalted ranks is to be *noble*, because they conceive to be noble implies to be superior; associating in their minds, as they always do, a pre-eminence over their equals. But, to be noble, among nobles, where is the pre-eminence?"

"Where, indeed?" said Mrs. Million; and she thought of herself, sitting the most considerable personage in this grand castle, and yet with sufficiently base blood flowing in her veins.

"And thus, in the highest circles," continued Vivian, "a man is of course not valued because he is a marquis, or a duke, but because he is a great warrior, or a great statesman, or very fashionable, or very witty. In all classes but the highest, a peer, however unbefriended by nature or by fortune, becomes a man of a certain rate of consequence, but to be a person of consequence in the highest class, requires something else except high blood."

"I quite agree with you in your sentiments, Mr. Grey. Now what character, or what situation in life, would you choose, if you had the power of making your choice?"

"That is really a most metaphysical question. As is the custom of all young men, I have sometimes, in my reveries, imagined what I conceived to be a lot of pure happiness;—and yet Mrs. Million will perhaps be astonished that I was—neither to be nobly born, nor to acquire nobility, that I was not to be a literary man, nor a warrior, nor indeed any profession, nor a merchant, nor even a professional dandy."

"O! love in a cottage, I suppose," interrupted Mrs. Million.

"Neither love in a cottage, nor science in a cell."

"O! pray tell me what it is."

"What it is? O! Lord Mayor of London, I suppose; that is the only situation which answers to my oracular description."

"O! then you've been joking all this time."

"O! no; not at all. Come, then, let us imagine this perfect lot. In the first place, I would be born in the middling classes of society, or even lower, because I would wish my character to be impartially developed. I would be born to no hereditary prejudices, nor hereditary passions. My course in life should not be carved out by the example of a grandfather, nor my ideas modelled, to a preconceived system of family perfection. Do you like my first principles, Mrs. Million?"

"I must hear every thing before I give an opinion."

"When, therefore, my mind was formed, I would wish to become the proprietor of a princely fortune."

"Yes!" eagerly exclaimed Mrs. Million.

"And now would come the moral singularity of

my fate. If I had gained this fortune by commerce, or in any other similar mode, my disposition, before the creation of this fortune, would naturally be formed, and be permanently developed; and my mind would be similarly affected, had I succeeded to some ducal father; for I should then, in all probability, have inherited some family line of conduct both moral and political; but under the circumstances I have imagined the result would be far different. I should then be in the singular situation of possessing, at the same time, unbounded wealth and the whole powers and natural feelings of my mind unoppressed and unshackled. O! how splendid would be my career! I would not allow the change in my condition to exercise any influence on my natural disposition. I would experience the same passions, and be subject to the same feelings, only they should be exercised, and influential in a wider sphere. Then would be seen the influence of great wealth, directed by a disposition similar to that of the generality of men, inasmuch as it had been formed like that of the generality of men; and, consequently, one much better acquainted with their feelings, their habits, and their wishes. Such a lot would indeed be princely! Such a lot would infallibly insure the affection and respect of the great majority of mankind; and, supported by them, what should I care if I were misunderstood by a few fools, and abused by a few knaves?"

Here came the marquis to lead the lady to the concert. As she quitted her seat, a smile, beaming with graciousness, rewarded her youthful companion. "Ah!" thought Mrs. Million; "I go to the concert, but leave sweeter music than can possibly meet me there. What is the magic of these words? It is not flattery: such is not the language of Miss Gusset! It is not a *refacimento* of compliments: such is not the style with which I am saluted by the Duke of Doze and the Earl of Leatherdale! Apparently I have heard a young philosopher delivering his sentiments upon an abstract point in human life; and yet have I not listened to the most brilliant apology for my own character, and the most triumphant defence of my own conduct. Of course it was unintentional, and yet how agreeable to the unintentionally defended!" So mused Mrs. Million, and she made a thousand vows, not to let a day pass over without obtaining a pledge from Vivian Grey to visit her on their return to the metropolis.

Vivian remained in his seat for some time after the departure of his companion. "On my honour, I have half a mind to desert my embryo faction, and number myself in her gorgeous retinue. Let me see—what part should I act? her secretary, or her toad-eater—or her physician, or her cook? or shall I be her page? Methinks I should make a pretty page, and hand a chased goblet as gracefully as any monkey that ever bent his knee in a lady's chamber. Well! at any rate, there is this chance to be kept back, as the gambler does his last trump, or the cunning fencer his last *ruste*."

He rose to offer his arm to some stray fair one; for crowds were now hurrying to pineapple and lobster salads: that is to say, supper was ready in the LONG GALLERY.

In a moment Vivian's arm was locked in that of Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

"O! Mr. Grey, I have got a much better ghost story than even that of the Leyden professor, for you; but I'm so wearied with waltzing, that I

must tell it you to-morrow. How came you to be so late this morning! Have you been paying many calls to-day? I quite missed you at dinner. Do you think Ernest Clay handsome? I daren't repeat what Lady Scrope said of you! You are an admirer of Lady Julia Knighton, I believe?—I don't much like this plan of supping in the long gallery—it's a favourite locale of mine, and I have no idea of my private promenade being invaded with the uninteresting presence of trifles and Italian creams. Have you been telling Mrs. Million that she was very witty?" asked Vivian's companion, with a very significant look.

CHAPTER XVI.

TOADEYS.

SWEET reader! you know what a toadey is? That agreeable animal which you meet every day in civilized society. But perhaps you have not speculated very curiously upon this interesting race. *Tant pis!* for you cannot live many lustres without finding it of some service to be a little acquainted with their habits.

The world in general is under a mistake as to the nature of these vermin. They are by no means characterized by that similarity of disposition for which your common observer gives them credit. There are toadeys of all possible natures.

There is your commonplace toadey, who merely echoes its feeder's commonplace observations. There is your playing-up toadey, who, unconscious to its feeder, is always playing up to its feeder's weakness—and, as the taste of that feeder varies, accordingly provides its cates and confitures. A little bit of scandal for a dashing widow, or a pious little hymn for a sainted one; the secret history of a newly discovered gas for a May Fair feeder, and an interesting anecdote about a Newgate bobcap or a penitentiary apron for a charitable one. Then there is your drawing-out toadey, who omits no opportunity of giving you a chance of being victorious in an argument where there is no contest, and a dispute where there is no difference; and then there is ———; but I detest essay writing, so I introduce you at once to a party of these vermin. If you wish to enjoy a curious sight, you must watch the toadeys when they are unembarrassed by the almost perpetual presence of their feeders—when they are animated by "the spirit of freedom," when, like Curran's negro, the chain bursts by the impulse of their swelling veins. The great singularity is the struggle between their natural and their acquired feelings; the eager opportunity which they seize of revenging their voluntary bondage, by their secret taunts on their adopted taskmasters; and the servility which they habitually mix up, even with their scandal. Like veritable grimalkins, they fawn upon their victims previous to the festival—compliment them upon the length of their whiskers, and the delicacy of their limbs, prior to excoriating them, and dwelling on the flavour of their crashed bones. O! 'tis a beautiful scene, and ten thousand times more piquant than the humours of a servants' hall, or the most grotesque and glorious moments of high life below stairs.

"Dear Miss Graves," said Miss Gusset, "you can't imagine how terrified I was at that horrible

green parrot flying upon my head! I declare it pulled out three locks of hair."

"Horrible green parrot, my dear madam! why it was sent to my lady by Prince Xtainprqtoskiw, and never shall I forget the agitation we were in about that parrot. I thought it would never have got to the chateau, for the prince could only send his carriage with it as far as Toadcaster: luckily my lady's youngest brother, who was staying a Desir, happened to get drowned at the time—and so Davenport, very clever of him! sent her on in my Lord Dormer's hearse."

"In the hearse! Good heavens, Miss Graves! How could you think of green parrots at such an awful moment! I should have been in fits for three days. Eh! Dr. Sly?"

"Certainly you would, madam—your nerves are very delicate."

"Well! I, for my part, could never see much use in giving up to one's feelings. It's all very well for commoners," rather rudely exclaimed the marchioness toadey—"but we did not choose to expose ourselves to the servants. When the old general died this year, every thing went on as usual. Her ladyship attended Almack's; my lord took his seat in the house; and I looked in at Lady Doubtful's; where we don't visit, but where the marchioness wishes to be civil."

"O! we don't visit Lady Doubtful either," replied Miss Gusset: "she hadn't a card for our *fière champêtre*. O! I was so sorry you were not in town. It was so delightful!"

"O! do tell me who was there. I quite long to know all about it. I saw an account of it in the papers. Every thing seemed to go off so well. Do tell me who was there?"

"O! there was plenty of royalty at the head of the list. Really I can't go into particulars, but everybody was there—who is anybody—eh! Dr. Sly?"

"Certainly, madam. The pines were most admirable; there are few people for whom I entertain a higher esteem than Mr. Gunter."

"The marchioness seems very fond of her dog and parrot, Miss Graves—but she's a sweet woman!"

"O, a dear, amiable creature! but I can't think how she can bear the eternal screaming of that noisy bird."

"Nor I, indeed. Well, thank goodness, Mrs. Million has no pets—eh! Dr. Sly!"

"Certainly—I'm clearly of opinion that it can't be wholesome to have so many animals about a house. Besides which, I have noticed that the marchioness always selects the nicest morsels for that little poodle; and I'm also clearly of opinion, Miss Graves, that the fit it had the other day arose from repletion."

"O! I've no doubt of it in the world. She consumes three pounds of arrow-root weekly, and two pounds of the finest loaf sugar, which I have the trouble of grating every Monday morning. Mrs. Million appears to be a most amiable woman, Miss Gusset?"

"O! quite perfection—so charitable, so intellectual, such a soul! it's a pity though her manner is so abrupt, she really does not appear to advantage sometimes—eh! Dr. Sly?"

The toadey's toadey bowed assent as usual.

"Well," rejoined Miss Graves, "that's rather a

fault of the dear marchioness—a little want of consideration for another's feelings, but she means nothing."

"O, no! nor Mrs. Million, dear creature, *she* means nothing; though, I dare say, not knowing her so well as we do—eh! Dr. Sly? you were a little surprised at the way in which she spoke to me at dinner."

"All people have their oddities, Miss Gusset. I'm sure the marchioness is not aware how she tries my patience about the little wretch Julie;—I had to rub her with warm flannels for an hour and a half, before the fire this morning;—that's that Vivian Grey's doing."

"Who is this Mr. Grey, Miss Graves?"

"Who, indeed!—Some young man the marquess has picked up, and who comes lecturing here about poodles, and parrots, and thinking himself quite lord paramount, I assure you; I'm surprised that the marchioness, who is a most sensible woman, can patronize such conduct a moment; but whenever she begins to see through him, the young gentleman has always got a story about a bracelet, or a bandeau, and quite turns her head."

"Very disagreeable, I'm sure—eh! Dr. Sly?"

"Some people are very easily managed. By-the-by, Miss Gusset, who could have advised Mrs. Million to wear crimson? So large as she is, it does not at all suit her: I suppose it's a *favourite* colour."

"Dear Miss Graves, you're always so insinuating. What can Miss Graves mean—eh! Dr. Sly?"

A Lord Burleigh shake of the head.

"Cynthia Courtown seems as lively as ever," said Miss Gusset.

"Yes, lively enough, but I wish her manner was less *brusque*."

"*Brusque*, indeed! you may well say so; she nearly pushed me down in the hall; and when I looked as if I thought she might have given me a little more room, she tossed her head and said, 'Beg pardon, never saw you.'"

"I wonder what Lord Alhambra sees in that girl."

"O! those forward misses always take the men—eh! Dr. Sly?"

"Well," said Miss Graves, "I've no notion that it will come to any thing.—I am sure, I, for one, hope not," added she with a toadey's venom.

"The marquess seems to keep a remarkably good table," said the physician. "There was a haunch to-day, which I really think was the finest haunch I ever met with; but that little move at dinner—it was, to say the least, very ill-timed."

"Yes, that was Vivian Grey again," said Miss Graves, very indignantly.

"So, you've got the Beaconsfields here, Miss Graves:—nice, unaffected, quiet people?"

"Yes! very quiet. As you say, Miss Gusset, *very* quiet, but a little heavy."

"Yes, heavy enough."

"If you had but seen the quantity of pineapples that boy Dormer Stanhope devoured at our fête champêtre!—but I've the comfort of knowing that they made him very ill—eh! Dr. Sly?"

"O! he learnt that from his uncle," said Miss Graves—"It's quite disgusting to see how that Vivian Grey encourages him."

"What an elegant, accomplished woman Mrs.

Felix Lorraine seems to be, Miss Graves!—I suppose the marchioness is very fond of her?"

"O, yes—the marchioness is so good-natured, that I dare say she thinks very well of Mrs. Felix Lorraine. She thinks well of every one—but I believe Mrs. Felix is rather a greater favourite with the *marquese*."

"O—h!" drawled out Miss Gusset with a very significant tone. "I suppose she's one of your playing-up ladies. I think you told me she was only on a visit here."

"A pretty long visit though for a sister-in-law, —if sister-in-law she be. As I was saying to the marchioness the other day, when Mrs. Felix offended her so violently by trampling on the dear little Julie—if it came into a court of justice, I should like to see the proof—that's all. At any rate, it's pretty evident that Mr. Lorraine has had enough of his bargain."

"Quite evident, I think—eh! Dr. Sly?—Those German women never make good English wives," continued Miss Gusset with all a toadey's patriotism.

"Talking of wives, didn't you think Lady Julia spoke very strangely of Sir Peter after dinner to-day? I hate that Lady Julia, if it's only for petting Vivian Grey so. She positively called him little love—very flighty, and sickening."

"Yes, indeed—it is quite enough to make one sick—eh! Dr. Sly?"

The doctor shook his head mournfully, remembering the haunch.

"They say Ernest Clay's in sad difficulties, Miss Gusset."

"Well, I always expected his dash would end in that. Those wild harum-scarum men are monstrous disagreeable—I like a person of some reflection—eh! Dr. Sly?"

Before the doctor could bow his usual assent, there entered a pretty little page, very daintily attired in a fancy dress of green and silver. Twirling his richly-chased dirk with one tiny white hand, and at the same time playing with a pet curl which was most picturesquely flowing over his forehead, he advanced with ambling gait to Miss Gusset, and, in a mincing voice, and courtly phrase, summoned her to the imperial presence.

The lady's features immediately assumed the expression which befitted the approaching interview, and in a moment Miss Graves and the physician were left alone.

"Very amiable young woman Miss Gusset appears to be, Dr. Sly."

"O! the most amiable young lady in the world—I owe her the greatest obligations."

"So gentle in her manners."

"O yes, *so* gentle."

"So considerate for everybody."

"O, yes! *so* considerate," echoed the Aberdeen M. D.

"I am afraid though she must sometimes meet with people who don't exactly understand her character; such extraordinary consideration for others is sometimes liable to misconstruction."

"Very sensibly remarked, Miss Graves; I am sure Miss Gusset means well; and that kind of thing is all very admirable in its way—but—but—"

"But what, Dr. Sly?"

"Why, I was merely going to hazard an observa-

tion, that according to my feelings—that is, to my own peculiar view of the case—I should prefer some people thinking more about their own business, and, and—but I mean nothing.”

“O, no, of course not, Dr. Sly; you know we always except our own immediate friends—at least, when we can be sure they are our friends; but as you were saying, or going to say, those persons who are so very anxious about other people’s affairs, are not always the most agreeable persons in the world to live with. It certainly did strike me that that interference of Miss Gusset’s about Julie to-day, was, to say the least, very odd.”

“O, my dear madam! when you know her as well as I do, you’ll see she’s always ready to put in a word.”

“Well! do you know, Dr. Sly, between ourselves, that was exactly my impression, and she is then very, very—I don’t exactly mean to say meddling, or inquisitive; but—but you understand me, Dr. Sly?”

“Perfectly; and if I were to speak my mind, which I don’t hesitate to do in confidence to you, Miss Graves, I really should say, that she is the most jealous, irritable, malicious, meddling, and at the same time, *fawning* disposition, that I ever met with in the whole course of my life—and I speak from experience.”

“Well, do you know, Dr. Sly, from all I’ve seen, that was exactly my impression; therefore I have been particularly careful not to commit myself to such a person.”

“Ah! Miss Graves! if all ladies were like you!—O—h!”

“My dear Dr. Sly!”

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CABINET DINNER.

VIVIAN had duly acquainted the marquess with the successful progress of his negotiations with their intended partisans, and his lordship himself had conversed with them singly on the important subject. It was thought proper, however, in this stage of the proceedings, that the parties interested should meet together, and so the two lords, and Sir Berdmore, and Vivian, were invited to dine with the marquess alone, and in his library.

There was abundance of dumb-waiters, and other inventions, by which the ease of the guests might be consulted, without risking even their secret looks to the gaze of liveried menials. The marquess’s gentleman sat in an antechamber, in case human aid might be necessary, and every thing, as his lordship averred, was “on the same system as the cabinet dinners.”

In the ancient kingdom of England, it hath ever been the custom to dine previously to transacting business. This habit is one of those few which are not contingent upon the mutable fancies of fashion, and at this day we see cabinet dinners, and vestry dinners, alike proving the correctness of my assertion. Whether the custom really expedites the completion, or the general progress of the business which gives rise to it, is a grave question, which I do not feel qualified to decide. Certain it is, that very often, after the *dinner*, an appointment is made for the transaction of the *business*

on the following morning; at the same time it must be remembered that had it not been for the opportunity which the banquet afforded of developing the convivial qualities of the guests, and drawing out, by the assistance of generous wine, their most kindly sentiments, and most engaging feelings, it is very probable that the appointment for the transaction of the business would never have been made at all.

There certainly was every appearance that “the great business,” as the marquess styled it, would not be very much advanced by the cabinet dinner at Chateau Desir. For, in the first place, the table was laden “with every delicacy of the season,” and really, when a man is either going to talk sense, fight a duel, or make his will, nothing should be seen at dinner save rump steaks and the lightest Bourdeaux. And, in the second place, it must be candidly confessed, that when it came to the point of all the parties interested meeting, the marquess’s courage somewhat misgave him. Not that any particular reason occurred to him, which would have induced him to yield one jot of the *theory* of his sentiments, but the putting them in practice rather made him nervous. In short, he was as convinced as ever that he was an ill-used man of first-rate talent, but then he remembered his agreeable sinecure and his dignified office, and he might not succeed.—“The thought did not please.”

But here they were all assembled; receding was impossible; and so the marquess dashed off a tumbler of Burgundy, and felt more courageous. His lordship’s conduct did not escape the hawk eye of one of his guests, and Vivian Grey was rather annoyed at seeing the marquess’s glass so frequently refilled. In fact, the marquess was drinking deep, and deep drinking was neither my Lord Carabas’s weak nor strong point, for he was neither habitually a toper, nor one who bore wine’s sweet influence like a docile subject.

The venison was so prime, that not one word relative to the subject of their meeting was broached during the whole dinner; and Lord Beaconsfield, more than once, thought to himself, that had he ever been aware that business was so agreeable, he too would have been a statesman. But the haunch at last vanished, and the speech from the throne commenced.

“My lords and gentlemen,” began the marquess, “although I have myself taken an opportunity of communicating to you singly my thoughts upon a certain subject, and although, if I am rightly informed, my excellent young friend has communicated to you more fully upon that subject, yet, my lords and gentlemen, I beg to remark that this is the first time that we have collectively assembled to consult on the possibility of certain views, upon the propriety of their nature, and the expediency of their adoption.” Here the bottle passed, and the marquess took a bumper. “My lords and gentlemen, when I take into consideration the nature of the various interests of which the body politic of this great empire is regulated; (Lord Courtown, the bottle stops with you,) when I observe, I repeat, this, I naturally ask myself what right, what claims, what—what—what—I repeat, what right these governing interests have to the influence which they possess? (Vivian, my boy, you’ll find Champagne on the waiter behind you.) Yes, gentlemen, it is in this temper, (the cork screws by Sir Berdmore,) it is, I repeat, in this

per, and actuated by these views that we meet together this day. Gentlemen, to make the matter short, it is clear to me that we have all been under a mistake; that my Lord Courtown, and my Lord Beaconsfield, and Sir Berdmore Scrope, and my humble self, are not doing our duty to our country, in not taking the management of its affairs into our own hands! Mr. Vivian Grey, a gentleman with whom you are all acquainted,—Mr. Vivian Grey is younger than myself, or you, my Lord Courtown, or you, my Lord Beaconsfield, or even you, I believe, Sir Berdmore. Mr. Vivian Grey has consequently better lungs than any of us, and he will, I make no doubt, do what I would, if I were o. his age, explain the whole business to us all; and now, my lords and gentlemen, let us have a glass of Champagne.”

A great deal of “desultory conversation,” as the reporters style it, relative to the great topic of debate, now occurred; and as the subject was somewhat dry, the Carabas Champagne suffered considerably. When the brains of the party were tolerably elevated, Vivian addressed them. The tenor of his oration may be imagined. He developed the new political principles, demonstrated the mistake under the baneful influence of which they had so long suffered, promised them place, and power, and patronage, and personal consideration, if they would only act on the principles which he recommended in the most flowing language, and the most melodious voice, in which the glories of ambition were ever yet chaunted. There was a buzz of admiration when the flattering music ceased; the marquess smiled triumphantly, as if to say, “Didn’t I tell you he was a monstrous clever fellow?” and the whole business seemed settled, Lord Courtown gave in a bumper, “*Mr. Vivian Grey, success to his maiden speech!*” and Vivian dashed off a tumbler of Champagne to “*the New Union,*” and certainly the whole party were in extreme good spirits. At last, Sir Berdmore, the coolest of them all, raised his voice: “He quite agreed with Mr. Grey in the principles which he had developed; and, for his own part, he was free to confess that he had the most perfect confidence in that gentleman’s very brilliant abilities, and augured from their exertion the most complete and triumphant success. At the same time, he felt it his duty to remark to their lordships, and also to that gentleman, that the House of Commons was a new scene to him; and he put it whether they were quite convinced that they were sufficiently strong as regarded talent in that assembly. He could not take it upon himself to offer to become the leader of the party. Mr. Grey *might* be capable of undertaking that charge, but still, it must be remembered, that in that assembly he was as yet *untried*. He made no apology to Mr. Grey for speaking his mind so freely; he was sure that his motives could not be misinterpreted. If their lordships, on the whole, were of opinion that this charge should be intrusted to him, he, Sir Berdmore, having the greatest confidence in Mr. Grey’s abilities, would certainly support him to the utmost.”

“He can do any thing,” shouted the marquess; who was now quite tipsy.

“He’s a surprising clever man!” said Lord Courtown.

“He’s a surprising clever man!” echoed Lord Beaconsfield.

“Stop, my lords,” burst forth Vivian, “your good opinion deserves my gratitude, but these important matters do *indeed* require a moment’s consideration. I trust that Sir Berdmore Scrope does not imagine that I am the vain idiot to be offended at his most excellent remarks, even for a moment. Are we not met here for the common good—and to consult for the success of the common cause? Whatever my talents are, they are at your service—and in your service will I venture any thing; but, surely, my lords, you will not unnecessarily intrust this great business to a raw hand! I need only aver that I am ready to follow any leader, who can play his great part in a becoming manner.”

“Noble!” hallooed the marquess; who was now quite drunk.

But who was the leader to be? Sir Berdmore frankly confessed that he had none to propose; and the viscount and the baron were quite silent.

“Gentlemen!” bawled the marquess, and his eye danced in his beaming face, “Gentlemen! there *is* a man who could do our bidding.” The eyes of every guest were fixed on the haranguing host.

“Gentlemen, fill your glasses—I give you our leader—Mr. Frederick Cleveland.”

“Cleveland!” was the universal shout. A glass of claret fell from Lord Courtown’s hand; Lord Beaconsfield stopped as he was about to fill his glass, and stood gaping at the marquess, with the decanter in his hand; and Sir Berdmore stared on the table, as men do when something unexpected and astounding has occurred at dinner, which seems past all their management.

“Cleveland!” shouted the guests.

“I should as soon have expected you to have given us Lucifer!” said Lord Courtown.

“Or the present secretary!” said Lord Beaconsfield.

“Or yourself,” said Sir Berdmore Scrope.

“And does any one mean to insinuate that Frederick Cleveland is not capable of driving out every minister that has ever existed since the days of the deluge?” demanded the marquess, with a fierce air.

“We do not deny Mr. Cleveland’s powers, my lord; we only humbly beg to suggest that it appears to us, that, of all the persons in the world, the man with whom Mr. Cleveland would be least inclined to coalesce, would be the Marquess of Carabas.”

In spite of the Champagne, the marquess looked blank.

“Gentlemen,” said Vivian, “do not despair; it’s enough for me to know that there *is* a man who is capable of doing our work. Be he animate man, or incarnate fiend, provided he can be found within this realm, I pledge myself that within ten days he is drinking my noble friend’s health at this very board.”

The marquess hallooed “Bravo!”—the rest laughed, and rose in confusion; Lord Beaconsfield fell over a chair, and extricating himself with admirable agility, got entangled with a dumb-waiter, which came tumbling down with a fearful crash of plates, bottles, knives, and decanters. The pledge was, however, accepted, and the marquess and Vivian were left alone. The worthy peer, though terrifically tipsy, seemed quite overcome by Vivian’s offer and engagement.

“Vivian, my boy, you don’t know what you’ve done—you don’t indeed—take care of yourself,

my boy,—you're going to call on the devil, you are indeed—you're going to leave your card at the devil's. Didn't you hear what Lord Beaconsfield, a very worthy gentleman, but, between ourselves, a damned fool, that's *entre nous* though, *entre nous*—I say didn't you hear Lord Beaconsfield, no, was it Lord Beaconsfield? No, no, your memory, Vivian, 's very bad; it was Lord Courtown: didn't you hear him say that Frederick Cleveland was Lucifer.—He is Lucifer; he is, upon my honour—how shocking! What times we live in! To think of you, Vivian Grey; you, a respectable young man, with a worthy and respectable father; to think of you leaving your card at—the devil's! O! shocking! shocking! But never mind, my dear fellow, never mind, don't lose heart—I'll tell you what to do—*talk* to him, and, by Jove, if he doesn't make me an apology, I am not a cabinet minister. Good night, my dear fellow; he's sure to make an apology; don't be frightened; remember what I say, *talk* to him;—*talk—talk.*" So saying, the worthy marquess reeled and retired.

"What have I done!" thought Vivian; "I'm sure that Lucifer *may* know, for I do not. This Cleveland is, I suppose, after all but a *man*. I saw the feeble fools were wavering; and to save all made a leap in the dark. Well! is my skull cracked? *Nous verrons.* How hot either this room or my blood is! Come, for some fresh air; (he opens the library window) how fresh and soft it is! Just the night for the balcony. Ha! music! I cannot mistake that voice. Singular woman! I'll just walk on, till I'm beneath her window."

Vivian accordingly proceeded along the balcony, which extended down one whole side of the chateau. While he was looking at the moon he stumbled against some one. It was Colonel Delmington. He apologized to the *militaire* for treading on his toes, and wondered how the devil he got there!

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

A COLLEAGUE.

FREDERICK CLEVELAND was educated at Eton and at Cambridge; and after having proved, both at the school and the University, that he possessed talents of the first order, he had the courage, in order to perfect them, to immure himself for three years in a German University. It was impossible, therefore, for two minds to have been cultivated on more contrary systems, than those of Frederick Cleveland and Vivian Grey. The systems on which they had been educated were not, however, more discordant than the respective tempers of the pupils. With that of Vivian Grey the reader is now somewhat acquainted. It has been shown that he was one precociously convinced of the necessity of managing mankind by studying their tempers and humouring their weaknesses. Cleveland turned from the book of nature with contempt; and although his was a mind of extraordinary acuteness, he was, at three-and-thirty, as ignorant of the workings of the human heart, as when, in the innocence of boyhood, he first reached Eton.

The inaptitude of his nature to consult the feelings, or adopt the sentiments of others, was visible in his slightest actions. He was the only man who ever passed three years in Germany, and in a German University, who had never yielded to the magic influence of a Meerschaum; and the same inflexibility of character which prevented him from smoking in Germany, attracted in Italy the loud contempt of those accomplished creatures—the Anglo-Italians. The Dutchess of Derwentwater, who saluted with equal *naivete* a cardinal, or a captain of banditti, was once almost determined to exclude Mr. Cleveland from her conversation, because he looked so much like an Englishman; and at Florence he was still more unpopular; for he abused Velluti, and pasquinaded his patroness.

Although possessed of no fortune, from the respectability of his connexions and the reputation of his abilities, he entered parliament at an early age. His success was eminent. It was at this period that he formed a great friendship with the present Marquess of Carabas, many years his senior, and then under-secretary of state. His exertions for the party to which Mr. Under-Secretary Lorraine belonged were unremitting; and it was mainly through their influence that a great promotion took place in the official appointments of the party. When the hour of reward came, Mr. Lorraine and his friends unfortunately forgot their youthful champion. He remonstrated, and they smiled: he reminded them of private friendship, and they answered him with political expediency. Mr. Cleveland went down to the House, and attacked his old comates in a spirit of unexampled bitterness. He examined in review the various members of the party that had deserted him. They trembled on their seats, while they writhed beneath the keenness of his satire: but when the orator came to Mr. President Lorraine, he flourished the tomahawk on high, like a wild Indian chieftain; and the attack was so awfully severe, so overpowering, so annihilating, that even this hackneyed and hardened official trembled, turned pale, and quitted the House. Cleveland's triumph was splendid, but it was only for a night. Disgusted with mankind, he scouted the thousand offers of political connexions which crowded upon him; and having succeeded in making an arrangement with his creditors, he accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.

By the interest of his friends, he procured a judicial situation of sufficient emolument, but of local duty; and to fulfil this duty he was obliged to reside in North Wales. The locality, indeed, suited him well, for he was sick of the world at nine-and-twenty; and, carrying his beautiful and newly-married wife from the world, which without him she could not love, Mr. Cleveland enjoyed all the luxuries of a cottage ornée in the most romantic part of the principality. Here were born unto him a son and daughter, beautiful children, upon whom the father lavished all the affection which nature had intended for the world.

Four years had Cleveland now passed in his solitude,—it must not be concealed, an unhappy man. A thousand times, during the first year of his retirement, he cursed the moment of excitation which had banished him from the world; for he found himself without resources, and restless as a curbed courser. Like many men who are bound to be orators—like Curran, and like Fox,—Cleveland was not blessed or cursed, with the faculty of composition; and

indeed, had his pen been that of a ready writer, pique would have prevented him from delighting or instructing a world, whose nature he endeavoured to persuade himself was base, and whose applause ought consequently to be valueless. In the second year he endeavoured to while away his time by interesting himself in those pursuits which Nature has kindly provided for country gentlemen. Farming kept him alive six months; but, at length, his was the prize ox; and, having gained a cup, he got wearied of kine too prime for eating; wheat too fine for the composition of the staff of life; and ploughs so ingeniously contrived, that the very ingenuity prevented them from being useful. Cleveland was now seen wandering over the moors and mountains, with a gun over his shoulder, and a couple of pointers at his heels; but cunni returned in spite of his *patent percussion*; and so, at length, tired of being a sportsman, he almost became, what he had fancied himself in an hour of passion,—a misanthrope.

With the aid of soda-water and Mr. Sadler, Vivian had succeeded, the morning after the cabinet-dinner, in getting the marquess up at a tolerably early hour; and, after having been closeted with his lordship for a considerable time, he left Chateau Desir.

Vivian travelled night and day, until he stopped at KENRICH LODGE—such was the correct style of Mr. Cleveland's abode. What was he to do now? After some deliberation, he despatched a note to Mr. Cleveland, informing him, "that he (Mr. Grey) was the bearer, from England, to Mr. Cleveland, of a 'communication of importance.' Under the circumstances of the case, he observed that he had declined bringing any letters of introduction. He was quite aware, therefore, that he should have no right to complain if he had to travel back three hundred miles without having the honour of an interview; but he trusted that this necessary breach of etiquette would be overlooked."

The note produced the desired effect; and an appointment was made for Mr. Grey to call at Kenrich Lodge on the following morning.

Vivian, as he entered the room, took a rapid glance at the master of Kenrich Lodge. Mr. Cleveland was a tall and elegantly formed man, with a face which might have been a model for manly beauty. He came forward to receive Vivian, with a Newfoundland dog on one side, and a large black greyhound on the other; and the two animals, after having elaborately examined the stranger, divided between them the luxuries of the rug. The reception which Mr. Cleveland gave our hero was cold and constrained in the extreme, but it did not appear to be purposely uncivil; and Vivian flattered himself that his manner was not unusually stiff.

"I don't know whether I have the honour of addressing the son of the author of —?" said Mr. Cleveland with a frowning countenance, which was intended to be courteous.

"I have the honour of being the son of Mr. Grey."

"Your father, sir, is a most amiable, and able man. I had the pleasure of his acquaintance when I was in London many years ago, at a time when Mr. Vivian Grey was not intrusted, I rather imagine, with missions 'of importance.'"—Although Mr. Cleveland smiled when he said this, his smile was any thing but a gracious one. The subdued satire of his keen eye burst out for an instant, and

he looked as if he would have said, "Who is this younker who is trespassing upon my retirement?"

Vivian had, unbidden, seated himself by the side of Mr. Cleveland's library-table; and, not knowing exactly how to proceed, was employing himself by making a calculation whether there were more black than white spots on the body of the old Newfoundland, who was now apparently most happily slumbering.

"Well, sir!" continued the Newfoundland master, "the nature of your communication? I am fond of coming to the point."

Now this was precisely the thing which Vivian had determined not to do; and so he *diplomatized*, in order to gain time.—"In stating, Mr. Cleveland, that the communication which I had to make was one of *importance*, I beg it to be understood, that it was with reference merely to *my* opinion of its nature that the phrase was used, and not as relative to the possible, or, allow me to say, the probable opinion of Mr. Cleveland."

"Well, sir!" said that gentleman, with a somewhat disappointed air.

"As to the purport or nature of the communication, it is," said Vivian, with one of his sweetest cadences, and looking up to Mr. Cleveland's face, with an eye expressive of all kindness,—"*it is of a political nature.*"

"Well, sir!" again exclaimed Cleveland; looking very anxious, and moving restlessly on his library chair.

"When we take into consideration, Mr. Cleveland, the present aspect of the political world; when we call to mind the present situation of the two great political parties, you will not be surprised, I feel confident, when I mention that certain personages have thought that the season was at hand, when a move might be made in the political world with very considerable effect—"

"Mr. Grey, what am I to understand?" interrupted Mr. Cleveland, who began to suspect that the envoy was no greenhorn.

"I feel confident, Mr. Cleveland, that I am doing very imperfect justice to the mission with which I am intrusted; but, sir, you must be aware that the delicate nature of such disclosures and—"

"Mr. Grey, I feel confident that you do not doubt my honour; and, as for the rest, the world has, I believe, some foolish tales about me; but, believe me, *you* shall be listened to with patience. I am certain that, whatever may be the communication, Mr. Vivian Grey is a gentleman who will do its merits justice."

And now Vivian, having succeeded in exciting Cleveland's curiosity, and securing himself the certainty of a hearing, and having also made a favourable impression, dropped the diplomatist altogether, and was explicit enough for a Spartan.

"Certain noblemen and gentlemen of eminence and influence, hitherto considered as props of the — party, are about to take a novel and decided course next session. It is to obtain the aid and personal co-operation of Mr. Cleveland, that I am now in Wales."

"Mr. Grey, I have promised to listen to you with patience;—you are too young a man to know much perhaps of the history of so insignificant a personage as myself; otherwise you would have been aware, that there is no subject in the world on which I am less inclined to converse than that of politics. If I were entitled to take such a liberty,

I would beseech you to think of them as little as I do;—but enough of this: who is the mover of the party?"

"My Lord Courtown is a distinguished member of it."

"Courtown—Courtown; respectable certainly; but surely the good viscount's skull is not exactly the head for the chief of a cabal?"

"There is my Lord Beaconsfield."

"Powerful—but a dolt."

"Well," thought Vivian, "it must out at last; and so to it boldly. And, Mr. Cleveland, there is little fear that we may secure the powerful interest and tried talents of—the Marquess of Carabas."

"The Marquess of Carabas!" almost shrieked Mr. Cleveland, as he started from his seat and paced the room with hurried steps; and the greyhound and the Newfoundland jumped up from their rug, shook themselves, growled, and then imitated their master in promenading the apartment, but with more dignified and stately paces. "The Marquess of Carabas! Now, Mr. Grey, speak to me with the frankness which one high-bred gentleman should use to another,—is the Marquess of Carabas privy to this application?"

"He himself proposed it."

"Then, sir, is he baser than even *I* conceived. O! Mr. Grey, I am a man spare of my speech to those with whom I am unacquainted; and the world calls me a soured, malicious man. And yet, when I think for a moment, that one so young as you are, with such talents, and; as I will believe, with so pure a spirit, should be the dupe, or tool, or even present friend, of such a creature as this perjured peer, I could really play the woman—and weep."

"Mr. Cleveland," said Vivian—and the drop which glistened in his eye responded to the tear of passion which slowly quivered down his companion's cheek,—"*I* am grateful for your kindness; and although we shall most probably part, in a few hours, never to meet again, I will speak to you with the frankness which you have merited, and to which I feel you are entitled. I am *not*, the dupe of the Marquess of Carabas; I am *not*, I trust, the dupe, or tool, of any one whatever. Believe me, sir, there is that at work in England, which, taken at the tide, may lead on to fortune. I see this, sir,—I, a young man, uncommitted in political principles, unconnected in public life, feeling some confidence. I confess, in my own abilities, but desirous of availing myself, at the same time, of the powers of others. Thus situated, I find myself working for the same end as my Lord Carabas, and twenty other men of similar calibre, mental and moral; and, sir, am I to play the hermit in the drama of life, because, perchance, my fellow-actors may be sometimes fools, and occasionally knaves? O! Mr. Cleveland, if the Marquess of Carabas has done you the ill service which fame says he has, your sweetest revenge will be to make *him* your tool: your most perfect triumph, to rise to power by his influence.

"I confess that I am desirous of finding in you the companion of my career. Your splendid talents have long commanded my admiration, and, as you have given *me* credit for something like good feeling, I will say that my wish to find in you a colleague is greatly increased, when I see that those splendid talents are even the least estimable points in Mr. Cleveland's character. But sir, per-

haps all this time I am in error,—perhaps Mr. Cleveland is, as the world reports him, no longer the ambitious being that once commanded the admiration of a listening senate,—perhaps, convinced of the vanity of human wishes, Mr. Cleveland would rather devote his attention to the furtherance of the interests of his immediate circle;—and, having schooled his intellect in the universities of two nations, is probably content to pass the hours of his life in mediating in the quarrels of a country village."

Vivian ceased. Cleveland heard him, with his head resting on both his arms. He started at the last expression, and something like a blush suffused his cheek, but he did not reply. At last he jumped up, and rang the bell. "Come, come, Mr. Grey," said he, "enough of politics for this morning. You shall not, at any rate, visit Wales for nothing. Morris! send down to the village for all the sacs and portmanteaus belonging to this gentleman. Even we cottagers have a bed for a friend, Mr. Grey;—come, and I'll introduce you to my wife."

CHAPTER II.

A COLLEAGUE.

AND Vivian was now an inmate of Kenrich Lodge. It would have been difficult to have conceived a life of more pure happiness, than that which was apparently enjoyed by its gifted master. A beautiful wife, and lovely children, and romantic situation, and an income sufficient, not only for their own, but for the wants of all their necessitous neighbours;—what more could man wish? Answer me, thou inexplicable myriad of sensations, which the world calls human nature!

Three days passed over in the most delightful converse. It was so long since Cleveland had seen any one fresh from the former scenes of his life, that the company of any one would have been delightful; but here was a companion, who knew every one, every thing, full of wit, and anecdote, and literature, and fashion, and then so engaging in his manners, and with such a winning voice.

The heart of Cleveland relaxed; his stern manner gave way; all his former war and generous feeling gained the ascendant: he was in turn, amusing, communicative, and engaging. Finding that he could please another, he began to please himself. The nature of the business on which Vivian was his guest, rendered confidence necessary; confidence begets kindness. In a few days, Vivian necessarily became more acquainted with Mr. Cleveland's disposition and situation, than if they had been acquainted for as many years; in short,

They talked with open heart and tongue,
Affectionate and true,—
A pair of friends.

Vivian, for some time, dwelt upon every thing but the immediate subject of his mission; but when, after the experience of a few days, their hearts were open to each other, and they had mutually begun to discover that there was a most astonishing similarity in their principles, their tastes, their feelings, then the magician poured forth his incantation, and raised the once-laid ghost of Cleveland's ambition. The recluse agreed to take the

lead of the *Carabas party*. He was to leave Wales immediately and resign his place; in return for which, the nephew of Lord Courtown was immediately to give up, in his favour, an office of considerable emolument, and having thus provided some certainty for his family, Frederick Cleveland prepared himself to combat for a more important office.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARRIVAL.

"Is Mr. Cleveland handsome?" asked Mrs. Felix Lorraine of Vivian, immediately on his return, "and what colour are his eyes?"

"Upon my honour I haven't the least recollection of ever looking at them; but I believe he is not blind."

"How foolish you are! now tell me, pray, *point de moquerie*, is he amusing?"

"What does Mrs. Felix Lorraine mean by *amusing*?" asked Vivian with an arch smile.

"O! you always tease me with your definitions; go away—I'll quarrel with you."

"O! by-the-by, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, how is Colonel Delmington?"

Vivian redeemed his pledge: Mr. Cleveland arrived. It was the wish of the marquess, if possible, not to meet his old friend till dinner-time. He thought that, surrounded by his guests, and backed by his bottle, certain awkward senatorial reminiscences might be got over. But, unfortunately, Mr. Cleveland arrived about an hour before dinner, and, as it was a cold autumnal day, most of the visitors, who were staying at Chateau Desir, were assembled in the drawing-room. The marquess sallied forward to receive his guest with a most dignified countenance, and a most aristocratic step; but, before he got halfway, his coronation pace degenerated into a strut, and then into a shamble, and with an awkward and confused countenance, half impudent, and half flinching, he held forward his left hand to his newly arrived visitor. Mr. Cleveland looked terrifically courteous, and amiably arrogant. He greeted the marquess with a smile, at once gracious and grim, and looked something like Goliath, as you see the Philistine depicted in some old German painting, looking down upon the pigmy fighting men of Israel.

As is generally the custom, when there is a great deal to be arranged, and many points to be settled, days flew over, and very little of the future system of the party was matured. Vivian made one or two ineffectual struggles to bring the marquess to a business-like habit of mind, but his lordship never dared trust himself alone with Cleveland, and indeed almost lost the power of speech when in presence of the future leader of his party; so, in the morning, the marquess played off the two lords and the baronet against his former friend, and then to compensate for not meeting Mr. Cleveland in the morning, he was particularly courteous to him at dinner-time, and asked him always "how he liked his ride?" and invariably took wine with him. As for the rest of the day, he had particularly requested his faithful counsellor, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, "for God's sake to take this man off his shoulders;" and so that lady, with her usual

kindness, and merely to oblige his lordship, was good enough to patronise Mr. Cleveland, and on the fourth day was taking a moon-lit walk with him.

Mr. Cleveland had now been ten days at Chateau Desir, and was to take his departure the next morning for Wales, in order to arrange every thing for his immediate settlement in the metropolis. Every point of importance was postponed until their meeting in London. Mr. Cleveland only agreed to take the lead of the party in the Commons, and received the personal pledge of Lord Courtown as to the promised office.

It was a September day, and to escape from the excessive heat of the sun, and at the same time to enjoy the freshness of the air, Vivian was writing his letters in the conservatory, which opened into one of the drawing-rooms. The numerous party, which then honoured the chateau with their presence, were out, as he conceived, on a picnic excursion to the Elfin's Well, a beautiful spot about ten miles off; and among the adventurers were, as he imagined, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, and Mr. Cleveland.

Vivian was rather surprised at hearing voices in the adjoining room, and he was still more so, when, on looking round, he found that the sounds proceeded from the very two individuals whom he thought were far away. Some tall American plants concealed him from their view, but he observed all that passed distinctly, and a singular scene it was. Mrs. Felix Lorraine was on her knees at the feet of Mr. Cleveland; her countenance indicated the most contrary passions, contending as it were, for mastery—supplication—anger,—and, shall I call it?—*love*. Her companion's countenance was hid, but it was evident that it was not wreathed with smiles: there were a few hurried sentences uttered, and then both quitted the room at different doors—the lady in despair,—and the gentleman—in disgust.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ELFIN'S WELL.

AND now Chateau Desir was almost deserted. Mrs. Million continued her progress northward. The Courtowns, and the Beaconsfields, and the Scropes quitted immediately after Mr. Cleveland, and when the families that form the *matériel* of the visiting *corps* retire, the nameless nothings that are always lounging about the country mansions of the great, such as artists, tourists, literateurs, and other live stock, soon disappear. Mr. Vivian Grey agreed to stay another fortnight, at the particular request of the marquess.

Very few days had passed, ere Vivian was exceedingly struck at the decided change which suddenly took place in his lordship's general behaviour towards him.

The marquess grew reserved and uncommunicative, scarcely mentioning "the great business," which had previously been the sole object of his conversation, but to find fault with some arrangement, and exhibiting, whenever his name was mentioned, a marked acrimony against Mr. Cleveland. This rapid change alarmed, as much as it astonished Vivian, and he mentioned his feelings

and observations to Mrs. Felix Lorraine. That lady agreed with him that something certainly was wrong, but could not, unfortunately, afford him any clue to the mystery. She expressed the liveliest solicitude that any misunderstanding should be put an end to, and offered her services for that purpose.

In spite, however, of her well-expressed anxiety, Vivian had his own ideas on the subject; and, determined to unravel the affair, he had recourse to a person, with whom he seldom interchanged a sentence—the marchioness.

"I hope your ladyship is well to-day. I had a letter from Count Caumont this morning. He tells me that he has got the prettiest poodle from Paris that you can possibly conceive! waltzes like an angel, and acts *proverbs* on its hind feet."

Her ladyship's eyes glistened with admiration.

"I've told Caumont to send it me down immediately, and I shall then have the pleasure of presenting it to your ladyship."

Her ladyship's eyes sparkled with delight.

"I think," continued Vivian, "I shall take a ride to-day. By-the-by, how's the marquess? he seems in low spirits lately."

"O! Mr. Grey, I don't know what you've done to him," said her ladyship, settling at least a dozen bracelets; "but—but—"

"But *what* my lady?"

"He thinks—he thinks—"

"Thinks what, my lady?"

"That you've entered into a conspiracy, Mr. Grey."

"Entered into a conspiracy!"

"Yes, Mr. Grey, a conspiracy—a conspiracy against the Marquess of Carabas, with Mr. Cleveland. He thinks that you have made him serve your purpose, and that now you're going to get rid of him."

"Well, that's excellent, and what else does he think?"

"He thinks you talk too loud," said the marchioness, still working at her bracelets.

"Well, that's shockingly vulgar! Allow me to recommend your ladyship to alter the order of those *bracelets*, and place the blue and silver against the maroon. You may depend upon it, that's the true Vienna order—and what else does the marquess say?"

"He thinks you are generally too authoritative. Not that I think so, Mr. Grey; I'm sure your conduct to me has been more courteous—the blue and silver *next* to the maroon, did you say? Yes—certainly it does look better. I've no doubt the marquess is quite wrong; and I dare say you'll set things right immediately. You'll remember the pretty poodle, Mr. Grey, and you'll not tell the marquess I mentioned any thing."

"O! certainly not. I'll give orders for them to book an inside place for the poodle, and send him down by the coach immediately. I must be off now. Remember, the blue and silver *next* the maroon. Good morning to your ladyship."

"Mrs. Felix Lorraine, I am your most obedient slave," said Vivian Grey, as he met that lady on the landing-place;—"I can see no reason why I should not drive you this bright day to the Ellin's Well; we have long had an engagement together."

The lady smiled a gracious assent; the pony phaeton was immediately ordered.

"How pleasant Lady Courtown and I used to

discourse about martingales! I think I invented one, didn't I? Pray, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, can you tell me what a martingale is? for upon my honour I've forgotten or never knew."

"If you found a martingale for the mother, Vivian, it had been well if you had found a curl for the daughter. Poor Cynthia! I had intended once to advise the marchioness to interfere, but one forgets these things."

"One does.—O! Mrs. Felix," exclaimed Vivian, "I told your admirable story of the Leyden professor to Mrs. Cleveland. It's universally agreed to be the best ghost story extant. I think you said you knew the professor?"

"O, well! I have seen him often, and heard the story from his own lips. And as I mentioned before, far from being superstitious, he was an *esprit fort*.—Do you know, Mr. Grey, I have such an interesting packet from Germany to-day; from my cousin, Baron Rodenstein; but I must keep all the stories for the evening: come to my boudoir, and I will read them to you—there is one tale which I am sure will make a convert even of you. It happened to Rodenstein himself, and within these three months," added the lady, in a serious tone.—"The Rodensteins are a singular family. My mother was a Rodenstein.—Do you think this beautiful?" said Mrs. Felix, showing Vivian a very small miniature which was attached to a chain round her neck. It was the portrait of a youth, habited in the costume of a German student. His rich brown hair was flowing over his shoulders, and his dark blue eyes beamed with such a look of mysterious inspiration, that they might have befitted a young prophet.

"Very, very beautiful!"

"'Tis Max—Max Rodenstein," said the lady, with a faltering voice. "He was killed at Leipsic, at the head of a band of his friends and fellow-students. O! Mr. Grey, this is a fair work of art, but if you had but seen the prototype, you would have gazed on this as on a dim and washed out drawing. There was one portrait, indeed, which did him more justice—but then, that portrait was not the production of mortal pencil."

Vivian looked at his companion with a somewhat astonished air, but Mrs. Felix Lorraine's countenance was as little indicative of jesting, as that of the young student whose miniature rested on her bosom.

"Did you say *not* the production of a mortal hand, Mrs. Felix Lorraine?"

"I'm afraid I shall weary you with my stories, but the one I am about to tell is so well evidenced, that I think even Mr. Vivian Grey will hear it without a sneer."

"A sneer! O! lady love, do I ever sneer?"

"Max Rodenstein was the glory of his house. A being so beautiful in body, and in soul, you cannot imagine, and I will not attempt to describe. This miniature has given you some faint idea of his image, and yet this is only the copy of a copy. The only wish of the Baroness Rodenstein, which never could be accomplished, was the possession of a portrait of her youngest son—for no consideration could induce Max to allow his likeness to be taken. His old nurse had always told him, that the moment that his portrait was taken, he would die. The condition upon which such a beautiful being was allowed to remain in the world, was, as she always said, that his beauty should not be ini-

tated. About three months before the battle of Leipsic, when Max was absent at the university, which was nearly four hundred miles from Rodenstein castle, there arrived one morning a large case directed to the baroness. On opening it, it was found to contain a picture—the portrait of her son. The colouring was so vivid, the general execution so miraculous, that for some moments they forgot to wonder at the incident in their admiration of the work of art. In one corner of the picture, in small characters, yet fresh, was an inscription, which on examining they found consisted of these words, ‘*Painted last night. Now, lady, thou hast thy wish.*’ My aunt sunk into the baron’s arms.

“In silence and in trembling the wonderful portrait was suspended over the fire-place of my aunt’s most favourite apartment. The next day, they received letters from Max. He was quite well, but mentioned nothing of the mysterious painting.

“Three months afterwards, as a lady was sitting alone in the baroness’s room, and gazing on the portrait of him she loved right dearly, she suddenly started from her seat, and would have shrieked, had not an indefinable sensation prevented her. The eyes of the portrait moved. The lady stood leaning on a chair, pale, and trembling like an aspen, but gazing steadfastly on the animated portrait. It was no illusion of a heated fancy; again the eyelids trembled, there was a melancholy smile, and then they closed. The clock of Rodenstein castle struck three. Between astonishment and fear, the lady was tearless. Three days afterwards came the news of the battle of Leipsic, and at the very moment that the eyes of the portrait closed, Max Rodenstein had been pierced by a Polish lancer.”

“And who was this wonderful lady, the witness of this wonderful incident?” asked Vivian.

“That lady was myself.”

There was something so singular in the tone of Mrs. Felix Lorraine’s voice, and so peculiar in the expression of her countenance, as she uttered these words, that the jest died on Vivian’s tongue; and for want of something better to do, he lashed the little ponies, who were already scampering at their full speed.

The road to the Elfin’s Well ran through the widest parts of the park; and after an hour and a half’s drive, they reached the fairy spot. It was a beautiful and pellucid spring, that bubbled up in a small wild dell, which, nurtured by the flowing stream, was singularly fresh and green. Above the spring, the taste of the marquess, or the marquess’s steward, had erected a Gothic arch of gray stone, round which grew a few fine birch trees. In short, nature had intended the spot for *pic-nics*. There was fine water, and an interesting tradition; and as the parties always bring, or always should bring, a trained punster, champagne, and cold pasties, what more ought nature to have provided?

“Come, Mrs. Lorraine, I will tie Gipsy to this ash, and then you and I will rest ourselves beneath these birch trees, just where the fairies dance.”

“O, delightful!”

“Now, truly, we should have some book of beautiful poetry to while away an hour. You will blame me for not bringing one. Do not. I would sooner listen to your voice; and, indeed, there is a subject on which I wish to ask your particular advice.”

“Is there?”

“I have been thinking that this is a somewhat rash step of the marquess—this throwing himself into the arms of his former bitterest enemy, Cleveland.”

“You really think so?”

“Why, Mrs. Lorraine, does it appear to you to be the most prudent course of action which could have been conceived?”

“Certainly not.”

“You agree with me, then, that there is, if not cause for regret at this engagement, at least for reflection on its probable consequences.”

“I quite agree with you.”

“I know you do. I have had some conversation with the marquess upon this subject, this very morning.”

“Have you?” eagerly exclaimed the lady, and she looked pale and breathed short.

“Ay, and he tells me you have made some very sensible observations on the subject. ’Tis a pity they were not made before Mr. Cleveland left, the mischief might then have been prevented.”

“I certainly have made *some* observations.”

“And very kind of you; what a blessing for the marquess to have such a friend.”

“I spoke to him,” said Mrs. Felix, with a more assured tone, “in much the same spirit as you have been addressing me. It does, indeed, seem a most imprudent act, and I thought it my duty to tell him so.”

“Ay, no doubt; but how came you, lady fair, to imagine that I was also a person to be dreaded by his lordship—I, Vivian Grey?”

“Did I say *you*?” asked the lady, pale as death—

“Did you *not*, Mrs. Felix Lorraine? Have you not, regardless to my interests, in the most unwarrantable and unjustifiable manner—have you not, to gratify some private pique which you entertain against Mr. Cleveland, have you not, I ask you, poisoned the marquess’s mind against one who never did aught to you, but what was kind and *honourable*?”

“I have been imprudent—I confess it—I have spoken somewhat loosely.”

“Now, madam, listen to me once more,” and Vivian grasped her hand—“What has passed between you and Mr. Cleveland, it is not for me to inquire—I give you my word of honour, that he never even mentioned your name to me. I can scarcely understand how any man could have incurred the deadly hatred which you appear to entertain for him. I repeat, I can contemplate no situation in which you could be placed together, which would justify such behaviour. It could *not* be justified, even if he had spurned you while—*knocking at his feet.*”

Mrs. Felix Lorraine shrieked and fainted. A sprinkling from the fairy stream soon recovered her. “Spare me! spare me!” she faintly cried: “do not expose me!”

“Mrs. Lorraine, I have no wish. I have spoken thus explicitly, that we may not again misunderstand each other—I have spoken thus explicitly, I say, that I may not be under the necessity of speaking again, for if I speak again, it must not be to Mrs. Felix Lorraine—there is my hand, and now let the Elfin’s Well be blotted out of our memories.”

Vivian drove rapidly home and endeavoured to talk in his usual tone, and with his usual spirit;

but his companion could not be excited. Once, ay, twice, she pressed his hand, and as he assisted her from the phaeton, she murmured something like a—blessing. She ran up stairs immediately. Vivian had to give some directions about the ponies; Gypsy was ill, or Fanny had a cold, or something of the kind, and so he was detained for about a quarter of an hour before the house, speaking most learnedly to grooms, and consulting on cases with a skilled gravity worthy of professor Coleman.

When he entered the parlour he found the luncheon prepared, and Mrs. Felix pressed him very earnestly to take some refreshment. He was indeed wearied, and agreed to take a glass of hock and seltzer.

"Let me mix it for you," said Mrs. Felix; "do you like sugar?"

Tired with his drive, Vivian Grey was leaning on the mantle-piece, with his eyes vacantly gazing on the looking-glass which rested on the marble slab. It was by pure accident that, reflected in the mirror, he distinctly beheld Mrs. Felix Lorraine open a small silver box, and throw some powder into the tumbler which she was preparing for him. She was leaning down, with her back almost turned to the glass, but still Vivian saw it—*distinctly*. A sickness came over him, and ere he could recover himself, his Hebe tapped him on the shoulder—

"Here drink, drink while it is effervescent."

"I cannot drink," said Vivian, "I am not thirsty—I am too hot—I am any thing—"

"How foolish you are! it will be quite spoiled."

"No, no, the dog shall have it. Here Fidele, you look thirsty enough—come here—"

"Mr. Grey, I do not mix tumblers for dogs," said the lady, rather agitated: "if you will not take it," and she held it once more before him, "here it goes forever." So saying she emptied the tumbler into a large globe of glass, in which some gold and silver fishes were swimming their endless rounds.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONVERSATION.

THIS last specimen of Mrs. Felix Lorraine was somewhat too much, even for the steeled nerves of Vivian Grey, and he sought his chamber for relief.

"Is it possible? Can I believe my senses? Or has some demon, as we read of it in old tales, mocked me in a magic mirror? I can believe in any thing.—O! my heart is very sick! I once imagined that I was using this woman for my purpose. Is it possible that aught of good can come to one who is forced to make use of such evil instruments as these? A horrible thought sometimes comes over my spirit. I fancy, that in this mysterious foreigner, that in this woman, I have met a kind of *double* of myself. The same wonderful knowledge of the human mind, the same sweetness of voice, the same miraculous management which has brought us both under the same roof: yet do I find her the most abandoned of all beings; a creature guilty of that, which, even in this guilty age, I thought was obsolete. And is it possible that I am like her? that I can

resemble her? that even the indefinite shadow of my most unhallowed thought can, for a moment, be as vile as her righteousness? O, God! the system of my existence seems to stop; I cannot breathe." He flung himself upon his bed, and felt for a moment as if he had quaffed the poisoning draught so lately offered.

"It is not so—it cannot be so—it shall not be so! In seeking the marquess, I was unquestionably impelled by a mere feeling of self-interest; but I have advised him to no course of action, in which his welfare is not equally consulted with my own. Indeed, if not principle, interest would make me act faithfully towards him, for my fortunes are bound up in his. But am I entitled—I, who can lose nothing—am I entitled to play with other men's fortunes? Am I, all this time, deceiving myself with some wretched sophistry? Am I then an intellectual Don Juan, reckless of human minds as he was of human bodies—a spiritual libertine? But why this wild declamation? Whatever I have done, it is too late to recede; even at this very moment *delay is destruction*, for now it is not a question as to the ultimate prosperity of our worldly prospects, but the immediate safety of our very bodies. Poison! O, God! O, God! Away with all fear—all repentance—all thought of past—all reckoning of future. If I am the Juan that I fancied myself, then, Heaven be praised! I have a confidant in all my trouble, the most faithful of counsellors; the craftiest of valets; a Leporello often tried, and never found wanting—my own good mind. And now, thou female fiend! the battle is to the strongest; and I see right well, that the struggle between two such spirits will be a long and fearful one. Wo, I say, to the vanquished! You must be dealt with by arts which even yourself cannot conceive. Your boasted knowledge of human nature shall not again stand you in stead; for, mark me from henceforward, Vivian Grey's conduct towards you shall have no precedent in human nature."

As Vivian re-entered the drawing-room, he met a servant carrying in the globe of gold and silver fishes.

"What, still in your pelisse, Mrs. Lorraine?" said Vivian. "Nay, I hardly wonder at it, for surely a prettier pelisse never yet fitted prettier form. You have certainly a most admirable taste in dress; and this the more surprises me, for it is generally your plain personage that is the most *recherché* in frills, and fans, and flounces."

The lady smiled.

"O! by-the-by," continued her companion, "I've a letter from Cleveland this morning. I wonder how any misunderstanding could possibly have existed between you, for he speaks of you in *such* terms."

"What does he say?" was the quick question.

"O, *what does he say?*" drawled out Vivian; and he yawned and was most provokingly uncommunicative.

"Come, come, Mr. Grey, *do* tell me."

"O! tell you—certainly. Come, let us walk together in the conservatory;" so saying, he took the lady by the hand and they left the room.

"And now for the letter, Mr. Grey!"

"Ay, now for the letter!" and Vivian slowly drew an epistle from his pocket, and therefrom read some exceedingly sweet passages, which made Mrs. Felix Lorraine's very heart's blood tingle. Considering that Vivian Grey had never in his life

received a single letter from Mr. Cleveland, this was tolerably well: but he was always an admirable improvisatore!

"I am sure that when Cleveland comes to town every thing will be explained; I am sure, at least, that it will not be my fault if you are not the best friends. I am heroic in saying all this, Mrs. Lorraine; there was a time when—(and here Vivian seemed so agitated that he could scarcely proceed)—there was a time when I could have called that man—*Liar!* who would have prophesied that Vivian Grey could have assisted another in riveting the afflictions of Mrs. Felix Lorraine;—but enough of this. I am a weak, inexperienced boy, and misinterpret, perhaps, that which is merely a compassionate kindness natural to all women, into a feeling of a higher nature. But, I must learn to contain myself; I really do feel quite ashamed of my behaviour about the tumbler to-day: to act with such unwarrantable unkindness, merely because I had remembered that you once performed the same kind office for Colonel Delmington, was indeed too bad!"

"Colonel Delmington is a vain, empty-headed fool. Do not think of him, my dear Mr. Grey," said Mrs. Felix, with a countenance beaming with smiles.

"Well, I will not; and I'll try to behave like a man; like a man of the world, I should say: but indeed you must excuse the warm feelings of a youth: and truly, when I call to mind the first days of our acquaintance, and then remember that our moonlit walks are gone forever—and that our—"

"Nay, do not believe so, my dear Vivian; believe me, as I ever shall be your friend, your—"

"I will, I will, my dear, my own Amelia!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE LONG GALLERY.

It was an autumnal night—the wind was capricious and changeable as a pretty beauty, or an Italian greyhound, or a shot silk. Now the breeze blew so fresh, that the white clouds dashed along the sky, as if they bore a band of witches too late for their Sabbath meeting—or some other mischief: and now, lulled and soft as the breath of a slumbering infant, you might almost have fancied it midsummer's eve; and the bright moon, with her stary court, reigned undisturbed in the light blue sky. Vivian Grey was leaning against an old beech tree in the most secluded part of the park and was gazing on the moon.

"O! thou bright moon! thou object of my first love! thou shalt not escape an invocation, although, perchance at this very moment, some varlet sonneteer is prating of 'thy boy Endymion,' and 'thy silver bow.' Here to thee, queen of the night! in whatever name thou most delightest! or Bendis, as they hailed you in rugged Thrace; or Bubastis, as they howled to you in mysterious Egypt; or Dian, as they sacrificed to you in gorgeous Rome; or Artemis, as they sighed to you on the bright plains of ever glorious Greece! Why is it, that all men gaze on thee? Why is it, that all men love thee? Why is it, that all men worship thee?

"Shine on, shine on, sultana of the soul! the passions are thy enuch slaves; Ambition gazes on thee, and his burning brow is cooled, and his fitful pulse is calm. Grief wanders in her moonlit walk, and sheds no tear; and when your crescent smiles, the lustre of Joy's revelling eye is dusked. Quick Anger, in your light, forgets revenge: and even dove-eyed Hope feeds on no future joys, when gazing on the miracle of thy beauty.

"Shine on, shine on! although a pure virgin, thou art the mighty mother of all abstraction! The eye of the weary peasant, returning from his daily toil, and the rapt gaze of the inspired poet, are alike fixed on thee; thou stillest the roar of marching armies; and who can doubt thy influence o'er the waves, who has witnessed the wide Atlantic sleeping under thy silver beams?

"Shine on, shine on! they say thou art earth's satellite! yet when I do gaze on thee, my thoughts are not of thy Suzerain. They teach us that thy power is a fable, and that thy divinity is a dream. O, thou bright queen! I will be no traitor to thy sweet authority; and, verily, I will not believe that thy influence o'er our hearts, is, at this moment, less potent, than when we worshipped in thy glittering fane of Ephesus, or trembled at the dark horrors of thine Arician rites. Then, hail to thee, queen of night! Hail to thee, Diana, Triformis, Cynthia, Orthia, Taurica, ever mighty, ever lovely, ever holy! hail! hail! hail!"

If I were a metaphysician, I would tell you why Vivian Grey had been gazing two hours on the moon, for I could then present you with a most logical programme of the march of his ideas, since he whispered his last honeyed speech in the ear of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, at dinner time, until this very moment, when he did not even remember that such a being as Mrs. Felix Lorraine breathed. Glory to the metaphysician's all perfect theory! When they can tell me why, at a bright banquet, the thought of death has flashed across my mind, who fear not death; when they can tell me why, at the burial of my beloved friend, when my very heart-strings seemed bursting, my sorrow has been mocked by the involuntary remembrance of ludicrous adventures and grotesque tales; when they can tell me why, in a dark mountain pass, I have thought of an absent woman's eyes; or why, when in the very act of squeezing the third lime into a beaker of Burgundy cup, my memory hath been of lean apothecaries and their vile drugs!—why, then, I say again, glory to the metaphysician's all perfect theory! and fare-you-well, sweet world, and you, my merry masters, whom, perhaps, I have studied somewhat too cunningly: *nosce teipsum* shall be my motto. I'll doff my travelling cap, and on with the monk's cowl.

There are, mysterious moments in some men's lives, when the faces of human beings are very agony to them, and when the sound of the human voice is jarring as discordant music. These fits are not the consequence of violent or contending passions; they grow not out of sorrow, nor joy nor hope, nor fear, nor hatred, nor despair. For in the hour of affliction, the tones of our fellow-creatures are ravishing as the most delicate lute; and in the flush moment of joy, where is the smile who loves not a witness to his revelry, or a listener to his good fortune? Fear makes us feel our humanity, and then we fly to men, and hope is the parent of kindness. The misanthrope and the

reckless are neither agitated nor agonized. It is in these moments that men find in nature that congeniality of spirit which they seek for in vain in their own species. It is in these moments that we sit by the side of a waterfall, and listen to its music: the livelong day. It is in these moments that we gaze upon the moon. It is in these moments that nature becomes our Egeria; and refreshed and renovated by this beautiful communion, we return to the world, better enabled to fight our parts in the hot war of passions, to perform the great duties for which man appears to have been created,—to love, to hate, to slander, and to slay.

It was past midnight, and Vivian was at a considerable distance from the chateau. He proposed entering by a side-door, which led into the billiard-room, and from thence crossing the long gallery, he could easily reach his apartments without disturbing any of the household. His way led through the little gate at which he had parted with Mrs. Felix Lorraine on the first day of their meeting.

As he softly opened the door which led into the long gallery, he found he was not alone; leaning against one of the casements was a female. Her profile was to Vivian as he entered, and the moon, which shone bright through the window, lit up a countenance which he might be excused for not immediately recognising as that of Mrs. Felix Lorraine. She was gazing steadfastly, but her eye did not seem fixed upon any particular object. Her features appeared convulsed, but their contortions were not momentary, and, pale as death, a hideous grin seemed chiselled on her idiot countenance.

Vivian scarcely knew whether to stay or to retire. Desirous not to disturb her, he determined not even to breathe; and, as is generally the case, his very exertions to be silent made him nervous; and to save himself from being stifled, he coughed.

Mrs. Lorraine immediately started, and stared wildly around her; and when her eye caught Vivian's, there was a sound in her throat something like the death-rattle.

"Who are you?" she eagerly asked.

"A friend, and Vivian Grey."

"Grey! how came you here?" and she rushed forward and wildly seized his hand—and then she muttered to herself, "'tis flesh—'tis flesh."

"I have been playing, I fear, the mooncalf to-night; and find that, though I am a late watcher, I am not a solitary one."

Mrs. Lorraine stared earnestly at him, and then she endeavoured to assume her usual expression of countenance: but the effort was too much for her. She dropped Vivian's arm, and buried her face in her own hands. Vivian was retiring, when she again looked up. "Where are you going?" she asked, with a quick voice.

"To sleep—as I would advise all: 'tis much past midnight."

"Thou sayest not the truth. The brightness of your eye belies the sentence of your tongue. You are *not* for sleep."

"Pardon me, my dear Mrs. Lorraine, I really have been gazing for the last hour," said Vivian, and he moved on.

"Mr. Grey! you are speaking to one who takes her answer from the eye, which does not deceive, and from the speaking lineaments of the face, which are truth's witnesses. Keep your voice for those who can credit man's words. You *will* go, then. What! are you afraid of a woman, because

'tis past midnight,' and you're in an old gallery!"

"Fear, Mrs. Lorraine, is not a word in my vocabulary."

"The words in thy vocabulary are few, boy! as are the years of thine age. He who sent you here this night sent you here not to slumber. Come hither!" and she led Vivian to the window: "what see you?"

"I see nature at rest, Mrs. Lorraine; and I would fain follow the example of beasts, birds, and fishes."

"Yet gaze upon this scene one second. See the distant hills, how beautifully their rich covering is tinted with the moonbeam! These nearer fir trees—how radiantly their black skeleton forms are tipped with silver! and the old and thickly foliaged oaks bathed in light! and the purpled lake reflecting in its lustrous bosom another heaven! Is it not a fair scene?"

"Beautiful! O, most beautiful!"

"Yet Vivian, where is the being for whom all this beauty existeth? Where is your mighty creature—man? The peasant on his rough couch enjoys perchance slavery's only service—money—sweet sleep; or, waking in the night, curses at the same time his lot and his lord. And that lord is restless on some downy couch; his night thoughts, not of this sheeny lake and this bright moon, but of some miserable creation of man's artifice, some mighty nothing which nature knows not of, some offspring of her bastard child—society. Why then is nature loveliest when man looks not on her? For whom, then, Vivian Grey, is this scene so fair?"

"For poets, lady; for philosophers; for all those superior spirits who require some relaxation from the world's toils; spirits who only commingle with humanity on the condition that they may some times commune with nature."

"Superior spirits! say you?" and here they paced the gallery. "When Valerian, first Lord Carabas, raised this fair castle—when, profuse for his posterity, all the genius of Italian art and Italian artists was lavished on this English palace; when the stuffs, and statues, the marbles, and the mirrors, the tapestry, and the carvings, and the paintings of Genoa, and Florence, and Venice, and Padua, and Vicenza, were obtained by him at miraculous cost, and with still more miraculous toil; what think you would have been his sensations, if, while his soul was revelling in the futurity of his descendants keeping their state in this splendid pile, some wizard had foretold to him, that ere three centuries could elapse, the fortunes of his mighty family would be the sport of two individuals; one of them a foreigner, unconnected in blood, or connected only in hatred; and the other a young adventurer, alike unconnected with his race, in blood, or in love! a being ruling all things by the power of his own genius, and reckless of all consequences, save his own prosperity. If the future had been revealed to my great ancestor, the Lord Valerian, think you, Vivian Grey, that we should have been walking in this long gallery?"

"Really, Mrs. Lorraine, I have been so interested in discovering what people think in the nineteenth century, that I have but little time to speculate on the possible opinions of an old gentleman who flourished in the sixteenth."

"You may sneer, sir; but I ask you, if there are

spirits so superior to that of the slumbering lord of this castle, as those of Vivian Grey and Amelia Lorraine; why may there not be spirits proportionately superior to our own?"

"If you are keeping me from my bed, Mrs. Lorraine, merely to lecture my conceit by proving that there are in this world wiser heads than that of Vivian Grey, on my honour, madam, you are giving yourself a great deal of unnecessary trouble."

"You will misunderstand me, then, thou wilful boy!"

"Nay, lady, I will not affect to misunderstand your meaning; but I recognise, you know full well, no intermediate essence between my own good soul, and that ineffable and omnipotent Spirit, in whose existence philosophers and priests alike agree."

"Omnipotent and ineffable essence! O! leave such words to scholars, and to schoolboys! And think you, that such indefinite nothings, such unmeaning abstractions, can influence beings whose veins are full of blood, bubbling like this!" And here she grasped Vivian with a feverish hand—"Omnipotent and ineffable essence! O! I have lived in a land, where every mountain, and every stream, and every ruin, has its legend, and its peculiar spirit; a land, in whose dark forests, the midnight hunter, with his spirit-shout, scars the slumbers of the trembling serf; a land from whose winding rivers, the fair-haired undine welcomes the belated traveller to her fond and fatal embrace; and you talk to me of omnipotent and ineffable essences! O! miserable mocker! It is not true, Vivian Grey; you are but echoing the world's deceit, and even at this hour of the night, thou darrest not speak as thou dost think. Thou worshippst no omnipotent and ineffable essence; thou believest in no omnipotent and ineffable essence; shrined in the secret chamber of your soul, there is an image, before which you bow down in adoration, and that image is—YOURSELF. And truly when I do gaze upon thy radiant eyes," and here the lady's tone became more terrestrial,—“and truly when I do look upon thy luxuriant curls,” and here the lady's small white hand, played like lightning through Vivian's dark hair,—“and truly when I do remember the beauty of thy all-perfect form, I cannot deem thy self-worship—a false idolatry;” and here the lady's arms were locked round Vivian's neck, and her head rested on his bosom.

"O! Amelia! it would be far better for you to rest here, than to think of that of which the knowledge is vanity."

"Vanity!" shrieked Mrs. Lorraine, and she violently loosed her embrace, and extricated herself from the arm, which, rather in courtesy than in kindness, had been wound round her delicate waist; "vanity! O! if you knew but what I know—O! if you had but seen what I have seen"—and here her voice failed her, and she stood motionless in the moonshine, with averted head and outstretched arms.

"Amelia! this is very madness; for Heaven's sake calm yourself!"

"Calm myself! O! it is madness; very, very madness! 'tis the madness of the fascinated bird; 'tis the madness of the murderer who is voluntarily broken on the wheel; 'tis the madness of the fawn, that gazes with admiration on the lurid glare of the anaconda's eye; 'tis the madness of a woman who flies to the arms of her—*Fate*," and here she

sprang like a tigress round Vivian's neck, her long light hair bursting from its bands, and clustering down her shoulders.

And here was Vivian Grey, at past midnight, in this old gallery, with this wild woman clinging round his neck. The figures in the ancient tapestry looked living in the moon, and immediately opposite him was one compartment of some old mythological tale, in which were represented, grinning, in grim majesty,—THE FATES.

The wind now rose again, and the clouds which had vanished began to reassemble in the heavens. As the blue sky was gradually being covered, the gigantic figures of Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos became as gradually dimmer and dimmer, and the grasp of Vivian's fearful burden looser and looser. At last the moon was entirely hid, the figures of the Fates vanished, and Mrs. Felix Lorraine sank lifeless into his arms.

Vivian groped his way with difficulty to the nearest window, the very one at which she was leaning when he first entered the gallery. He played with her wild curls; he whispered to her in a voice sweeter than the sweetest serenade; but she only raised her eyes from his breast, and stared wildly at him, and then clung round his neck with, if possible, a tighter grasp.

For nearly half an hour did Vivian stand leaning against the window, with his mystic and motionless companion. At length the wind again fell; there was a break in the sky, and a single star appeared in the midst of the clouds, surrounded with a little heaven of azure.

"See there, see there!" the lady cried, and then she unlocked her arms. "What would you give, Vivian Grey, to read that star?"

"Am I more interested in that star, Amelia, than in any other of the bright host?" asked Vivian, with a serious tone, for he thought it necessary to humour his companion.

"Are you *not*? is it not the star of thy destiny?"

"And are you learned in all the learning of the Chaldeans, too, lady?"

"O, no, no, no!" slowly murmured Mrs. Lorraine, and then she started; but Vivian seized her arms, and prevented her from again clasping his neck.

"I must keep these pretty hands close prisoners," he said, smiling, "unless you promise to behave with more moderation. Come, my Amelia! you shall be my instructress! Why am I so interested in this brilliant star?" and holding her hands in one of his, he wound his arm round her waist, and whispered her such words as he thought might calm her troubled spirit. The wildness of her eyes gradually gave way; at length, she raised them to Vivian, with a look of meek tenderness, and her head sunk upon his breast.

"It shines, it shines, it shines, Vivian! glory to thee, and to me! Nay, you need not hold my hands, I will not harm you. I cannot—'tis no use. O, Vivian! when we first met, how little did I know to whom I pledged myself!"

"Amelia, forget these wild fancies, strange yourself from the murky mysticism which has exercised so baneful an influence, not only over your mind, but over the very soul of the land from which you come. Recognise in me only your friend, and leave the other world to those who value it more, or more deserve it. Does not this

fair earth contain sufficient of interest and enjoyment?"

"O, Vivian! you speak with a sweet voice, but with a sceptic's spirit. Thou knowest not what I know."

"Tell me then, my Amelia; let me share your secrets, provided they be your sorrows!"

"O, Vivian! almost within this hour, and in this park, there has happened that—which—" and here her voice died, and she looked fearfully round her.

"Nay, fear not, fear not; no one can harm you here, and no one shall harm you. Rest, rest upon me, and tell me all thy grief."

"I dare not—I cannot tell you."

"Nay, my own love, thou shalt."

"I cannot speak, your eye scares me. Are you mocking me! I cannot speak if you look so at me."

"I will not look on you; I will play with your long hair, and gaze on yonder star. Now, speak on, my own love."

"O, Vivian! there is a custom in my native land—the world calls it an unhallowed one; you, in your proud spirit, will call it a vain one. But you would not deem it vain, if you were the woman now resting on your bosom. At certain hours of particular nights, and with peculiar ceremonies, which I need not here mention—we do believe, that in a lake or other standing water, fate reveals itself to the solitary votary. O, Vivian! I have been too long a searcher after this fearful science; and this very night, agitated in spirit, I sought yon water. The wind was in the right direction, and every thing concurred in favouring a most propitious divination. I knelt down to gaze on the lake. I had always been accustomed to view my own figure performing some future action, or engaged in some future scene of my life. I gazed, but I saw nothing but a brilliant star. I looked up into the heavens, but the star was not there, and the clouds were driving quick across the sky. More than usually agitated by this singular occurrence, I gazed once more; and just at the moment when, with breathless and fearful expectation, I waited the revelation of my immediate destiny, there flitted a figure across the water. It was there only for the breathing of a second, and as it passed it mocked me." Here Mrs. Lorraine writhed in Vivian's arms; her features were moulded in the same unnatural expression as when he first entered the gallery, and the hideous grin was again sculptured on her countenance. Her whole frame was in such a state of agitation, that she rose up and down in Vivian's arms: and it was only with the exertion of his whole strength that he could retain her.

"Why, Amelia—this—this was nothing—your own figure."

"No, not my own—it was yours!"

Uttering a loud and piercing shriek, which echoed through the winding gallery, she fainted.

Vivian gazed on her in a state of momentary stupefaction, for the extraordinary scene had begun to influence his own nerves. And now he heard the tread of distant feet, and a light shone through the key-hole of the nearest door. The fearful shriek had alarmed some of the household. What was to be done! In desperation, Vivian caught the lady up in his arms, and dashing out of an opposite door, bore her to her chamber.

CHAPTER VII.

SOUTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY.

WHAT is this chapter to be about? Come, I am inclined to be courteous! You shall choose the subject of it. What shall it be—sentiment or scandal? a love scene, or a lay-sermon—or a lecture on omelettes soufflées? I am sick of the world! Don't be frightened, sweet reader! I, Pearson, bring me a bottle of soda-water! I am sick of the world, and actually am now hesitating whether I shall turn misanthrope, or go to the ancient music. Not that you are to imagine that I am a dissatisfied, disappointed, moody monster, who lectures the stars, and fancies himself Rousseau secundus—not in the least. I am naturally a very amiable individual; but the truth is, I have been suffering the last three weeks under a tremendous attack of bile, and if I chance to touch a quill in this miserable state, why, unfortunately, I have the habit of discharging a little of that ever-to-be-abhorred juice. This, therefore, must be my excuse for occasionally appearing to be a little peevish. Far from disliking the world, I am always ready to do its merits the most poetical justice. O! thou beautiful world! thou art a very pleasant thing—to those who know thee not. Pah! I can't get on: and now, on looking in the glass again, I do find myself a *little* yellow under the eyes still, a twitch in the left temple, tongue like snow in a fog, a violent nausea, pulse at one hundred and ten, yet with an appetite of a Bonassus. Another fit of the bile, by all that's sacred—O! thou vile world! now for a libel!

When Vivian awoke in the morning, he found a note upon his pillow.

"Did you hear the horrid shriek last night? It must have disturbed every one. I think it must have been one of the South American birds, which Captain Tropic gave the marchioness. Do not they sometimes favour the world with these nocturnal shriekings? Isn't there a passage in Spix apropos to this? A—"

"Did you hear the shriek last night, Mr. Grey?" asked the marchioness, as Vivian entered the breakfast-room.

"O yes! Mr. Grey, did you hear the shriek?" asked Miss Graves.

"Who didn't?"

"O! what could it be?" said the marchioness.

"O! what could it be?" said Miss Graves.

"O! what could it be—a cat in the gutter, or a sick cow, or a toad dying to be devoured, Miss Graves."

Always snub toadeys and fed captains. 'Tis only your greenhorns who endeavour to make their way by fawning and cringing to every member of the establishment. It is a miserable mistake. No one likes his dependants to be treated with respect, for such treatment affords an unpleasant contrast to his own conduct. Besides, it makes the toadey's blood unruly. There are three persons, mind you, to be attended to:—my lord, or my lady, as the case may be, (usually the latter,) the pet daughter, and the pet dog. I throw out these hints *en passant*, for my principal objects in writing this work are to amuse myself, and to instruct society. In some future book, probably the twentieth or twenty-fifth, when the plot begins to wear threadbare, and we can afford a digression, I may give a chapter on domestic tactics.

"My dear marchioness," continued Vivian, "see there I've kept my promise—there's your bracelet. How's Julie to-day?"

"O, Julie! poor dear, I hope she's better."

"O, yes, poor Julie! I think she's better."

"I don't know that, Miss Graves," said her ladyship somewhat tartly, not at all approving of a toadey *thinking*. "I'm afraid that scream last night must have disturbed her. O, dear Mr. Grey, I'm afraid she'll be ill again."

Miss Graves looked mournful, and lifted up her eyes and hands to Heaven, but did not dare to speak this time.

"I thought she looked a little heavy about the eyes this morning," said the marchioness, apparently very agitated; "and I've heard from Eglamour's this post; he's not well too—I think everybody's ill now—he's caught a fever going to see the ruins of Pæstum: I wonder why people go to see ruins!"

"I wonder indeed," said Miss Graves; "I never could see anything in a ruin."

"O, dear Grey!" continued the marchioness, "I really am afraid Julie's going to be very ill."

"O! let Miss Graves pull her tail and give her a little mustard seed; she'll be better to-morrow."

"Well, Graves, mind you do what Mr. Grey tells you."

"O! y-e-s, my lady!"

"Mrs. Felix Lorraine," said the marchioness, as that lady entered the room, "you are late to-day; I always reckon upon you as a supporter of an early breakfast at Desir."

"O! I've been half round the park."

"Did you hear the scream, Mrs. Felix?"

"Do you know what it *was*, marchioness?"

"No—do you?"

"Ay! ay! see the reward of early rising, and a walk before breakfast. It was one of your new American birds, and it has half torn down our aviary."

"One of the new Americans! O, the naughty thing! and it has broke the new fancy wire work?"

Here a little odd-looking, snuffy old man, with a brown scratch wig, who had been very busily employed the whole breakfast-time with a cold game pie, the bones of which Vivian observed him most scientifically pick and polish, laid down his knife and fork, and addressed the marchioness with an air of great interest.

"Pray will your ladyship have the goodness to inform me what bird this is?"

The marchioness looked astonished at any one presuming to ask her a question; and then she drawled, "Vivian, you know everything—tell this gentleman what a bird is."

Now this gentleman was Mr. Mackaw, the most celebrated ornithologist extant, and who had written a treatise on Brazilian parrots, in three volumes folio. He had arrived late at the chateau the preceding night, and, although he had the honour of presenting his letter of introduction to the marquess, this morning was the first time he had been seen by any of the party present, who were of course profoundly ignorant of his character.

"O! we were talking of some South American bird given to the marchioness by the famous Captain Tropic; you know him, perhaps, Bolivar's brother-in-law, or aid-de-camp, or something of that kind:—and which screams so dreadfully at

night, that the whole family is disturbed. The Chowchowitzow, it's called—isn't it, Mrs. Lorraine?"

"The Chowchowitzow!" said Mr. Mackaw "I don't know it by that name."

"O! don't you? I dare say we shall find an account of it in Spix, however," said Vivian rising, and taking a volume from the book-case "ay! here it is—I'll read it to you."

"The Chowchowitzow is about five feet seven inches in length, from the point of the bill to the extremity of the claws. Its plumage is of a dingy, yellowish white: its form is elegant, and in its movements, and action, a certain pleasing and graceful dignity is observable; but its head is by no means worthy of the rest of its frame, and the expression of its eye is indicative of the cunning and treachery of its character. The habits of this bird are peculiar: occasionally most easily domesticated, it is apparently sensible of the slightest kindness; but its regard cannot be depended upon, and for the slightest inducement, or with the least irritation, it will fly at its feeder. At other times, it seeks the most perfect solitude, and can only be captured with the greatest skill and perseverance. It generally feeds three times a-day, but its appetite is not rapacious; it sleeps little; is usually on the wing at sunrise, and proves that it slumbers but little in the night by its nocturnal and thrilling shrieks."

"What an extraordinary bird! Is that the bird you meant, Mrs. Felix Lorraine?"

Mr. Mackaw was extremely restless the whole time that Vivian was reading this interesting extract. At last he burst forth with an immense deal of science, and a great want of construction—a want, which scientific men often experience, always excepting those mealy-mouthed *professeurs* who lecture "at the Royal," and get patronised by the blues—the Lavoisiers of May fair!

"Chowchowitzow, my lady!—five feet seven inches high! Brazilian bird! When I just remind your ladyship that the height of the tallest bird to be found in Brazil,—and in mentioning this fact, I mention nothing hypothetical,—the tallest bird does not stand higher than four feet nine. Chowchowitzow! Dr. Spix is a name—accurate traveller—don't remember the passage—most singular bird! Chowchowitzow! don't know it by that name. Perhaps, your ladyship isn't aware,—I think you called that gentleman Mr. Grey,—perhaps, Mr. Grey is not aware, that I am Mr. Mackaw—I arrived here late last night—whose work in three volumes folio, on Brazilian Parroquets, although I had the honour of seeing his lordship, is, I trust, a sufficient evidence that I am not speaking at random on this subject; and consequently from the lateness of the hour, could not have the honour of being introduced to your ladyship."

"Mr. Mackaw!" thought Vivian, "the deuce you are! O! why didn't I say a Columbian cassowary, or a Peruvian penguin, or a Chilian condor, or a Guatemalan goose, or a Mexican mustard—any thing but Brazilian! O! unfortunate Vivian Grey."

The marchioness, who was quite overcome with this scientific appeal, raised her large, beautiful, sleepy eyes, from a delicious compound of French roll and new milk, which she was working up in a Sevre saucer for Julie; and then, as usual, looked to Vivian for assistance.

"Grey, dear! You know every thing, tell Mr. Mackaw about this bird."

"Is there any point on which you differ from Spix in his account of the Chowchotow, Mr. Mackaw?"

"My dear sir, I don't follow him at all. Dr. Spix is a most excellent man; a most accurate traveller—quite a name—but to be sure, I've only read his work in our own tongue, and I fear from the passage you have just quoted—five feet seven inches high! in Brazil! It must be a most imperfect version. I say that four feet nine is the greatest height I know. I don't speak without some foundation for my statement. The only bird I know about that height is the Paraguay cassowary; which, to be sure, is sometimes found in Brazil. But the description of your bird, Mr. Grey, does not answer that at all. I ought to know. I do not speak at random. The only living specimen of that extraordinary bird, the Paraguay cassowary, in this country, is in my possession. It was sent me by Bonpland; and was given to him by the Dictator of Paraguay himself. I call it, in compliment, *Doctor Francia*. I arrived here so late last night—only saw his lordship—or I would have had it on the lawn this morning."

"O! then, Mr. Mackaw," said Vivian, "that was the bird which screamed last night."

"O, yes! O, yes! Mr. Mackaw," said Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

"Marchioness! marchioness!" continued Vivian, "it's found out. It's Mr. Mackaw's particular friend, his family physician, whom he always travels with, that awoke us all last night."

"Is he a foreigner?" asked the marchioness, looking up.

"My dear Mr. Grey, impossible! the doctor never screams."

"O! Mr. Mackaw, Mr. Mackaw!" said Vivian.

"O! Mr. Mackaw, Mr. Mackaw!" said Mrs. Felix Lorraine.

"I tell you he never screams," reiterated the man of science, "I tell you he can't scream, he's muzzled."

"O! then it must have been the Chowchotow."

"Yes, I think it must have been the Chowchotow."

"I should very much like to hear Spix's description again," said Mr. Mackaw, "only I fear it's troubling you too much, Mr. Grey."

"Read it yourself, my dear sir," said Vivian, putting the book into his hand, which was the third volume of Tremaine.

Mr. Mackaw looked at the volume, and turned it over, and sideways, and upside downwards: the brain of a man who has written three folios on parroquets is soon puzzled. At first he thought the book was a novel; but then, an essay on predestination, under the title of *Memoirs of a Man of Refinement*, rather puzzled him; then he mistook it for an Oxford reprint of Pearson on the Creed; and then he stumbled on rather a warm scene in an old chateau in the south of France.

Before Mr. Mackaw could gain the power of speech, the door opened, and entered—who? Doctor Francia.

Mr. Mackaw's travelling companion possessed the awkward accomplishment of opening doors, and now strutted in, in quest of his beloved master.

Affection for Mr. Mackaw was not, however, the only cause which induced this entrée.

The household of Chateau Desir, unused to cassowaries, had neglected to supply Dr. Francia with his usual breakfast, which consisted of half a dozen pounds of rump steaks, a couple of bars of hard iron, some pig lead, and brown stout. The consequence was, the dictator was sadly famished.

All the ladies screamed; and then Mrs. Felix Lorraine admired the doctor's violet neck, and the marchioness looked with an anxious eye on Julie, and Miss Graves, as in duty bound, with an anxious eye on the marchioness.

There stood the doctor, quite still, with his large yellow eye fixed on Mr. Mackaw. At length he perceived the cold pastry, and his little black wings began to flutter on the surface of his immence body.

"Che, che, che, che!" said the ornithologist, who didn't like the symptoms at all: "Che, che, che, che,—don't be frightened, ladies! you see he's muzzled—che, che, che, che.—now, my dear doctor, now, now, now, Franky, Franky, Franky, now go away, go away, that's a dear doctor—che, che, che, che!"

But the large yellow eye grew more flaming and fiery, and the little black wings grew larger and larger; and now the left leg was dashed to and fro, with a fearful agitation. Mackaw looked agonized. Pop! what a whirl! Francia is on the table! All shriek, the chairs tumble over the ottomans—the *Sevre china* is in a thousand pieces—the muzzle is torn off and thrown at Miss Graves; Mackaw's wig is dashed in the clotted cream, and devoured on the spot; and the contents of the boiling urn are poured over the beautiful and beloved Julie!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VIVIAN PAPERS.

MR. COLBURN insists that this is the only title under which I can possibly publish the letters which Vivian Grey received on the — day of —, 18—. I love to be particular in dates.

THE HONOURABLE MISS CYNTHIA COURTOWN TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

Alburies, Oct. 18.

"DEAR GREY,—We have now been at Alburies for a fortnight. Nothing can be more delightful. Here is everybody in the world that I wish to see, except yourself. The Knightons, with as many outriders as usual: Lady Julia and myself are great allies. I like her amazingly. The Marquess of Grandgout arrived here last week, with a most delicious party; all the men who write John Bull. I was rather disappointed at the first sight of Stanislaus Hoax. I had expected, I don't know why, something juvenile, and squibbish—when lo! I was introduced to a corpulent individual, with his coat buttoned up to his chin, looking dull, gentlemanly, and apoplectic. However, on acquaintance he came out quite rich—sings delightful, and improvises like a prophet—ten thousand times more entertaining than Pistrucci. We are sworn friends; and I know all the secret history of John Bull.

There is not much, to be sure, that you didn't tell me yourself; but still there are *some things*. I must not trust them, however, to paper, and therefore pray dash down to Alburies immediately; I shall be most happy to introduce you to Lord Devil-drain. There *was* an interview. What think you of that? Stanislaus told me all, *circumstantially*, and *after dinner*—I don't doubt that it's quite true. What would you give for the secret history of the 'rather yellow, rather yellow,' *chanson*? I dare not tell it you. It came from a quarter that will quite astound you, and in a very elegant, small, female hand. You remember Lambton did stir very awkwardly in the Lisbon business. Stanislaus wrote all the songs that appeared in the first numbers, except that; but he never wrote a single line of prose for the first three months; it all came from Vivida Vis.

"I like the Marquess of Grandgout so much! I hope he'll be elevated in the peerage: he looks as if he wanted it so: poor dear man!

"O! do you know I've discovered a *liaison* between Bull and Blackwood? I'm to be in the next Noctes; I forget the words of the chorus exactly, but *Courtown* is to rhyme with *port down*, or something of that kind, and then they're to dash their glasses over their heads, give three cheers, and adjourn to whisky-toddy and the Chaldee chamber. How delightful!

"The Prima Donnas are at Cheltenham, looking most respectable. Do you ever see the Age? It is not proper for me to take it in. Pray send me down your numbers, and tell me all about it; that's a dear. Is it true that his lordship paragraphizes a little!

"I have not heard from Ernest Clay, which I think very odd. If you write to him, mention this, and tell him to send me word how Dormer Stanhope behaves at mess. I understand there has been a *melée*, not much—merely a *roulette*: do get it all out of him.

"Colonel Delmington is at Cheltenham, with the most knowing beard you can possibly conceive; Lady Julia rather patronises him. Lady Doubtful has been turned out of the rooms; fifty challenges in consequence, and one duel; missed fire, of course.

"I have heard from Alhambra; he has been wandering about in all directions. He has been to the Lakes, and is now at Edinburgh. He likes Southey. He gave the laureate a quantity of hints for his next volume of the Peninsular War, but does not speak very warmly of Wordsworth, gentlemanly man, but only reads his own poetry. I made him promise to go and see De Quincy; and, like a good boy, he did; but he says he's a complete humbug. What can he mean? He stayed some days at Sir Walter's and met Tom Moore. Singular, that our three great poets should be together this summer! He speaks in raptures of the great baronet, and of the beauties of Abbotsford. He met Tom Moore again in Edinburgh, and was present at the interview between him and Hogg. Lalla Rookh did not much like being called 'Tam Muir,' and rather kicked at the shepherd.

"Edinburgh is more delightful than you can possibly conceive. I certainly intend to go next summer. Alhambra is very intimate with John Wilson, who seems indeed a first-rate fellow, full of fun and genius; and quite as brilliant a hand at a comic song, as at a tragic drama. Do you know it struck me the other day, that comic song

and tragedies are 'the lights and shadows' of literature. Pretty idea, is it not?

"Here has been a cousin of yours about us; a young barrister going the circuit, by name Hargrave Grey. The name attracted my notice, and due inquiries having been made, and satisfactorily answered, I patronised the limb of law. Fortunate for him! I got him to all the fancy balls and pic-nics that were going on. He was in heaven for a fortnight, and at length, having overstayed his time, he left us, also leaving his bag and only brief behind him. They say he's ruined for life. Write soon.

"Yours, ever,

"CYNTHIA COURTTOWN."

ERNEST CLAY, ESQ., TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

"October —, 18—.

"DEAR GREY!—I am sick of key-bugles and country balls! All the girls in town are in love with me—or my foraging cap. I am very much obliged to you for your letter to Kennet, which procured every thing I wanted. The family turned out *bores*, as you had prepared me. I never met such a clever family in my life; the father is summoning up courage to favour the world with a volume of sermons; both the sons have had sonnets refused by the London magazines; and Isabella Kennet most satisfactorily proved to me, after an argument of two hours, which, for courtesy's sake, I fought very manfully, that Sir Walter Scott was not the author of *Waverley*; and then she vowed, as I have heard fifty other young literary ladies vow before, that she had 'seen the Antiquary in manuscript.'

"There has been a slight row to diversify the monotony of our military life. Young Premium, the son of the celebrated loan-monger, has bought in; and Dormer Stanhope, and one or two others equally fresh, immediately anticipated another Battier business; but with the greatest desire to make a fool of myself, I have a natural repugnance to mimicking the foolery of others; so with some little exertion, and very fortunately for young Premium, I got the tenth voted vulgar, on the score of curiosity, and we were civil to the man. As it turned out, it was all very well, for Premium is a quiet gentlemanly fellow enough, and exceedingly useful. He'll keep extra grooms for the whole mess, if they want it. He's very grateful to me for what does not deserve any gratitude, and for what gave me no trouble; for I did not defend him from any feeling of kindness. And both the Mouteneys, and young Stapylton Toad, and Augustus, being in the regiment, why, I've very little trouble in commanding a majority, if it come to a division.

"I dined the other day at old Premium's, who lives near this town in a magnificent old hall, which, however, is not near splendid enough for a man who is the creditor of every nation from California to China; and, consequently, the great Mr. Stucco is building a plaster castle for him in another part of the park. Glad am I enough, that I was prevailed upon to patronise the Premium; for I think I never witnessed a more singular scene than I did the day I dined there.

"I was ushered through an actual street of ~~serv~~itors, whose liveries were really cloth of gold, and whose elaborately powdered heads would not have disgraced the most ancient mansion in St.

James's Square, into a large and very crowded saloon. I was, of course, received with the most miraculous consideration; and the ear of Mrs. Premium seemed to dwell upon the jingling of my spurs, (for I am adjutant,) as upon the most exquisite music. It was *bona fide* evidence of 'the officers being there.' She'll now be visited by the whole country.

"Premium is a short, but by no means vulgar-looking man, about fifty, with a high forehead covered with wrinkles, and with eyes deeply sunk in his head. I never met a man of apparently less bustle, and of a cooler temperament. He was an object of observation from his very unobtrusiveness. There were, I immediately perceived, a great number of foreigners in the room. They looked much too knowing for Arguelles and Co., and I soon found that they were members of the different embassies, or missions of the various governments, to whose infant existence Premium is foster-father. There were two very striking figures in oriental costume, who were shown to me as the Greek deputies—not that you are to imagine that they always appear in this picturesque dress. It was only as a particular favour, and to please Miss Premium,—there, Grey, my boy! there's a quarry!—that the illustrious envoys appeared habited, this day, in their national costume.

"O! Grey, you would have enjoyed the scene. In one part of the room was a naval officer, just hot from the mines of Mexico, and lecturing eloquently on the passing of the Cordillera. In another, was a man of science, dilating on the miraculous powers of a newly-discovered amalgamation process, to a knot of merchants, who, with bent brows and eager eyes, were already forming a company for its adoption. Here floated the latest anecdote of Bolivar; and there a murmur of some new movement of Cochrane's. And then the perpetual babble about 'rising states,' and 'new loans,' and 'enlightened views,' and 'junctures of the two oceans,' and 'liberal principles,' and 'steamboats to Mexico,' and the earnest look which every one had in the room. O! how different to the vacant gaze that we have been accustomed to! I was really particularly struck by this circumstance. Every one at Premium's looked full of some great plan; as if the fate of empires was on his very breath. I hardly knew whether they were most like conspirators, or gamblers, or the lions of a public dinner, conscious of an universal gaze, and consequently looking proportionately interesting. One circumstance particularly struck me: as I was watching the acute countenance of an individual, who young Premium informed me was the Chilean minister, and who was listening with great attention to a dissertation from Captain Tropic, the celebrated traveller, on the feasibility of a railroad over the Andes—I observed a very great sensation among all those around me; every one shifting, and shuffling, and staring, and assisting in that curious and confusing ceremony, called *making way*. Even Premium appeared a little excited, when he came forward with a smile on his face, to receive an individual, apparently a foreigner, and who stepped on with great, though gracious dignity. Being very curious to know who this great man was, I found that this was an *ambassador*—the representative of a recognised state.

"'Pon my honour, when I saw all this, I could not refrain from moralizing on the magic of

wealth, and when I just remember the embryo plot of some young huzzar officers to *cut* the son of the magician, I rather smiled; but while I, with even greater reverence than all others, was making way for *his excellency*, I observed Mrs. Premium looking at my spurs—'Farewell, Philosophy!' thought I, 'puppyism for ever!'

"Dinner was at last announced, and the nice etiquette which was observed between *recognised* states and *non-recognised* states, was really excessively amusing: not only the ambassador would take precedence of the mere political agent, but his excellency's private secretary was equally tenacious as to the agent's private secretary. At length we were all seated:—the spacious dining-room was hung round with portraits of the most of the *successful* revolutionary leaders, and over Mr. Premium was suspended a magnificent portrait of Bolivar. O! Grey, if you could but have seen the plate! By Jove! I have eaten off the silver of most of the first families in England, yet, never in my life, did it enter into my imagination, that it was possible for the most ingenious artist that ever existed, to repeat a crest half so often in a table spoon, as in that of Premium. The crest is a bubble, and really the effect produced by it is most ludicrous.

"I was very much struck at table, by the appearance of an individual who came in very late, but who was evidently, by his bearing, no insignificant personage. He was a tall man, with a long hooked nose, and high cheek bones, and with an eye—(were you ever at the Old Bailey? there you may see its fellow;)—his complexion looked as if it had been accustomed to the breezes of many climes; and his hair, which had once been red, was now silvered, or rather iron-grayed, not by age. Yet there were in his whole bearing, in his slightest actions, even in the easy, desperate air with which he took a glass of wine, an indefinable—something (you know what I mean) which attracted your unremitting attention to him. I was not wrong in my suspicions of his celebrity; for, as Miss Premium, whom I sat next to, (eh! Grey, my boy, how are you? 'tis a very fine thing for a father-in-law,' &c., &c.,) whispered, 'he was quite a lion.' It was Lord Oceanville. What he is after, no one knows. Some say he is going to Greece, others whisper an invasion of Paraguay, and others of course say other things, perhaps equally correct. I think he's for Greece. I know he's the most extraordinary man I ever met with. I'm getting prosy. Good 'bye! Write soon. Any fun going on? How is Cynthia? I ought to have written. How's Mrs. Felix Lorraine? she's a d—d odd woman!

"Yours, faithfully,

"ERNEST CLAY."

MR. DANIEL GROVES TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

"SIR,—I have just seen Sir Hanway, who gave me a letter from you, requesting me to furnish you with my ideas on the state of the agricultural interest; and to think of John Conyers for the farm of Maresfield, now vacant.

"With respect to the former, I can't help thinking ministers remarkable wrong on the point of the game laws particularly, to say nothing of the duty on felled timber, malt, and brown mustard. 'Tayn't the greatness of the duty that makes the increase of the revenue. That's my maxim.

"As to Maresfield, I certainly had an eye to it for my second son, William, as my mistress says, he's now getting fittish to look out for himself in the world—and then there's my nephew at Edgecombe, the son of my sister Mary, who married one of the Wrights at Upton, and I always promised old Mr. Wright to see Tom well done by. That's the ground I stand upon. But, certainly, to oblige your honour, I can't say but what I'll think of it.

"Sir Hanway says, Conyers told him that Whitefooted Moll died on Wednesday. She was, as your honour always said, a pretty creature. Talking of this, puts me in mind, that if your honour comes in for Mounteney, which they're talking of in these parts, I hope you'll say something about the tax on cart-horses. This is the ground I stand upon—if a gentleman keeps a horse for pleasure, it's only right government should have the benefit: but when it's to promote the agricultural interest, my maxim is, it's remarkable wrong to tax 'em all promiscuous.

"As for Conyers, I can't help thinking his cottage might be removed: it stands in the midst of one of the finest pieces of cornland in this country; and I said so the other day to Mr. Stapylton Toad, but he's not a man as'll take advice. That Maresfield farm is a nice bit for game, as I believe your honour well knows. I took out Snowball and Negro the other morning, with young Fletcher of Upton—he's the third cousin of old Mrs. Wright's sister-in-law's niece—we coursed three hares, and killed one just opposite Gunter's on the hill, who's a bit of a relation again on my wife's side; so I just looked in and took a crust of bread and cheese, for civility costs nothing—that's my maxim.

"The new beer bill is felt a grievance—John Sandys says as my men won't be satisfied with less than ten strike to the hogshead; this is remarkable wrong. So you may make your mind easy about John Conyers: I've been talking to my mistress, and the upshot of it is, that I'll take my old horse and ride over to Stapylton Toad and settle with him about the removal; and if I can give you any more information on this point, or any thing else relating to our part of the world, or the corn-laws in general, I shall be very happy to remain

"Your honour's obedient servant,

"DANIEL GROVES.

"P. S. The half pipe of port wine I told you of is come in, and I think it promises to be as good sterling stuff as ever you need wish to taste—some *body* in it—none of your French vinegary slip-slop. Depend on't, port's the wine for Englishmen—there's some stamina in it: that's the ground I stand upon."

HARGRAVE GREY, ESQ., TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

"October —, 17—.

"DEAR VIVIAN,—You ought not to expect a ceter from me. I cannot conceive why you do not occasionally answer your correspondents' letters, if correspondents they may be called. It is really a most unreasonable habit of yours; any one but myself would quarrel with you.

"A letter from Baker met me at this place, and I find that the whole of that most disagreeable and annoying business is arranged. From the promptitude, skill, and energy, which are apparent in the whole affair, I suspect I have to thank the very

gentleman, whom I was just going to quarrel with. You're a good fellow, Vivian, after all. For want of a brief, I sit down to give you a sketch of my adventures on this my first circuit.

"This circuit is a cold and mercantile adventure, and I'm disappointed in it. Not so either, for I looked for but little to enjoy. Take one day of my life as a specimen; the rest are mostly alike. The sheriff's trumpets are playing,—one, some tune of which I know nothing, and the other no tune at all. I'm obliged to turn out at eight. It is the first day of the assize, so there is some chance of a brief, being a new place. I push my way into court through files of attorneys, as civil to the rogues as possible, assuring them there is plenty of room, though I am at the very moment gasping for breath, wedged in a lane of well lined waistcoats. I get into court, take my place in the quietest corner, and there I sit, and pass other men's fees and briefs like a twopenny postman only without pay. Well! 'tis six o'clock—dinner time—at the bottom of the table—carve for all—speak to none—nobody speaks to me—must wait till last to sum up, and pay the bill. Reach home quite devoured by spleen, after having heard every one abused, who happened to be absent.

"You wished me many briefs, but only one of your wishes have come to pass, and that at this place; but I flatter myself I got up the law of the case in a most masterly style; and I am sure you will allow me to be capable of so doing, when I relate the particulars:—

"Indictment states, that prisoner, on, &c., at, &c., from out of a certain larder, stole a pork pie.

"2d count—a meat pie.

"3d count—a pie in general.

"The great question was, whether the offence was complete or not, the *felon* not having carried it out of the larder, but only conveyed it into his own pocket:—that is, all he could not eat.

"Plea:—he was hungry.

"Per Bolter Baron.—'He must not satisfy his appetite at another person's expense, so let him be whipped, and discharged; and let the treasurer of the county pay the expenses of this prosecution.' Which were accordingly allowed, to the amount of something under fifty pounds.

"Don't turn up the whites of your eyes, Vivian; and, in the fulness of your indignation, threaten us with all the horrors of parliamentary interference. The fact is, on this circuit, to judge of the number of offences tried, such a theft is as enormous as a burglary, with one or two throats cut, in London, for pork pies are the staple of the county: and they export them by canal to all parts of the world whereto the canals run, which the natives imagine to be to parts beyond seas at least.

"I travelled to this place with Manners, whom I believe you know, and amused myself by getting from him an account of my fellows, anticipating, at the same time, what in fact happened:—to wit, that I should afterwards get his character from them. It is strange how freely they deal with each other—that is, the person spoken of being away. I would not have had you see our Stanhope for half a hundred pounds: your jealousy would have been so excited. To say the truth, we are a little rough;—our mane wants pulling, and our hoofs trimming, but we jog along without performing either operation: and, by dint of rattling the whip against the splash-board, using all one's

persuasion of hand and voice, and jerking the bit in his mouth, we do contrive to get into the circuit-town, usually just about the time that the sheriff and his *posse comitatus* are starting to meet my lord the king's justice:—and that is the worst of it; for their horses are prancing and pawing coursers just out of the stable,—sleek skins and smart drivers. We begin to be knocked up just then, and our appearance is the least brilliant of any part of the day. Here I had to pass through a host of these powdered, scented fops; and the multitude who had assembled to gaze on the nobler exhibition rather scoffed at our humble vehicle. As Manners had just then been set down to find the inn and lodging, I could not jump out and leave our equipage to its fate, so I settled my cravat, and seemed not to mind it—only I *did*.

“Manners has just come in, and insists upon my going to the theatre with him. I shall keep this back another post, to tell you whether I receive another letter from Baker, at ——d!

“No letter from Baker, but I find it so dull sitting in court with nothing to do, that I shall trouble you with a few more lines from myself. The performance last night was rather amusing: Romeo and Juliet turned into a melo-drame, to suit the taste of the vicinity. The nasal tones of Juliet's voice in the love-scenes, must have been peculiarly moving to any Romeo, but to that for whom they were intended, they seemed so much in earnest, that he must have been quite enraptured. There were no half meetings. Juliet entered fully into the feeling of the poet; and hung about his neck, and kissed his lips—all like life, to the great edification of the audience assembled; which, as it was assize week, was a very brilliant one. In such a company, there must necessarily be economy used in the actors and actresses. Thus, as Mercutio is killed off in the first act, he afterwards performs the Friar, and the Friar himself figures as the chief dancer in the masquerade: but I was most charmed at discovering Juliet's nasal tones in her own dirge—a wonderful idea, never before introduced on any stage. I was led to make this discovery, not merely by the fact of her voice being undisguised, but from an unfortunate accident which occurred at the funeral. As the deceased heroine was a chief mourner, her beloved corpse had to be performed by a bundle of rags, or something of the kind, laid upon a sort of school form, and carried by herself and five other ladies in white:—so, as the music was rather quick, and the mourners had to perform *pas de zephyr* all round the stage, and Juliet did not keep very good time, while the virgins on one side were standing on their left legs towards the audience, as nearly in a horizontal posture as possible, the daughter of Capulet, and her battalion, began performing on the wrong leg, and in the consequent scuffle the bier overturned! The accident, however, was speedily rectified, and the procession moved on to the music of two fiddles and one bell. Juliet's tomb was a snug little parlour with blue panels, and Romeo drank gin instead of poison, which Shakspeare must have surely intended, or else it was quite out of nature to make Juliet exclaim, What, churl! not left one drop!

“But I must leave off this nonsense, and attend to his lordship's charge, which is now about to commence. I have not been able to get you a single good murder, although I have kept a sharp

look out as you desired me; but there's a chance of a first-rate one at ——n.

“I am quite delighted with Mr. Justice St. Prose. He is at this moment in a most entertaining passion, preparatory to a ‘*conscientious*’ summing up; and in order that his ideas may not be disturbed, he has very liberally ordered the door-keeper to have the door oiled immediately, *at his own expense*. Now for my lord the king's justice.

“Gentlemen of the jury!

“The noise is insufferable—the heat is intolerable—the door-keepers let the people keep shuffling in—the ducks in the corner are going quack, quack, quack—here's a little girl being tried for her life, and the judge can't hear a word that's said. Bring me my black cap, and I'll condemn her to death instantly.’

“‘You can't, my lord,’ shrieks the infant sinner; ‘it's only for petty larceny!’

“This is agreeable, is it not? but let us see what the next trial will produce:—this was an action of trespass, for breaking off the pump handle, knocking down the back-kitchen door, spitting on the parlour carpet, and tumbling the maid's head about.

“‘Plea.—That the defendants, eight in number, entered in aid of the constable, under warrant of a magistrate, to search for stolen goods.

“John Staff, examined by Mr. Shuffleton.

“Well, Mr. Constable, what have you to say about this affair?’

“Why, sir, I charged them men to assist me in the king's name.’

“What, eight of you? why, there was only an old woman, and a boy, and the servant girl in the house. You must have been terribly frightened at them, eh?’

“Can't say for that, sir, only they was needful.’

“Why, what could you want so many for?’

“Why, you see, sir, I couldn't read the warrant myself, so I charged Abraham Lockit to read it for me; and when he came, he said as it was Squire Jobson's writing, and so he could not, and then I had occasion to charge Simon Lockit, and he read it.’

“Well, that's only two: what were the rest for?’

“Why, your honour, they was to keep the women quiet.’

“*Mr. Justice St. Prose.*—‘Take care what you're about, witness. I consider it my duty to advise you not to laugh; it is, in my opinion, a contempt of court, and I therefore desire you to restrain yourself.’

“*Mr. Shuffleton.*—‘But you haven't told me why you wanted these other six men.’

“‘Why, the women, d'ye see, sir, was so very unruly in the kitchen; and so I charged them to keep 'em quiet.’

“‘Now, sir, what do you call keeping the women quiet, pulling the maid's cap off, and ——?’

“*Mr. Justice St. Prose.* (To a person opposite.)—‘You'll excuse me, sir, but I think that those two little gentlemen had better leave the court till this examination is over.’

“His lordship ‘thought it his duty’ to give a similar warning to two very pretty young ladies in pink bonnets and green pelisses. They were, however, so obstinate as to remain in court, until they had heard the whole circumstantial and improper evidence, of the destruction of the maid's cap. When it was all over, his lordship once more fixed

his large eyes on the constable, and thus delivered himself:—

“Now, Mr. Constable, to remove the sting of any remark which may have dropped from me during this trial, I will allow that, very probably, you had reason to laugh.”—Mr. Constable looked quite relieved.

“By way of variety, I will give a specimen of his lordship's style of cross-examination.

“Enter a witness with a flourishing pair of whiskers, approximating to a King Charles.

“*Mr. Justice St. Prose.*—‘Pray, sir, who are you?’

“*Whiskered witness.*—‘An architect, my lord.’

“*Mr. J. St. Prose.*—‘An architect! sir; are you not in the army?’

“*W. W. (Agitated).*—‘No, my lord.’

“*Mr. J. St. Prose.*—‘Never were?’

“*W. W. (Much browbeat).*—‘No, my lord.’

“*Mr. J. St. Prose.*—‘Then, sir, what right have you to wear those whiskers? I consider that you can't be a respectable young man, and I sha'n't allow you your expenses.’

“I have just got an invite from the Kearneys. Congratulate me.

“Dear Vivian, yours, faithfully,
“HARGRAVE GREY.”

LADY SCROPE TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

“Ormsby Park, Oct. —, 18—.

“MY DEAR VIVIAN,—By desire of Sir Berdmore, (is not this pretty and proper?) I have to request the fulfilment of a promise, upon the hope of which being performed, I have existed through this dull month. Pray, my dear Vivian, come to us immediately. Ormsby has at present little to offer for your entertainment. We have had that unendurable bore, Vivacity Dull, with us for a whole fortnight. A report of the death of the lord chancellor, or a rumour of the production of a new tragedy, has carried him up to town; but whether it be to ask for the seals, or to indite an ingenious prologue to a play which will be condemned the first night, I cannot inform you. I am quite sure he is capable of doing either. However, we shall have other deer in a few days.

“I believe you have never met the Mounteneys—no, I'm sure you have not. They have never been at Hallsbrooke since you have been at Desir. They are coming to us immediately. I am sure you will like them very much. Lord Mounteney is one of those kind, easy-minded, accomplished men, who, after all, are nearly the pleasantest society one ever meets. Rather wild in his youth, but with his estate now unincumbered, and himself perfectly domestic. His lady is an unaffected, agreeable woman. But it is Caroline Mounteney whom I wish you particularly to meet. She is one of those delicious creatures, who, in spite of not being married, are actually conversable. Spirited, without any affectation or *brusquerie*; beautiful, and knowing enough to be quite conscious of it; and perfectly accomplished, and yet never annoying you with tattle about Rochas, and Ronzi de Begnis, and D'Egville.

“We also expect the Delmonts, the most endurable of the Anglo-Italians that I know. Mrs. Delmont is not always dropping her handkerchief like Lady Gusto, as if she expected a miserable *cavalier servente* to be constantly upon his knees,

or giving those odious expressive looks, which quite destroy my nerves whenever I am under the same roof as that horrible Lady Soprano. There is a little too much talk, to be sure, about Roman churches, and newly-discovered Mosaisms, and Abbete Maii, but still we cannot expect perfection. There are reports going about that Ernest Clay is either ruined, going to be married, or about to write a novel.

“Perhaps all are true. Young Premium has nearly lost his character, by driving a square-built, striped green thing, drawn by one horse. Ernest Clay got him through this terrible affair. What can be the reasons of the Sieur Ernest's excessive amiability?

“Both the young Mounteneys are with their regiment, but Aubrey Vere is coming to us, and I've half a promise from—; but I know you never speak to unmarried men, so why do I mention them? Let me, I beseech you, my dear Vivian, have a few days of you to myself, before you are introduced to Caroline Mounteney. I did not think it was possible that I could exist so long without seeing you; but you really must not try me too much, or I shall quarrel with you. I have received all your letters, which are very, very agreeable; but I think rather imprudent. If you don't behave better, I shan't pet you—I shan't indeed; so do not put off coming a single moment. Adieu!
HENRIETTE SCROPE.”

HORACE GREY, ESQ., TO VIVIAN GREY, ESQ.

“Paris, Oct. 18—.

“MY DEAR VIVIAN,—I have received your last letter, and have read it with mixed feelings of astonishment and sorrow.

“You are now, my dear son, a member of what is called, *le grand monde*—society formed on anti-social principles. Apparently, you have possessed yourself of the object of your wishes; but the scenes you live in are very movable; the characters you associate with are all masked; and it will always be doubtful, whether you can retain that longer, which has been obtained by some slippery artifice. Vivian, you are a juggler; and the deception of your slight-of-hand tricks depend upon instantaneous motions.

“When the selfish combine with the selfish, bethink you how many projects are doomed to disappointment! how many cross interests baffle the parties, at the same time joined together without ever uniting! What a mockery is their love! but how deadly are their hatreds! All this great society, with whom so young an adventurer has trafficked, abate nothing of their price in the slavery of their service, and the sacrifice of violated feelings. What sleepless nights has it cost you to win over the disobliged, to conciliate the discontented, to cajole the contumacious! You may smile at the hollow flatteries, answering to flatteries as hollow, which, like bubbles when they touch, dissolve into nothing: but tell me, Vivian, what has the self-tormenter felt at the laughing treacheries, which force a man down into self-contempt?

“Is it not obvious, my dear Vivian, that true fame, and true happiness, must rest upon the imperishable social affections? I do not mean that coterie celebrity, which paltry minds accept as fame, but that which exists independent of the opinions, or the intrigues of individuals; nor do I

mean that glittering show of perpetual converse with the world, which some miserable wanderers call happiness; but that which can only be drawn from the sacred and solitary fountain of your own feelings.

"Active as you have now become in the great scenes of human affairs, I would not have you guided by any fanciful theories of morals or of human nature. Philosophers have amused themselves by deciding on human actions by systems; but as these systems are of the most opposite natures, it is evident that each philosopher, in reflecting his own feelings in the system he has so elaborately formed, has only painted his own character.

"Do not, therefore, conclude with Hobbes and Mandeville, that man lives in a state of civil warfare with man; nor with Shaftesbury, adorn with a poetical philosophy our natural feelings. Man is neither the vile nor the excellent being which he sometimes imagines himself to be. He does not so much act by system as by sympathy. If this creature cannot always feel for others, he is doomed to feel for himself; and the vicious are, at least, blessed with the curse of remorse.

"You are now inspecting one of the worst portions of society, in what is called the great world; (St. Giles's is bad, but of another kind;) and it may be useful, on the principle that the actual sight of brutal ebriety was supposed to have inspired youth with the virtue of temperance, on the same principle that the Platonist, in the study of deformity, conceived the beautiful. Let me warn you not to fall into the usual error of youth, in fancying that the circle you move in is precisely the world itself. Do not imagine that there are not other beings, whose benevolent principle is governed by finer sympathies, by more generous passions, and by those nobler emotions which really constitute all our public and private virtues. I give this hint, lest, in your present society, you might suppose these virtues were merely historical.

"Once more I must beseech you not to give loose to any elation of mind. The machinery by which you have attained this unnatural result, must be so complicated, that, in the very tenth hour, you will find yourself stopped in some part where you never counted on an impediment; and the want of a slight screw, or a little oil, will prevent you from accomplishing your magnificent end.

"We are, and have been, very dull here. There is every probability of Madam de Genlis writing more volumes than ever. I called on the old lady, and was quite amused with the enthusiasm of her imbecility. Chateaubriand is getting what you call a *bore*; and the whole city is mad about a new opera by Boieldieu. Your mother sends her love, and desires me to say, that the *salmi* of woodcocks, à la *Lucullus*, which you write about, does not differ from the practice here in vogue; but we have been much pleased with ducks, with olive sauce, about which she particularly wishes to consult you. How does your cousin Hargrave prosper on his circuit? The Delmingtons are here, which makes it very pleasant for your mother, as well as for myself; for it allows me to hunt over the old book shops at my leisure. There are no new books worth sending you, or they would accompany this; but I would recommend you to get Meyer's new volume from Treuttel and

Wurtz, and continue to make notes as you read it. Give my compliments to the marquess, and believe me

"Your most affectionate father,

"HORACE GREY."

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEPARTURE.

It was impossible for any human being to behave with more kindness than the Marquess of Carabas did to Vivian Grey, after that young gentleman's short conversation with Mrs. Felix Lorraine, in the conservatory. The only feeling which seemed to actuate the peer, was an eager desire to compensate, by his present conduct, for any past misunderstanding, and he loaded his young friend with all possible favour. Still Vivian was about to quit Chateau Desir, and in spite of all that had passed, he was extremely loath to leave his noble friend under the guardianship of his female one.

About this time the Duke and Dutchess of Juggernaut, the very pink of aristocracy, the wealthiest, the proudest, the most ancient, and most pompous couple in Christendom, honoured Chateau Desir with their presence for two days; *only two days*, making the marquess's mansion a convenient resting-place in one of their princely castles.

Vivian contrived to gain the heart of her grace, by his minute acquaintance with the Juggernaut pedigree; and having taken the opportunity, in one of their conversations to describe Mrs. Felix Lorraine as the most perfect specimen of divine creation with which he was acquainted, at the same time the most amusing and the most amiable of women, that lady was honoured with an invitation to accompany her grace to HIMALAYA CASTLE. As this was the greatest of all possible honours, and as Desir was now very dull, Mrs. Felix Lorraine accepted the invitation, or rather obeyed the command, for the marquess would not hear of a refusal, Vivian having dilated, in the most energetic terms, on the opening which now presented itself of gaining the Juggernaut. The coast being thus cleared, Vivian set off the next day for Sir Berdmore Scrope's.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE important time drew nigh. Christmas was to be passed by the Carabas family, the Beaconsfields, the Scropes, and the Clevelands, at Lord Courtown's villa at Richmond: at which place, on account of its vicinity to the metropolis, the viscount had determined to *make out* the holidays, notwithstanding the Thames entered his kitchen windows, and the Donna del Lago was acted in the theatre with real water—Cynthia Courtown performing Elena, paddling in a punt.

"Let us order our horses, Cleveland, round to the Piccadilly gate, and walk through the guards. I must stretch my legs. That bore, Horace Buttonhole, captured me in Pall-Mall East, and has

kept me in the same position for upwards of half an hour I shall make a note to blackball him at the Athenæum. How's Mrs. Cleveland?"

"Extremely well. She goes down to Buckhurst Lodge with the marchioness. Isn't that Lord Lowersdale?"

"His very self. He's going to call on Vidua Vis, I've no doubt. Lowersdale is a man of very considerable talent—much more than the world gives him credit for."

"And he doubtless finds a very able counsellor in Monsieur le Secrétaire?"

"Can you name a better one?"

"You rather patronise Vidua, I think, Grey?"

"Patronise him! he's my political pet!"

"And yet Kerrison tells me, you reviewed the Suffolk papers in the Edinburgh."

"So I did—what of that? I defended them in Blackwood."

"This, then, is the usual method of you literary gentlemen. Thank God! I never could write a line!"

"York House rises proudly—if York House be its name."

"This confounded Catholic question is likely to give us a great deal of trouble, Grey. It's perfect madness for us to advocate the cause of the 'six millions of hereditary bondsmen;' and yet, with not only the Marchese, but even Courtown and Beaconsfield committed, it is, to say the least, a very delicate business."

"Very delicate, certainly; but there are *some* precedents, I shrewdly suspect, Cleveland, for the influence of a party being opposed to measures, which the heads of that party had pledged themselves to adopt."

"Does old Gifford still live at Pamlico, Grey?"

"Still."

"He's a splendid fellow after all."

"Certainly, a mind of great powers—but bigoted."

"O! yes, I know exactly what you're going to say. It's the fashion, I'm aware, to abuse the old gentleman. He's the Earl of Eldon of literature;—not the less loved because a little vilified. But, when I just remember what Gifford has done—when I call to mind the perfect and triumphant success of every thing he has undertaken—the Anti-Jacobin—the Baviad and Mæviad—the Quarterly—all palpable hits—on the very jingular—upon my honour, I hesitate before I speak of William Gifford in any other terms, or in any other spirit, than those of admiration and of gratitude."

"And to think, Grey, that the tory administration, and the tory party of Great Britain, should never, by a single act, or in one single instance, have indicated that they were in the least aware that the exertions of such a man differed in the slightest degree from those of Hunt and Hone!—O! Grey, of all the delusions which flourish in this mad world, the delusion of that man is the most frantic, who voluntarily, and of his own accord, supports the interest of a party. I mention this to you, because it is the rock on which all young politicians strike. Fortunately, you enter life under different circumstances from those which usually attend most political debutants. You have your connexions formed, and your views ascertained. But if, by any chance, you find your-

self independent and unconnected, never, for a moment, suppose that you can accomplish your objects by coming forward, unsolicited, to fight the battle of a party. They will cheer your successful exertions, and then smile at your youthful zeal—or, crossing themselves for the unexpected succour, be too cowardly to reward their unexpected champion. No, Grey, make them *fear* you,—and they will kiss your feet. There is no act of treachery or meanness of which a political party is not capable;—for in politics there is no honour.

"As to Gifford, I am surprised at their conduct towards him,—although I know better than most men of what wood a minister is made, and how much reliance may be placed upon the gratitude of a party; but Canning—from Canning I certainly did expect different conduct."

"O, Canning! I love the man: but as you say, Cleveland, ministers have short memories, and Canning's—that was Antilles that just passed us; apropos to whom I quite rejoice that the marquess has determined to take such a decided course on the West Indian question."

"O, yes! curse your East India sugar."

"To be sure—slavery and sweetmeats for ever."

"I was always for the West India interest, from a boy, Grey. I had an aunt who was a Creole, and who used to stuff me with guava jelly, and small, delicate limes, that looked, for all the world, like emeralds powdered with diamond dust."

"Pooh! my dear Cleveland; they should not have looked like any such thing. What your Creole aunt gave you must have been *candied*. The delicate fruit should swim in an ocean of clarified sugar."

"I believe you're right, Grey; I sacrificed truth to a trope. Do you like the Barbadoes ginger?"

"If it is mild, and of a pale golden colour. How delicious the Bordeaux flows after it! O! the West India interest for ever!"

"But aside with joking, Grey, I really think, that if any man of average ability dare rise in the House, and rescue many of the great questions of the day from what Dugald Stewart, or D'Israeli, would call the spirit of *political religionism*, with which they are studiously mixed up, he would not fail to make a great impression upon the House, and a still greater one upon the country."

"I quite agree with you; and certainly I should recommend commencing with the West India question. Singular state of affairs! when even Canning can only insinuate his opinion, when the very existence of some of our most valuable colonies is at stake, and when even his insinuations are only indulged with an audience, on the condition that he favours the House with an introductory discourse of twenty minutes on 'the divine Author of our faith'—and an éloge of equal length on the *esprit du Christianisme*, in a style worthy of Chateaubriand."

"Miserable work, indeed! I have got a pamphlet on the West India question sent me this morning. Do you know any raving lawyer, any mad master in chancery, or something of the kind, who meddles in these affairs?"

"O! Stephens! a puzzle in a storm! He's for a crusade for the regeneration of the Antilles—the most forcible of feebles—the most energetic of drivellers,—Velluti acting Pietro L'Eremita."

"Do you know, by any chance, whether Southey's *Vindiciæ* is out yet? I wanted to look it over during the holidays."

"Not out—though it has been advertised some time; but what do you expect?"

"Nay! it's an interesting controversy, as controversies go. Not exactly Milton and Salmasius—but fair enough."

"O! I don't know. It has long degenerated into a mere personal bickering between the laureate and Butler. Southey is, of course, revelling in the idea of writing an English work with a Latin title; and that, perhaps, is the only circumstance for which the controversy is prolonged."

"But Southey, after all, is a man of splendid talents."

"Doubtless—the most philosophical of bigots, and the most poetical of prose writers."

"Apropos to the Catholic question—there goes Colonel Eotherem, trying to look like Prince Metemich; a decided failure."

"What can keep him in town?"

"Writing letters, I suppose. Heaven preserve me from receiving any of them!"

"Is it true, then, that his letters are of the awful length that is whispered?"

"True! O! they're something beyond all conception! Perfect epistolary boa constrictors. I speak with feeling, for I have myself suffered under their voluminous windings."

"Have you seen his quarto volume—'The Cure for the Catholic Question?'"

"Yes."

"If you have it, lend it to me. What kind of thing is it?"

"O! what should it be! ingenious, and imbecile.—He advises the Catholics, in the old nursery language, to behave like good boys—to open their mouths and shut their eyes, and see what God will send them."

"Well, that's the usual advice. Is there nothing more characteristic of the writer?"

"What think you of a proposition of making Jocky of Norfolk patriarch of England, and of an ascertained *credo* for our Catholic fellow-subjects—ingenious, isn't it?"

"Have you seen Puff's new volume of Ariosto?"

"I have. What could possibly have induced Mr. Parthenopex Puff to have undertaken such a duty! Mr. Puff is a man destitute of poetical powers; possessing no vigour of language, and gifted with no happiness of expression. His translation is hard, dry, and husky as the outside of a cocoa-nut. I am amused to see the excellent tact with which the public have determined not to read his volumes, in spite of the incessant exertions of a certain set to insure their popularity; but the time has gone by, when the smug coterie could create a reputation."

"Do you think the time ever existed Cleveland?"

"What could have seduced Puff into being so ambitious! I suppose his admirable knowledge of Italian; as if a man were entitled to strike a die for the Lew sovereign, merely because he was aware how much alloy might legally debase its carats of pure gold."

"I never can pardon Puff for that little book on cats. The idea was admirable; but instead of one of the most delightful volumes that ever appeared, to take up a dull, tame compilation from Bingley's *Animal Biography*!"

"Yes! and the impertinence of dedicating such a work to the officers of his majesty's household troops! Considering the quarter from whence it proceeded, I certainly did not expect much, but still I thought that there was to be some little *esprit*. The poor guards! how nervous they must have been at the announcement! What could have been the point of that dedication?"

"I remember a most interminable proser, that was blessed with a very sensible-sounding voice and who, on the strength of that, and his correct and constant emphasis, was considered by the world, for a great time, as a sage. At length it was discovered that he was quite the reverse. Mr. Puff's wit is very like this man's wisdom. You take up one of his little books, and you fancy, from its title-page, that it's going to be very witty; as you proceed you begin to suspect that the man is only a wag, and then, surprised at not 'seeing the point,' you have a shrewd suspicion that he is a great hand at dry humour. It is not till you have closed the volume that you wonder who it is that has had the hardihood to intrude such imbecility upon an indulgent world."

"Come, come! Mr. Puff is a worthy gentleman. Let him cease to dusk the radiancy of Ariosto's sunny stanzas, and I shall be the first man who will do justice to his merits. He certainly tattles prettily about tenses, and terminations, and is not an inelegant grammarian."

"Another failure among the booksellers to-day!"

"Indeed! literature, I think, is at a low ebb."

"Certainly. There is nothing like a fall of stocks—to affect what is the fashion to style the literature of the present day—a fungus production, which has flourished from the artificial state of our society—the mere creature of our imaginary wealth. Everybody being very rich, has afforded to be very literary—books being considered a luxury almost as elegant and necessary as ottomans, bonbons, and pier-glasses. Consols at 100 were the origin of all book societies. 'The stock-brokers' ladies took off the quarto travels, and the hotpressed poetry. They were the patronesses of your patent ink, and your wire-wove paper. That is all passed. Twenty per cent. difference in the value of our public securities from this time last year—that little incident has done more for the restoration of the old English feeling than all the exertions of church and state united. O, there is nothing like a fall in consols to bring the blood of our good people of England into cool order. It's your grand state medicine—your veritable doctor Sangrado!"

"A fall in stocks! and halt! to 'the spread of knowledge!' and 'the progress of liberal principles' is like that of a man too late for post-horses. A fall in stocks! and where are your London universities and your mechanics' institutes, and your new docks? Where your philosophy, your philanthropy, and your competition? National prejudices revive as national prosperity decreases. If the consols were at sixty, we should be again bellying, God save the king! eating roast beef, and damning the French."

"And you imagine literature is equally affected, Grey?"

"Clearly. We were literary, because we were rich. Amid the myriad of volumes which issued monthly from the press, what one was not written for the mere hour? It is well, very well to buy

mechanical poetry, and historical novels, when our purses have a plethora; but now, my dear fellow, depend upon it, the game is up. We have no scholars now—no literary recluses—no men who ever appear to *think*. 'Scribble, scribble,' as the Duke of Cumberland said to Gibbon, should be the motto of the mighty 'nineteenth century.'"

"Southey, I think, Grey, is an exception."

"By no means. Southey is a political writer—a writer for a particular purpose. All his works, from those in three volumes quarto to those in one duodecimo, are alike political pamphlets. Sharon Turner, in his solitude, alone seems to have his eye upon Prince Posterity; but, as might be expected, the public consequently has not its eye upon Sharon Turner. Twenty years hence they may discover that they had a prophet among them, and knew him not."

"His history is certainly a splendid work, but little known. Lingard's, which in ten years' time will not be known even by name, sells admirably, I believe."

"I was very much amused, Cleveland, with Allen's review of Lingard, in the Edinburgh. His opinion of the 'historian's style'—that it combined, at the same time the excellencies of Gibbon and Hume—was one of the most exquisite specimens of irony, that, I think, I ever met with: it was worthy of former days. I was just going to give up the Edinburgh, when I read that sentence, and I continued in consequence."

"We certainly want a master-spirit to set us right, Grey. Scott, our second Shakspeare, we, of course, cannot expect to step forward to direct the public mind. He is too much engaged in delighting it. Besides, he is not the man for it. He is not a *litterateur*. We want Byron."

"Ah! there was the man! And that such a man should be lost to us, at the very moment that he had begun to discover why it had pleased the Omnipotent to have endowed him with such powers!"

"If one thing was more characteristic of Byron's mind than another, it was his strong, shrewd, common sense—his pure, unalloyed sagacity."

"You knew the glorious being, I think, Cleveland?"

"Well; I was slightly acquainted with him, when in England; slightly, however, for I was then very young. But many years afterwards I met him in Italy. It was at Pisa, just before he left for Genoa. I was then very much struck at the alteration in his appearance."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; his face was very much swollen, and he was getting fat. His hair was gray, and his countenance had lost that spiritual expression which it once so eminently possessed. His teeth were decaying; and he said, that if ever he came to England, it would be to consult Wayte about them. I certainly was very much struck at his alteration for the worse. Besides, he was dressed in the most extraordinary manner."

"Slovenly?"

"O! no, no, no,—in the most dandified style that you can conceive; but not that of an English dandy, either. He had on a magnificent foreign foraging cap, which he wore in the room, but his gray curls were quite perceptible; and a frogged *surtout*; and he had a large gold chain round his

neck, and pushed it into his waistcoat pocket. I imagined, of course, that a glass was attached to it; but I afterwards found that it bore nothing but a quantity of trinkets. He had also another gold chain tight round his neck, like a collar."

"How extraordinary! and did you converse much with him?"

"I was not long at Pisa, but we never parted, and there was only one subject of conversation—England, England, England. I never met a man in whom the *maladie du pays* was so strong. Byron was certainly at this time restless and discontented. He was tired of his dragoon captains, and pensioned poetasters, and he dared not come back to England with, what he considered, a tarnished reputation. His only thought was of some desperate exertion to clear himself. It was for this he went to Greece. When I was with him, he was in correspondence with some friends in England, about the purchase of a large tract of land in Colombia. He affected a great admiration of Bolivar."

"Who, by-the-by, is a great man."

"Assuredly."

"Your acquaintance with Byron must have been one of the most gratifying incidents of your life, Cleveland?"

"Certainly; I may say with Friar Martin, in Goetz of Berlichingen, 'The sight of him touched my heart. It is a pleasure to have seen a great man.'"

"Hobhouse was a very faithful friend to him?"

"His conduct has been beautiful—and Byron had a thorough affection for him, in spite of a few squibs, and a few drunken speeches, which damned good-natured friends have always been careful to repeat."

"The loss of Byron can never be retrieved. He was indeed a man—a *real man*; and when I say this, I award him, in my opinion, the most splendid character which human nature need aspire to. At least, I, for my part, have no ambition to be considered either a divinity or an angel; and, truly, when I look round upon the creatures alike effeminate in mind and body, of which *the world* is, in general, composed, I fear that even my ambition is too exalted. Byron's mind was like his own ocean—sublime in its yesty madness—beautiful in its glittering summer brightness—mighty in the lone magnificence of its waste of waters—gazed upon from the magic of its own nature, yet capable of representing, but as in a glass darkly, the nature of all others. I say, Cleveland, here comes the greatest idiot in town; Craven Bucke. He came to me the other day complaining bitterly of the imperfections of Johnson's Dictionary. He had looked out *Domester St. Leger* in it, and couldn't find the word."

"How d'ye do, Bucke? you're just the man I wanted to meet. Make a note of it while I remember. There is an edition of Johnson just published, in which you'll find every single word you want. Now put it down at once. It's published under the title of John Bees' Slang Lexicon. Good-bye! How's your brother?"

"Pray, Cleveland, what do you think of Milman's 'new dramatic poem,' Anne Boleyn?"

"I think it's the dullest work on the Catholic question that has yet appeared."

"Is it true that Lockhart is going to have the *Quarterly*?"

"It was told me as a positive fact to-day. I believe it."

"Murray can't do better. It's absolutely necessary that he should do something. Lockhart is a man of prodigious talents. Do you know him?"

"Not in the least. He certainly is a man of great powers, but I think rather too hot for the Quarterly."

"O! no, no, no—a little of the Albemarle attrition will soon cool the fiery wheels of his bounding chariot. Come! I see our horses."

"Hyde Park is greatly changed since I was a dandy, Vivian. Pray, do the Misses Otranto still live in that house?"

"Yes—blooming as ever."

"It's the fashion to abuse Horace Walpole, but I really think him one of the most delightful writers that ever existed. I wonder who is to be the Horace Walpole of the present. Some one perhaps we least suspect."

"Vivida Vis, think you?"

"More than probable. I'll tell you who ought to be writing memoirs—Lord Dropmore."

"Does my Lord Manfred keep his mansion there, next to the Misses Otranto?"

"I believe so, and lives there."

"I knew him in Germany—a singular man, and not understood. Perhaps he does not understand himself."

"I'll join you in an instant, Cleveland. I just want to speak one word to Master Osborne, who I see coming down here. Well, Osborne, I must come and knock you up one of these mornings. I've got a nice little commission for you from Lady Julia Knighton, which you must pay particular attention to."

"Well, Mr. Grey, how does Lady Julia like the bay mare?"

"Very much, indeed; but she wants to know what you've done about the chestnut."

"O! put it off, sir, in the prettiest style, on young Mr. Feofinment, who has just married and taken a house in Gower-street. He wanted a bit of blood—hopes he likes it."

"Hopes he does, Jack. There's a particular favour which you can do me, Osborne, and which I'm sure you will. Ernest Clay—you know Ernest Clay—a most excellent fellow is Ernest, you know, and a great friend of yours, Osborne:—I wish you'd just step down to Connaught Place, and look at those bays he bought of Harry Mounteney. He's in a little trouble, and we must do what we can for him—you know he's an excellent fellow, and a great friend of yours. Thank you, thank you—I knew you would. Good morning:—remember Lady Julia. So you really fitted young Feofinment with the chestnut. Well, that was admirable!—Good morning;—good morning."

"I don't know whether you care for these things at all, Cleveland, but Premium, a famous millionaire, has gone this morning, for I don't know how much! Half the new world will be ruined; and in this old one, a most excellent fellow, my friend Ernest Clay. He was engaged to Premium's daughter—his *dernière ressource*; and now, of course, it's all up with him."

"I was at college with his brother, Augustus Clay. He's a nephew of Lord Mounteney's, is he not?"

"The very same. Poor fellow! I don't know what we must do for him. I think I shall advise

him to change his name to Clay-ville; and if the world ask him the reason of the euphonious augmentation, why, he can swear that it was to distinguish himself from his brothers. Too many *roués* for the same name will never do. And now spurs to our steeds, for we are going at least three miles out of our way, and I must collect my senses, and arrange my curls before dinner; for I have to flirt with, at least, three fair ones."

CHAPTER II.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLOT.

THESE CONVERSATIONS play the very deuse with one's story. I had intended to have commenced this book with something quite terrific—a murder, or a marriage: and I find that all my great ideas have ended in a lounge. After all, it is, perhaps, the most natural termination. In life, surely, man is not always as monstrously busy as he appears to be in novels and romances. We are not always in action—not always making speeches, or making money, or making war, or making love. Occasionally we talk,—about the weather, generally—sometimes about ourselves—oftener about our friends—as often about our enemies; at least, those who have any; which, in my opinion, is the vulgarst of all possessions; I have no enemies. Am I not an amiable fellow? At this moment, I am perfectly happy—am I not a lucky fellow?

And what is your situation, Mr. Felicity? you will ask. Have you just made a brilliant speech in the House? or have you negotiated a great loan for a little nation? or have you touched, for the first time, some fair one's cheek? In short, what splendid juggle have you been successful in? Have you deluded your own country or another? Have you deceived another's heart, or, are you, yourself, a dupe? Not at all, my sweet questioner—I am strolling on a sunny lawn, and flanking butterflies with a tandem whip.

I have not felt so well for these six months. What would I have given to have had my blood dancing as it is now, while I was scribbling the preceding part of this dear book. But there is nothing like the country! I think I was saying that these lounges in St. James's Park do not always very materially advance the progress of our narrative. Not that I would insinuate that the progress of our narrative has flagged at all; not in the least, I am sure we can't be accused of being prosy. There has been no *Balaam* (I do not approve this neologism; but I am too indolent, at present, to think of another word) in these books. I have withstood every temptation; and now, though I scarcely know in what way to make out this volume, here I am, without the least intention of finally proving that our Vivian Grey is the son of the Marquess of Carabas, by a former and secret marriage—in Italy, of course,—Count Anselmo, Naples—and an old nurse, &c. &c.; or that Mrs. Felix Lorraine is Horace Grey, Esquire, in disguise—or of making that much neglected beauty, Julia Manvers, arrive in the last scene with a chariot with four horses and patent axle-tree—just in time! Alas! dear Julia! we meet again. In the mean time the memory of your bright blue eyes shall not escape me; and when we *do* meet, why you shall talk more and laugh less. But you were young

when last you listened to my nonsense, one of those innocent young ladies, who, on entering a drawing-room, take a rapid glance at their curls in a pier-glass, and then, flying to the eternal round-table, seek refuge in an admiring examination of the beauties of the Florence Gallery, or the binding of Batty's Views.

This slight allusion to Julia is a digression. I was about to inform you that I have no intention of finishing this book by any thing extraordinary. The truth is, and this is quite confidential, invention is not to be "the feature" of this work. What I have seen, I have written about; and what I shall see, I shall, perhaps, also write about. Some day I may, perchance, write for fame; at present, I write for pleasure. I think, in that case, I'll write an epic, but it shall be in prose. The reign of poesy is over, at least for half a century; and by that time my bones will be bleached. I think I should have made a pretty poet. Indeed, it is with great difficulty that I prevent my paragraphs from hobbling into stanzas.

Stop! I see the finest PURPLE EMPEROR just alighting upon that myrtle. Beautiful insect! thy title is too humble for thy bright estate! for what is the pagantry of princes to the splendour of thy gorgeous robes! I wish I were a purple emperor! I came into the world naked—and you in a garment of glory. I dare not subject myself to the heat of the sun, for fear of a *coup de soleil*; nor to a damp day for fear of the rheumatism; but the free sky is your proper habitation, and air your peculiar element. What care you, bright one, for Dr. Kitchener, or the Almanach des Gourmands? you, whose food is the dew of heaven, and the honeyed juices which you distil from every flower? Shadowed by a leaf of that thick shrub, I could for a moment fancy that your colour was sooty black; and yet now that soft wind has blown the leaf aside, my eye is suddenly dazzled at the resplendent glow of your vivid purple. Now I gaze in admiration at the delightful and amazing variety of your shifting tints playing in the sunbeam; now, as it is lighting up the splendour of your purple mantle, and now lending fresh brilliancy to your rings of burnished gold!

My brilliant purple emperor! I must have you—I must indeed:—but I wish, if possible, to bring you down, rather by the respiration of my flank than the impulse of my thigh. Smack! confound the easterly wind playing up my nostril. I've missed him—and there he flies, mounting higher and higher, till at last he fixes on the topmost branch of your lofty acacia. What shall I do? I'm not the least in the humour for writing.

There is the luncheon-bell! Luncheon is a meal, if meal it may be called, which I do not patronise. 'Tis very well for schoolboys and young ladies: acceptable to the first, because they are always ready to devour—and to the second, because a glass of sherry and a slice of reindeer's tongue, and a little marmalade, and a little Neufchatel, enable them to toss their pretty little heads at dinner, and "not touch any thing;" be proportionately pitied, and look proportionately interesting. Luncheon is the modern mystery of the Bona Dea. I say nothing, but I once acted Clodius, in this respect. I never wondered afterwards at a woman's want of appetite.

But in the dear delicious country, and in a house where no visiter is staying, and where I am

tempted to commit suicide hourly, I think I must take a very thin crust, or one traveller's biscuit, and a little hock and seltzer; although I'm in that horrid situation, neither possessing appetite, nor wanting refreshments. What shall I do now? Who can write when the sun shines? It's a warm, soft, sunny day, though in March. I'll lie down on the lawn and play with my Italian grey hound. Don't think me a puppy for having one. It was given to me by —. That's a sufficient excuse, is it not?

"Now, Hyacinth, now, my Hyacinth, now, my own dog; try to leap over me!—frolic away, my beautiful one; I love thee, and have not I cause? What confidence have you violated? What sacred oaths have you outraged? Have you proved a craven in the hour of trial? Have I found you wanting when I called, or false when I fondled? Why do you start so, my pretty dog? Why are your eyes so fixed, your ears so erect? Pretty creature! does any thing frighten you? Kiss me my own Hyacinth, my dear, dear dog! O! you little wretch! you've bit my lip. Get out! I'll not speak to you for a fortnight."

I'll get Spencer's Fairy Queen. I'm just in the humour for reading it; but still it's a horrid bore to get up and go to the library. Come! a desperate exertion! On my legs again—there's nothing like energy. Here's the book. O! how I shall revel in his sweet and bitter fancies!—Confusion! I've brought a volume of Tillotson's Sermons. I hate the fellow! That's the advantage of your country libraries, having all your books bound the same.

Now I don't know what I shall do. I think I'll amuse myself by jumping over that *ha-ha*;—I'm quite confident I can do it—and yet, whenever I'm about trying, my heart sadly misgives me. It's a complete fallacy; it's devilish deep though. There—that easterly wind has balked me again; and here I am, up to my knees in mud; and my pretty violet-coloured slippers spoiled!

First dinner-bell! A heatomb to the son of Latona,—his rays are getting less powerful, and it's getting a little later. Though nobody is staying here, I'll go and dress myself in the most elaborate manner; it will assist in the destruction of the time. What a dull dinner! I have eaten of every thing—*soupe printanière* (twice)—fillets of turbot à la *crème*—fowl à la *Montmorenci*—garnished with *ragoût à l'Allemande*—neck of veal à la *St. Menchoult*—*marinade* of chickens à la *St. Florentin*—*Muriton* of red tongue, with spinach—six quails—two dishes of kail, with plain butter—half a dozen orange jellies, *en mosaïque*—cauliflowers with *velouté* sauce, and a *petit gateau à la Mannon*—a *soufflée* with lemon, and a dozen Neufchatel cheeses—a bottle of Markebrunnen, a pint of Latour, and a pint of Maraschino. Gone through it all; and yet here I am, breathing as freely as a young eagle. O! for an indigestion, if merely for the sake of variety! Good heavens! I'm afraid I'm getting healthy!

Now for Vivian Grey again! I don't know how it is, but I cannot write to-day; the room's so hot. Open that door—now I shall get better. O! what a wretched pen! I can't get out a sentence. The room's too cold;—shut that horrid door. Write I must, and will,—what's the matter? It's this great bowstring of a cravat. Off with it! who would ever write in a cravat!

CHAPTER III.

BUCKHURST LODGE.

MR. CLEVELAND and Mrs. Felix Lorraine again met, and the gentleman scarcely appeared to be aware that this meeting was not their first. The lady sighed, and fainted, and remonstrated: and terrific scenes followed each other in frightful succession. She reproached Mr. Cleveland with passages of letters. He stared, and deigned not to reply to an artifice, which he considered equally impudent and shallow. Vivian was forced to interfere; but as he deprecated all explanation, his interference was of little avail; and, as it was ineffectual for one party, and uncalled for by the other, it was, of course, not encouraged. At length, Mrs. Felix broke through all bounds. Now the enraged woman insulted Mrs. Cleveland, and now humbled herself before Mrs. Cleveland's husband. Her insults and her humility were treated with equal *hauteur*; and at length the Cleverlands left Buckhurst Lodge.

Peculiar as was Mrs. Lorraine's conduct in this particular respect, we should, in candour, confess, that, at this moment, it was in all others most exemplary. Her whole soul seemed concentrated in the success of the approaching struggle. No office was too mechanical for her attention, or too elaborate for her enthusiastic assiduity. Her attentions were not confined merely to Vivian and the marquess, but were lavished with equal generosity on their colleagues. She copied letters for Sir Berdmore, and composed letters for Lord Courtown, and construed letters to Lord Beaconsfield; they, in return, echoed her praises to her delighted relative, who was daily congratulated on the possession of "such a fascinating sister-in-law."

"Well, Vivian," said Mrs. Lorraine, to that young gentleman, the day previous to his departure from Buckhurst Lodge; "you are going to leave me behind you."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, I hope you will not want me. I am very much annoyed at not being able to go to town with you, but Lady Courtown is so pressing; and I've really promised so often to stay a week with her, that I thought it was better to make out my promise at once, than in six months hence."

"Well! I'm exceedingly sorry, for you are really so useful; and the interest you take in every thing so encouraging, that really I very much fear that we shall not be able to get on without you. The important hour draws nigh."

"I does, indeed, Vivian—and I assure you that there is no person awaiting it with intenser interest than myself. I little thought," she added in a low, but distinct voice, "I little thought, when I first reached England, that I should ever again be interested in any thing in this world." Vivian was silent—for he had nothing to say.

"Vivian!" very briskly resumed Mrs. Lorraine, "I shall get you to frank all my letters for me. I shall never trouble the marquess again. Do you know it strikes me you'll make a very good speaker?"

"You flatter me exceedingly—suppose you give me a few lessons."

"But you must leave off some of your wicked tricks, Vivian! You must not improvise parliamentary papers."

"Improvise papers, Mrs. Lorraine! what can you mean?"

"O! nothing. I never mean any thing."

"But you must have had some meaning."

"Some meaning! O, yes! I dare say, I had,—I meant—I meant—do you think it will rain to-day?"

"Every respect of a hard frost. I never knew before that I was an improvisatore."

"Nor I. Have you heard from papa lately? I suppose he is quite in spirits at your success?"

"My father is a man who seldom gives way to any elation of mind."

"Ah, indeed! a philosopher, I've no doubt like his son."

"I have no claims, I believe, to the title of the philosopher, although I have had the advantage of studying in the school of Mrs. Felix Lorraine."

"Lord! what do you mean? If I thought you meant to be impertinent, I really would pull that pretty little curl, but I excuse you—I think the boy means well."

"O! the boy means nothing—he never means any thing."

"Come, Vivian! we are going to part. Don't let us quarrel the last day. There, my little pet, there's a sprig of myrtle for you!"

"What! not to accept my foolish flower!"

Nay then, I am unblest indeed!"

And now you want it all! O! you unreasonable young man! If I were not the kindest lady in the land, I should tear this little sprig into a thousand pieces sooner; but come, my pretty pet! you shall have it. There! it looks quite imposing in your buttonhole. How handsome you look to-day!"

"How agreeable you are to-day! I do so love compliments!"

"O! Vivian—will you never give me credit for any thing but a light and callous heart? Will you never be convinced that—that—but why make this humiliating confession? O! no, let me never be misunderstood forever! The time may come, when Vivian Grey will find that Amelia Lorraine was—"

"Was what, lady?"

"You shall choose the word, Vivian."

"Say then my friend."

"'Tis a monosyllable full of meaning, and I will not quarrel with it. And now, adieu! Heaven prosper you! Believe me, that my first thoughts and my last are for you and of you!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE POST.

"THIS is very kind of you, Grey! I was afraid my note might not have caught you. You haven't breakfasted? Really, I wish you'd take up your quarters in Carabas house, for I want you now every moment."

"What is the urgent business of this morning, my lord?"

"O! I've seen Beresford."

"Hah!"

"And every thing is most satisfactory. I did not go into detail; I left that for you: but I ascer-

tained sufficient to convince me, that management is now alone required."

"Well, my lord, I trust that will not be wanting."

"No, Vivian—you have opened my eyes to the situation in which fortune has placed me. The experience of every day only proves the truth and the soundness of your views. Fortunate, indeed, was the hour in which we met."

"My lord, I do trust that it was a meeting which neither of us will live to repent."

"Impossible! my dearest friend. I do not hesitate to say that I would not change my present lot for that of any peer of this realm; no, not for that of his majesty's most favoured counsellor. What! with my character and my influence, and my connexions, I to be a tool! I, the Marquess of Carabas! I say nothing of my own powers; but as you often most justly and truly observe, the world has had the opportunity of judging of them; and I think, I may recur without vanity to the days in which my voice had some weight in the royal counsels. And as I have often remarked, I have friends—I have you, Vivian. My career is before you. I know what I should have done, at your age; not to say what I did do—I to be a tool! The very last person that ought to be a tool. But I see my error; you have opened my eyes, and blessed be the hour in which we met. But we must take care how we act Vivian; we must be wary—eh! Vivian—wary—wary. People must know what their situations are—eh! Vivian?"

"Exceedingly useful knowledge, my lord, but I don't exactly understand the particular purport of your lordship's last observation."

"You don't, eh?" asked the peer, and he fixed his eyes as earnestly and expressively as he possibly could upon his young companion. "Well, I thought not. I was positive it was not true," continued the marquess in a murmur.

"What, my lord?"

"O! nothing, nothing; people talk at random—at random. I feel confident you quite agree with me, eh! Vivian?"

"Really, my lord, I fear I'm unusually dull this morning."

"Dull! no, no, you quite agree with me, I feel confident you do. People must be taught what their situations are—that's what I was saying, Vivian. My Lord Courtown," added the marquess in a whisper, "is not to have every thing his own way—eh! Vivian?"

"O, O!" thought Vivian, "this then is the result of that admirable creature, Mrs. Felix Lorraine, staying a week with her dear friend, Lady Courtown."—"My lord, it would be singular if, in the Carabas party, the Carabas interest was not the predominant one."

"I knew you thought so. I couldn't believe for a minute that you could think otherwise: but some people take such strange ideas into their heads—I can't account for them. I felt confident what would be your opinion. My Lord Courtown is not to carry every thing before him, in the spirit that I have lately observed, or rather in the spirit which I understand, from very good authority, is exhibited. Eh! Vivian—that's your opinion, isn't it?"

"O! my dear marquess, we must think alike on this, as on all points."

"I knew it. I felt confident as to your sentiments upon this subject. I cannot conceive why

some people take such strange ideas into their heads. I knew that you couldn't disagree with me upon this point. No, no, no; my Lord Courtown must feel which is the predominant interest, as you so well express it. How choice your expressions always are! I don't know how it is, but you always hit upon the right expression, Vivian—*The predominant interest*—the pre-do-mi-nant—in-te-rest. To be sure. What! with my high character and connexions, with my stake in society, was it to be expected that I, the Marquess of Carabas, was going to make any move which compromised the predominancy of my interest? No, no, no, my Lord Courtown—the predominant interest must be kept predominant,—eh! Vivian!"

"To be sure, to be sure, my lord; explicitness and decision will soon arrange any *desagrémens*."

"I have been talking to the marchioness, Vivian, upon the expediency of her opening the season early. I think a course of parliamentary dinners would produce a good effect. It gives a tone to a political party."

"Certainly; the science of political gastronomy has never been sufficiently studied."

"Egad! Vivian, I'm in such spirits this morning. This business of Beresford so delights me; and finding you agree with me about Lord Courtown, I was confident as to your sentiments on that point. But some people take such strange ideas in their heads! To be sure, to be sure, the predominant interest, mine—that is to say, ours, Vivian, is the predominant interest. I've no idea of the predominant interest not being predominant; that would be singular! I knew you'd agree with me—we always agree. 'Twas a lucky hour when we met. Two minds so exactly alike! I was just your very self when I was young; and as for you—my career is before you."

Here entered Mr. Sadler with the letters.

"One from Courtown. I wonder if he has seen Mountency. Mountency is a very good-natured fellow, and I think might be managed. Ah! I wish you could get hold of him, Vivian; you'd soon bring him round. What it is to have brains, Vivian!" and here the marquess shook his head very pompously, and at the same time tapped very significantly on his left temple. "Hah! what—what's all this! Here, read it, man—I've no head to-day."

Vivian took the letter, and his quick eye dashed through its contents in a second. It was from Lord Courtown, and dated far in the country. It talked of private communications, and premature conduct, and the suspicions, not to say dishonest behaviour of Mr. Vivian Grey: it trusted that such conduct was not sanctioned by his lordship, but "nevertheless obliged to act with decision—regretted the necessity," &c. &c. &c. &c. In short, Lord Courtown had deserted, and recalled his pledges as to the official appointment promised to Mr. Cleveland, "because that promise was made while he was the victim of delusions created by the representations of Mr. Grey."

"What can all this mean, my lord?"

The marquess swore a fearful oath, and threw another letter.

"This is from Lord Beaconsfield, my lord," said Vivian, with a face pallid as death, "and apparently the composition of the same writer; at least it is the same tale, the same *refacimento* of lies, and treachery, and cowardice, doled out with diplo-

matic *politesse*. But I will off to —shire instantly. It is not yet too late to save every thing. This is Wednesday; on Thursday afternoon I shall be at Norwood Park. Thank God! I came this morning."

The face of the marquess, who was treacherous as the wind, seemed already to indicate, "Adieu! Mr. Vivian Grey!" but that countenance exhibited some very different passions, when it glanced over the contents of the next epistle. There was a tremendous oath—and a dead silence. His lordship's florid countenance turned as pale as that of his companion. The perspiration stole down in heavy drops. He gasped for breath!

"Good God! my lord, what is the matter?"

"The matter!" howled the marquess, "the matter! That I have been a vain, weak, miserable fool!" and then there was another oath, and he flung the letter to the other side of the table.

It was the official congé of the most noble Sydney, Marquess of Carabas. His majesty had no longer any occasion for his services. His successor was Courtown!

I will not affect to give any description of the conduct of the Marquess of Carabas at this moment. He raved! he stamped! he blasphemed! but the whole of his abuse was levelled against his former "monstrous clever" young friend; of whose character he had so often boasted that his own was the prototype, but who was now an adventurer—a swindler—a scoundrel—a liar—a base, deluding, flattering, fawning villain, &c. &c. &c. &c.

"My lord!"—said Vivian.

"I'll not hear you—out on your fair words! They have duped me enough already. That I, with my high character and connexions! that I, the Marquess of Carabas, should have been the victim of the arts of a young scoundrel!"

Vivian's fist was once clenched—but it was only for a moment. The marquess leaned back in his chair, with his eyes shut. In the agony of the moment, a projecting tooth of his upper jaw had forced itself through his upper lip, and from the wound the blood was flowing freely over his dead white countenance. Vivian left the room.

CHAPTER V.

THE RACK.

He stopped one moment on the landing place, ere he was about to leave the house forever.

"'Tis all over! and so, Vivian Grey, your game is up! and to die, too, like a dog!—a woman's dupe! Were I a despot, I should perhaps satiate my vengeance upon this female fiend, with the assistance of the rack—but that cannot be; and, after all, it would be but a poor revenge in one who has worshipped the EMPIRE OF THE INTELLECT, to vindicate the agony I am now enduring upon the base body of a woman. No! 'tis not all over. There is yet an intellectual rack few dream of, far, far more terrific than the most exquisite contrivances of Parysatis. Madeleine," said he to a female attendant that passed, "is your mistress at home?"

"She is, sir."

"'Tis well," said Vivian, and he sprang up stairs.

"Health to the lady of our love!" said Vivian Grey, as he entered the elegant boudoir of Mrs. Felix Lorraine. "In spite of the easterly wind which has spoiled my beauty for the season, I could not refrain from inquiring after your prosperity, before I went to the marquess. Have you heard the news?"

"News! no; what news?"

"'Tis a sad tale," said Vivian, with a melancholy voice.

"O! then, pray don't tell it me. I'm in no humour for sorrow to-day. Come! a bon mot, or a calembourg, or *exit*, Mr. Vivian Grey."

"Well, then, good morning! I'm off for a black crape, or a Barcelona kerchief.—Mrs. Cleveland is—*dead*."

"Dead!" exclaimed Mrs. Lorraine.

"Ay; cold dead. She died last night—suddenly. Isn't it horrible?"

"Shocking!" exclaimed Mrs. Lorraine, with a mournful voice, and an eye dancing with joy. "Why! Mr. Grey, I do declare you're weeping."

"It is not for the departed!"

"Nay, Vivian! for Heaven's sake, what's the matter?"

"My dear Mrs. Lorraine!"—But here the speaker's voice was choked with grief, and he could not proceed.

"Pray, compose yourself."

"Mrs. Felix Lorraine, can I speak with you half an hour, undisturbed?"

"O! certainly, by all means. I'll ring for Madeleine. Madeleine! mind, I'm not at home to any one. Well! what's the matter?"

"O! madam, I must pray your patience. I wish you to shrieve a penitent."

"Good God! Mr. Grey, for Heaven's sake be explicit."

"For Heaven's sake—for your sake—for my soul's sake, I would be explicit; but explicitness is not the language of such as I am. Can you listen to a tale of horror? can you promise me to contain yourself?"

"I will promise any thing. Pray, pray, proceed."

But, in spite of her earnest solicitations, her companion was mute. At length he arose from his chair, and leaning on the chimney-piece buried his face in his hands, and wept most bitterly.

"Vivian," said Mrs. Lorraine, "have you seen the marquess yet?"

"Not yet," he sobbed; "I am going to him—but I'm in no humour for business this morning."

"O, compose yourself, I beseech you. I will hear every thing. You shall not complain of an inattentive, or an irritable auditor. Now, my dear Vivian, sit down and tell me all." She led him to a chair, and then after stifling his sobs, with a broken voice he proceeded.

"You will recollect, madam, that accident made me acquainted with certain circumstances connected with yourself and Mr. Cleveland. Alas! actuated by the vilest sentiments, I conceived a violent hatred against that gentleman—a hatred only to be equalled by my passion for you; but, I find difficulty in dwelling upon the details of this sad story of jealousy and despair."

"O! speak, speak! compensate for all you have done, by your present frankness;—be brief—be brief."

"I will be *brief*," shouted Vivian, with terrific

earnestness; "I will be *brief*. Know then, madam, that in order to prevent the intercourse between you and Mr. Cleveland from proceeding, I obtained his friendship, and became the confidant of his heart's sweetest secret. Thus situated, I suppressed the letters with which I was entrusted from him to you, and poisoning his mind, I accounted for your silence, by your being employed in *other* correspondence; nay, I did more; with the malice of a fiend, I boasted of ——— nay, do not stop me; I have more to tell."

Mrs. Felix Lorraine, with compressed lips, and looks of horrible earnestness, gazed in silence.

"The result of all this you know—but the most terrible part is to come; and, by a strange fascination, I fly to confess my crimes at your feet, even while the last minutes have witnessed my most heinous one. O! madam, I have stood over the bier of the departed; I have mingled my tears with those of the sorrowing widower—his young and tender child was on my knee; and as I kissed his innocent lips, methought it was but my duty to the departed, to save the father from his mother's rival —" He stopped.

"Yes—yes—yes," said Mrs. Felix Lorraine, in a low whisper.

"It was then, even then, in the hour of his desolation that I mentioned your name; that it might the more *disgust* him; and while he wept over his virtuous and sainted wife, I dwelt on the vices of his rejected *mistress*."

Mrs. Lorraine clasped her hands, and moved restlessly on her seat.

"Nay! do not stop me;—let me tell *all*. 'Cleveland,' said I, 'if ever you become the husband of Mrs. Felix Lorraine, remember my last words:—It will be well for you, if your frame be like that of Mithridates of Pontus, and proof against ——— *poison*.'"

"And did you say this?" shrieked the woman.

"Even these were my words."

"Then may all evil blast you!" She threw herself on the sofa; her voice was choked with the convulsions of her passion, and she writhed in the most fearful agony.

Vivian Grey, lounging in an arm-chair, in the easiest of postures, and with a face brilliant with smiles, watched his victim with the eye of a Mephistopheles.

She slowly recovered, and with a broken voice poured forth her sacred absolution to the relieved penitent.

"You wonder I do not stab you—hah! hah! hah! there is no need for *that*;—the good powers be praised, that you refused the draught I once proffered. Know, wretch, that your race is run. Within five minutes you will be a beggar and an outcast. Your golden dreams are over—your cunning plans are circumented—your ambitious hopes are crushed forever—you are blighted in the very spring of your life. O! may you never die! May you wander forever, the butt of the world's malice! and may the slow moving finger of scorn point where'er you go to the ruined charlatan!"

"Ha, ha! is it so, my lady? O! think you, that Vivian Grey would fall by a woman's wile? O! think you that Vivian Grey could be crushed by such a worthless thing as *you*! Know, then, that your political intrigues have been as little concealed from *me*, as your personal ones;—I have been acquainted with all. The marquess has, him-

self, seen the minister, and is more firmly established in his pride of place than ever. I have, myself, seen our colleagues, whom you tampered with, and their hearts are still true, and their purpose still fixed. All, all prospers; and ere five days are passed, 'the *charlatan*' will be a *senator*."

The shifting expressions of Mrs. Lorraine's countenance, while Vivian was speaking, would have baffled the most cunning painter. Her complexion was capricious as the chameleon's, and her countenance was so convulsed, that her features seemed of all shapes and sizes. One large vein protruded nearly a quarter of an inch from her forehead; and the dank light which gleamed in her tearful eye, was like an unwholesome meteor quivering in a marsh. When he ended, she sprang from the sofa, and looking up, and extending her arms with unmeaning wildness, she gave one loud shriek, and dropped like a bird shot on the wing —she had burst a blood-vessel.

Vivian raised her on the sofa and paid her every possible attention. There is always a vile apothecary lurking about the mansions of the noble, and so a Mr. Andrews soon appeared, and to this worthy and the attendant Madeleine, Vivian delivered his patient.

Had Vivian Grey left the boudoir a pledged bridegroom, his countenance could not have been more triumphant; but he was labouring under the most unnatural excitation: for it is singular that when, as he left the house, the porter told him that Mr. Cleveland was with his lord, Vivian had no idea at the moment what individual bore that name. The fresh air of the street revived him, and somewhat cooled the bubbling of his blood. It was then that the man's information struck upon his senses.

"So, poor Cleveland!" thought Vivian, "then he knows all!" His own misery he had not yet thought of; but when Cleveland occurred to him, with his ambition once more balked—his high hopes once more blasted—and his honourable soul once more deceived,—when he thought of his fair wife, and his infant children, and his ruined prospects, a sickness came over his heart, he grew dizzy, and fell.

"And the gentleman's ill, I think," said an honest Irishman; and, in the fulness of his charity, he placed Vivian on a door step.

"So it seems," said a genteel passenger in black; and he snatched, with great *sangfroid*, Vivian's gold watch.

"Stop thief!" hallooed the Hibernian. Paddy was tripped up. There was a row; in the midst of which Vivian Grey crawled to a hotel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CLUB.

In half an hour Vivian was at Mr. Cleveland's door.

"My master is at the Marquess of Carabas's, sir; he will not return, but is going immediately to Richmond, where Mrs. Cleveland is staying."

Vivian immediately wrote to Mr. Cleveland. "If your master has left the marquess's, let this be forwarded to him at Richmond immediately."

"CLEVELAND!—You know all. It would be mockery were I to say, that at this moment I am

not thinking of myself. I am a ruined man in body and in mind. But my own misery is nothing; I can die—I can go mad—and who will be harmed? But you! I had wished that we should never meet again; but my hand refuses to trace the thoughts with which my heart is full, and I am under the sad necessity of requesting you to see me once more. We have been betrayed—and by a woman: but there has been revenge! O! what revenge!

VIVIAN GREY."

When Vivian left Mr. Cleveland's, he actually did not know what to do with himself. Home, at present, he could not face, and so he continued to wander about quite unconscious of locality. He passed in his progress many of his acquaintances, who, from his distracted air and rapid pace, imagined that he was intent on some important business. At length he found himself in one of the most sequestered parts of Kensington gardens. It was a cold, frosty day, and as Vivian flung himself upon one of the summer seats, the snow drifted from off the frozen board; but Vivian's brow was as burning hot as if he had been an inhabitant of Sirius. Throwing his arms on a small garden table, he buried his face in his hands, and wept—as men can but once weep in this world!

O! thou sublime and most subtle philosopher, who, in thy lamp-lit cell, art speculating upon the passions which thou hast never felt! O! thou splendid and most admirable poet, who, with cunning words, art painting with a smile a tale of woe! tell me what is grief, and solve me the mystery of sorrow.

Not for himself—for after the first pang, he would have whistled off his high hopes with the spirit of a Ripperda—not even for Cleveland—for at this moment, it must be confessed, his thoughts were not for his friend—did Vivian Grey's soul struggle as if it were about to leave its fleshy chamber. I said he wept; as men can weep but once in this world, and yet it would have been impossible for him to have defined what, at that fearful moment, was the cause of his heart's sorrow. Incidents of childhood of the most trivial nature, and until this moment forgotten, flashed across his memory; he gazed on the smile of his mother—he listened to the sweet tones of his father's voice—and his hand clenched with still more agonized grasp his rude resting-place; and the scalding tears dashed down his cheek in still more ardent torrents. He had no distinct remembrance of what had so lately happened; but characters flitted before him as in a theatre, in a dream—dim and shadowy, yet full of mysterious and indefinable interest; and then there came a horrible idea across his mind, that his glittering youth was gone and wasted; and then there was a dark whisper of treachery, and dissimulation, and dishonour; and then he sobbed as if his very heart was cracking. All his boasted philosophy vanished—his artificial feelings fled him. Insulted nature re-asserted her long-spurned authority, and the once proud Vivian Grey felt too humble even to curse himself. Gradually his sobs became less convulsed, and his brow more cool; and calm from very exhaustion, he sat for upwards of an hour motionless.

At this moment there issued with their attendant, from an adjoining shrubbery, two beautiful children. They were so exceedingly lovely, that the passenger would have stopped to gaze upon

them. The eldest, who yet was very young, was leading his sister hand-in-hand, with slow and graceful steps, mimicking the courtesy of men. But when his eye caught Vivian's, the boy uttered a loud cry of exultation, and rushed with the eagerness of infantile affection to his gentle and favourite playmate. They were the young Cleverlands. With what miraculous quickness will man shake off the outward semblance of grief when his sorrow is a secret! The mighty merchant who knows that in four-and-twenty hours the world must be astounded by his insolvency, will walk in the front of his confident creditor, as if he was the lord of a thousand argosies—the meditating suicide will smile on the arm of a companion, as if to breathe in this sunny world were the most ravishing and rapturous bliss. We cling to our stations in our fellow-creatures' minds and memories; we know, too well, the frail tenure on which we are in this world great and considerate personages. Experience makes us shrink from the specious sneer of sympathy: and when we are ourselves falling, bitter memory whispers, that we have ourselves been neglectful.

And so it was, that even unto these infants Vivian Grey dared not appear other than a gay and easy-hearted man; and in a moment he was dancing them on his knee, and playing with their curls, and joining in their pretty prattle, and pressing their small and fragrant lips.

It was night when he paced down.—He passed his club; that club, to become a member of which had once been the object of his high ambition, and to gain which privilege had cost such hours of canvassing; such interference of noble friends; and the incurring of favours from five thousand people, "which never could be forgotten."

I know not what desperate feeling actuated him, but he entered the club-house. He walked into the great saloon, and met some fifty most "particular friends," all of whom asked him "how the marquis did," or "have you seen Cleveland?" and a thousand other as comfortable queries. At length, to avoid these disagreeable rencontres, and, indeed, to rest himself, he went to a smaller and more private room. As he opened the door, his eyes lighted upon Cleveland.

He was standing with his back to the fire. There were only two other persons in the room: one was a friend of Cleveland's, and the other an acquaintance of Vivian's. The latter was writing at the table.

When Vivian saw Cleveland, he would have retired, but he was bid to "come in," in a voice of thunder.

As he entered, he instantly perceived that Cleveland was under the influence of wine. When in this situation, unlike other men, Mr. Cleveland's conduct was not distinguished by any of the little inproprieties of behaviour by which a man is always known by his friends "to be very drunk." He neither reeled nor hiccupped, nor grew maudlin. The effect of drinking upon him was only to increase the intensity of the sensation by which his mind was, at the moment, influenced. He did not even lose the consciousness of identity of persons. At this moment it was clear to Vivian that Cleveland was under the influence of the extremest passion: his eyes rolled wildly, and seemed fixed only upon vacancy. As Vivian was no friend to *scenas* before strangers, he bowed to

the two gentlemen, and saluted Cleveland with his wonted cordiality; but his proffered hand was rudely repelled.

"Away!" exclaimed Cleveland, in a furious tone, "I have no friendship for traitors!"

The two gentlemen stared, and the pen of the writer stopped.

"Cleveland!" said Vivian, in an earnest whisper, as he came up close to him;—"for God's sake contain yourself. I have written you a letter which explains all—but—"

"Out! out upon you! Out upon your honeyed words and your soft phrases! I've been their dupe too long!" and he struck Vivian with tremendous force.

"Sir John Poynings!" said Vivian, with a quivering lip, turning to the man writing at the table—"we were school-fellows; circumstances have prevented us from meeting often in after-life, but I now ask you with the frankness of an old acquaintance, to do me the sad service of accompanying me in this quarrel—a quarrel which I call Heaven to witness, is not of my seeking."

The baronet, who was in the guards, and, although a great dandy, quite a man of business in these matters, immediately rose from his seat, and led Vivian to a corner of the room. After some whispering, he turned round to Mr. Cleveland, and bowed to him with a very significant look. It was evident that Cleveland comprehended his meaning, for though he was silent, he immediately pointed to the other gentleman—his friend Mr. Castleton.

"Mr. Castleton," said Sir John, giving his card, "Mr. Grey will accompany me to my rooms in Pall Mall; it is now ten o'clock: we shall wait two hours, in which time I hope to hear from you. I leave time, and place, and terms to yourself. I only wish to be understood that it is the particular desire of my principal that the meeting should be as speedy as possible."

About eleven o'clock the communication from Mr. Castleton arrived. It was quite evident that Cleveland was sobered, for, in one instance, Vivian observed that the style was corrected by his own hand. The hour was eight the next morning, at — Common, about six miles from town.

Poynings wrote to a professional friend to be on the ground at half-past seven, and then he and Vivian retired.

Did you ever fight a duel? No! Nor send a challenge either? Well! you're fresh indeed! 'Tis an awkward business, after all—even for the boldest. After an immense deal of negotiation, and giving the party every opportunity of coming to an *honourable* understanding, the fatal letter is at length signed, sealed, and sent. You pass your morning at your second's apartments, paeing his drawing-room, with a quivering lip and uncertain step. At length he enters with an answer, and while he reads, you endeavour to look easy, with a countenance merry with the most melancholy smiles. You have no appetite at dinner, but you are too *brave* not to appear at table; and you are called out after the second glass by the arrival of your solicitor who comes to alter your will. You pass a restless night, and rise in the morning as bilious as a Bengal general. Urged by impending fate you make a desperate effort to accommodate matters, but in the contest between your pride and your terror, you at the same time prove that you're a coward, and fail in the negotiation. You both

fire—and miss; and then the seconds interfere, and then you shake hands, every thing being arranged in the most *honourable* manner, and to the mutual satisfaction of both parties. The next day you are seen pacing Bond street with an erect front, and a flashing eye—with an air at once dandyish and heroic!—a mixture, at the same time, of Brummel and the Duke of Wellington.

It was a fine February morning. Sir John drove Vivian to the ground in his cabriolet.

"Nothing like a cab, Grey, for the business you're going on. I only keep it for *meetings*. You glide along the six miles in such style, that it actually makes you quite courageous. I remember once going down on a similar purpose, in a post and pair; and, 'pon my soul, when I came to the ground, my hand shook so that I could scarcely draw. But I was green then. Now when I go in my cab, with Philidor with his sixteen-mile-an-hour paces, egad! I wing my man in a trice; and take all the parties home to Pall Mall, to celebrate the event with a grilled bone, Havannahs, and Regent's punch. Ah! there! that's Cleveland that we have just passed, going to the ground in a chariot: he's a dead man, or my name's not Poynings—"

"Come, Sir John; no fear of Cleveland's dying," said Vivian with a smile.

"What, you mean to fire in the air, and all that sort of thing!—sentimental, but slip-slop!"

The ground is measured—all is arranged. Cleveland, a splendid shot, fired first. His pistol grazed Vivian's elbow. Vivian fired in the air. The seconds interfered. Cleveland was implacable—and "in the most irregular manner," as Sir John declared, insisted upon another shot. To the astonishment of all, he fired quite wild. Vivian shot at random; and his bullet pierced Cleveland's heart. Cleveland sprang nearly two yards from the ground, and then fell upon his back. In a moment Vivian was at the side of his fallen antagonist; but the dying man "made no sign," he stared wildly, and then closed his eyes forever.

CHAPTER VII.

TRAVEL.

WHEN Vivian Grey remembered his existence, he found himself in bed. The curtains of his couch were closed; but, as he stared around him, they were softly withdrawn, and a face that recalled every thing to his recollection, gazed upon him with a look of affectionate anxiety.

"My father!" exclaimed Vivian—but the finger pressed on the parental lip warned him to silence. His father knelt by his side, and softly kissed his forehead, and then the curtains were again closed.

Six weeks, unconsciously to Vivian, had elapsed since the fatal day, and he was now recovering from the effects of a fever, from which his medical attendants had supposed he never could have escaped. And what had been the past? It did, indeed, seem like a hot and feverish dream. Here was he, once more in his own quiet room, watched over by his beloved parents; and had there then ever existed such beings as the marquess, and Mrs. Lorraine, and Cleveland, or were they only the actors in a vision? "It must be so," thought Vivian; and he jumped up in his bed, and stared

wildly around him. "And yet it was a horrid dream! Murder! horrible murder!—and so real! so palpable! I muse upon their voices, as upon familiar sounds, and I recall all the events, not as the shadowy incidents of sleep—that mysterious existence in which the experience of a century seems caught in the breathing of a second—but as the natural and material consequences of time and stirring life. O! no! 'it is too true!' shrieked the wretched sufferer, as his eye glauced upon a desk which was on the table, and which had been given to him by the marquess; "it is true! it is true! murder! murder!" he foamed at the mouth and sunk exhausted on his pillow.

But the human mind can master many sorrows, and after a desperate relapse, and another miraculous rally, Vivian Grey rose from his bed.

"My father! I fear that I shall live!"

"Hope, rather, my beloved."

"O! why should I hope!" and the sufferer's head sank upon his breast.

"Do not give way, my son; all will yet be well, and we shall all yet be happy," said the father, with streaming eyes.

"Happy! O, not in this world, my father!"

"Vivian, my dearest, your mother visited you this morning, but you were asleep. She was quite happy to find you slumbering so calmly."

"And yet my dreams were not the dreams of joy. O! my mother, you were wont to smile upon me—alas! you smiled upon your sorrow."

"Vivian, my beloved! you must indeed restrain your feelings. At your age, life cannot be the lost game you think it. A little repose, and I shall yet see my boy the honour to society which he deserves to be."

"Alas! my father, you know not what I feel! The springiness of my mind has gone. O! man, what vain fool thou art! Nature has been too bountiful to thee. She has given thee the best of friends, and you value not the gift of exceeding price, until your griefs are past even friendship's cure. O! my father! why did I leave you!" and he seized Mr. Grey's hand with a convulsive grasp.

Time flew on even in this house of sorrow. "My boy," said Mr. Grey to his son one day, "your mother and I have been consulting together about you; and we think, now that you have somewhat recovered your strength, it may be well for you to leave England for a short time. The novelty of travel will relieve your mind, without too much exciting it; and if you can manage by the autumn, to settle down anywhere within a thousand miles of England, why we will come and join you, and you know that will be very pleasant. What say you, my boy, to this little plan?"

In a few weeks after this proposition had been made, Vivian Grey was in Germany. He wandered for some months in that beautiful land of rivers, among which flows the Rhine, matchless in its loveliness; and at length, the pilgrim shook the dust off his feet at Heidelberg, in which city Vivian proposed taking up his residence. It is, in truth, a place of surpassing loveliness; where all the romantic wildness of German scenery is blended with the soft beauty of the Italian. An immense plain, which, in its extent and luxuriance, reminds you of the most fertile tracts of Tuscany, is bordered on one side by the Bergstrasse mountains, and on the other by the range of the Vosges. Situated

on the river Neckar, in a ravine of the Bergstrasse, amid mountains covered with vines, is the city of Heidelberg: its ruined castle backing the city, and still frowning from one of the most commanding heights. In the middle of the broad plain may be distinguished the shining spires of Mannheim, Worms, and Frankenthal; and pouring its rich streams through its luxuriant land, the beautiful and abounding Rhine receives the tribute of the Neckar. The range of the Vosges forms the extreme distance.

To the little world, of the little city, of which he was now an inhabitant, Vivian Grey did not appear a broken-hearted man. He lived neither as a recluse, nor a misanthrope. He became extremely addicted to field sports, especially to hunting the wild boar; for he feared nothing so much as thought, and dreaded nothing so much as the solitude of his own chamber. He was an early riser, to escape from hideous dreams; and, at break of dawn, he wandered among the wild passes of the Bergstrasse; or, climbing a lofty ridge, was a watcher for the rising sun; and in the evening he sailed upon the star-lit Neckar.

I fear me much, that Vivian Grey is a lost man; but I am sure that every sweet and gentle spirit, who has read this sad story of his fortunes, will breathe a holy prayer this night for his restoration to society and to himself.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

Thou rapid Aar! thy waves are swollen by the snows of a thousand hills—but for whom are thy leaping waters fed?—Is it for the Rhine!

Calmly, O placid Neckar! does thy blue stream glide through thy vine-clad vales—but calmer seems thy course when it touches the rushing Rhine!

How fragrant are the banks which are cooled by thy dark-green waters, thou tranquil Maine!—but is not the perfume sweeter of the gardens of the Rhine!

Thou impetuous Nah! I lingered by thine islands of nightingales, and I asked thy rushing waters why they disturbed the music of thy groves!—They told me, they were hastening to the Rhine!

Red Moselle! fierce is the swell of thy spreading course—but why do thy broad waters blush when they meet the Rhine!

Thou delicate Meuse! how clear is the current of thy limpid wave—as the wife yields to the husband, do thy pure waters yield to the Rhine!

And thou! triumphant and imperial river, flushed with the tribute of these vassal streams; thou art thyself a tributary, and hastenest even in the pride of conquest to confess thine own vassalage! But no superior stream exults in the homage of thy servile waters: the ocean, the eternal ocean, alone comes forward to receive thy kiss!—not as a conqueror, but as a parent, he welcomes with proud joy his gifted child, the offspring of his honour; thy duty—his delight; thy tribute—his own glory!

Once more upon thy banks, most beautiful

RHINE! In the spring-time of my youth I gazed on thee, and deemed thee matchless. Thy vine-enchanted mountains—thy spreading waters—thy traditional crags—thy shining cities—the sparkling villages of thy winding shores—thy antique convents—thy gray and silent castles—the purple glories of thy radiant grape—the vivid tints of thy teeming flowers—the fragrance of thy sky—the melody of thy birds, whose carols tell the pleasures of their sunny woods, are they less lovely now, less beautiful, less sweet?

Once more upon thy banks, most beautiful Rhine! Since I first gazed on thee, other climes have revealed to me their wonders and their glory—other climes, which Fame, perhaps, loves more; which many deem more beautiful—but not for a moment have I forgotten thy varied banks, and my memory still clings to thee, thou river of my youth!

The keen emotions of our youth are often the occasion of our estimating too ardently; but the first impression of beauty, though often overcharged, is seldom supplanted: and as the first great author which he reads is revered by the boy as most immortal, and the first beautiful woman that he meets is sanctified by him as the most adorable; so the impressions created upon us by those scenes of nature which first realize the romance of our reveries, never escape from our minds, and are ever consecrated in our memories;—and thus some great spirits, after having played their part on the theatre of the world, have retired from the blaze of courts and cities, to the sweet seclusion of some spot, which they have accidentally met with in the earlier years of their career.

But we are to speak of one who had retired from the world before his time; of one, whose early vices, and early follies, have been already obtruded, for no unworthy reason, on the notice of the public, in as hot and hurried a sketch as ever yet was penned; but, like its subject—for what is youth but a sketch—a brief hour of principles unsettled, passions unrestrained, powers undeveloped, and purposes unexecuted!

I am loath to speak even one moment of the author, instead of the hero; but with respect to those who have with such singular industry associated the character of the author of Vivian Grey with that of its hero, I must observe, that as this is an inconvenience which I share in company with more celebrated writers, so also is it one which will never prevent me from describing any character which my mind may conceive.

To those who, alike unacquainted with my person, my life, my habits, have, with that audacious accuracy for which ignorance is celebrated, not only boldly avowed that the original of my hero may be discovered in myself, but that the character, at the same time, forms also a flattering portrait of a more frail original, I shall say nothing. Most of these chatters are included in that vast catalogue of frivolous beings who carry on in society an espionage on a small scale, not precisely through malice, but from an invincible ambition of having something to say, when they have nothing to think about. A few of those persons, I am informed, cannot even plead a brainless skull as an excuse for their indecent conduct; but dreading that in time the lash might be applied to their own guilty littleness, they have sought in the propagation of falsehood on their part, a boasted means

for the prevention of further publication on mine. Unlucky rogues! how effectual have been your exertions! Let me not by one irritable expression console these clumsy midwives of calumny for the abortion of their slander; but pass over their offences with that merciful silence, to which even insolent imbecility is ever entitled.

Of the personal and political matter contained in the former books of this work, I can declare, that though written in a hasty, it was not written in a reckless spirit; and that there is nothing contained in those volumes of which I am morally ashamed. As to the various satires in verse, and political and dramatic articles of unsuccessful newspapers, which have been palmed, with such lavish liberality, upon myself, or upon another individual as the supposed author of this work—inasmuch as I never wrote one single line of them, neither of the articles nor of the satires, it is unnecessary for me to apologize for their contents. They have been made the ostensible, the avowed pretext for a series of attacks, which I now, for once, notice, only to recommend them to the attentive study of those ingenious gentlemen who wish to be libellers with impunity; and who are desirous of vindicating imaginary wrongs, or maintaining a miserable existence by the publication of periodical rhapsodies, whose foul scurrility, over-wrought malice, ludicrous passion, evident mendacity, and frantic feebleness, alike exempt them from the castigation of literary notice or the severer penalties of an outraged law.

Of the literary vices of Vivian Grey, no one is perhaps more sensible than their author. I conceive the character of a youth of great talents, whose mind had been corrupted, as the minds of many of our youth have been, by the artificial age in which he lived. The age was not less corrupted than the being it had generated. In his whole career he was to be pitied; but for his whole career he was not to be less punished. When I sketched the feelings of his early boyhood, as the novelist, I had already foreseen the results to which those feelings were to lead; and had in store for the fictitious character the punishment which he endured. I am blamed for the affectation, the flippancy, the arrogance, the wicked wit of this fictitious character. Yet was Vivian Grey to talk like Simon Pure, and act like Sir Charles Grandison?

But to our tale.—Upwards of a year had now elapsed since Vivian Grey left England. The mode of life which he pursued at Heidelberg for many months, has already been mentioned. He felt himself a broken-hearted man, and looked for death, whose delay was no blessing; but the feelings of youth which had misled him in his burning hours of joy, equally deceived him in his days of sorrow, he lived; and in the course of time, found each day that life was less burdensome. The truth is, that if it be the lot of man to suffer, it is also his fortune to forget. Oblivion and sorrow share our being in much the same manner as darkness and light divide the course of time. It is not in human nature, to endure extremities; and sorrows soon destroy either us or ourselves. Perhaps the fate of Niobe is no fable, but a type of the callousness of our nature. There is a time in human suffering when succeeding sorrows are but like snow falling on an iceberg. It is true, that it is horrible to think that our peace of mind

should arise, not from a retrospection of the past, but from a forgetfulness of it; but though this peace of mind is produced at the best by a mental laudanum, it is not valueless; and oblivion, after all, is a just judge. As we retain but a faint remembrance of our felicity, it is but fair that the smartest stroke of sorrow should, if bitter, at least be brief. But in feeling that he might yet again mingle in the world, Vivian Grey also felt that he must meet mankind with different feelings, and view their pursuits with a different interest. He woke from his secret sorrow in as changed a state of being as the water-nymph from her first embrace; and he woke with a new possession, not only as miraculous as Undine's soul, but gained at as great a price, and leading to as bitter results. The nymph woke to new pleasures, and to new sorrows; and innocent as an infant, she deemed mankind a god, and the world a paradise. Vivian Grey discovered that this deity was but an idol of brass, and this garden of Eden but a savage waste; for if the river-nymph had gained a soul, he had gained EXPERIENCE.

EXPERIENCE—word so lightly used, so little understood! Experience,—mysterious spirit! whose result is felt by all, whose nature is described by none. The father warns the son of your approach, and sometimes looks to you as his offspring's cure, and his own consolation. We hear of you in the nursery—we hear of you in the world—we hear of you in books; but who has recognised you until he was your subject, and who has discovered the object of so much fame until he has kissed your chain? To gain you is the work of all, and the curse of all; you are at the same time necessary to our happiness, and destructive of our felicity; you are the saviour of all things, and the destroyer of all things; our best friend, and our bitterest enemy; for you teach us truth, and that truth is—despair. Ye youth of England, would that ye could read this riddle!

To wake from your bright hopes, and feel that all is vanity—to be roused from your crafty plans, and know that all is worthless, is a bitter, but your sure destiny. Escape is impossible; for despair is the price of conviction. How many centuries have fled, since Solomon, in his cedar palaces, sung the vanity of man! Though his harp was golden, and his throne of ivory, his feelings were not less keen, and his conviction not less complete. How many sages of all nations, have, since the monarch of Jerusalem, echoed his sad philosophy! yet the vain bubble still glitters, and still allures and must forever.

The genealogy of Experience is brief; for Experience is the child of Thought, and Thought is the child of Action. We cannot learn men from books, nor can we form, from written descriptions, a more accurate idea of the movements of the human heart than we can of the movements of nature. A man may read all his life, and form no conception of the rush of a mountain torrent or the waving of a forest of pines in a storm; and a man may study in his closet the heart of his fellow-creatures for ever, and have no idea of the power of ambition or the strength of revenge.

It is when we have acted ourselves, and have seen others acting; it is when we have laboured ourselves under the influence of our passions, and have seen others labouring; it is when our great hopes have been attained, or have been balked;

it is when, after having had the human heart revealed to us, we have the first opportunity to think; it is then, if we can think, that the whole truth lights upon us; it is then, that we ask of ourselves whether it be wise to endure such anxiety of mind, such agitation of spirit, such harrowing of the soul, to gain what may cease to interest to-morrow, or for which, at the best, a few years of enjoyment can alone be afforded; it is then that we waken to the hollowness of all human things; it is then that the sayings of sages, and the warnings of prophets are explained and understood; it is then that we gain EXPERIENCE.

To deem all things vain is not the part of a disappointed man, who may feign it, but who can never feel it. To deem all things vain is the bitter portion of that mind, who, having known the world, dares to think. Experience will arise as often from satiety of joy as from the sting of sorrow. But knowledge of the world is only an acquaintance with the powers of human passions, formed from our observation of our fellow-creatures, and of ourselves. He whose courage has been put to the test—who has relied on the love, or suffered by the hate of woman—has been deceived by man, and has deceived himself—may have as much knowledge of the world at twenty as if he had lived a century. We may travel over the whole globe, and not gain more, although, certainly, we might have more opportunities of seeing the same farce repeated, the same game of broken promises, and balked hopes, false expectation, and self-delusion. Few men were better acquainted with their species than Gil Blas, when he sat down at Liria, and yet he had only travelled in two or three Spanish provinces.

Vivian Grey woke, as we have said, to a conviction of the worthlessness of human fortunes. His character was changed; and this is the most wonderful of all revolutions—a revolution which precept or reason can never bring about, but which a change of circumstances or fortune may. In his career through the world he resembled a turbid mountain river, whose colour had been cleared, and whose course had been calmed in its passage through a lake.

But he commenced by founding his philosophy on a new error; for he fancied himself passionless, which man never is. His trial had been severe, and because he could no longer interest himself in any of the usual pursuits of men, he believed that he could interest himself in none. But doubting of all things, he doubted of himself; and finding himself so changed from what he had been only a year or two before, he felt as if he should not be astonished if he changed again.

With all his grief, he was no cynic—if he smiled on men, it was not in bitterness; if he thought them base, he did not blame them. He pitied those whose baseness, in his opinion, was their sufficient punishment; for nothing they could attain could repay them for the hot contest of their passions. Subdued, but not melancholy; contemplative, but not gloomy; he left his solitude. Careless of what was to come, the whole world was before him. Indifference is at least the boon of sorrow; for none look forward to the future with indifference, who do not look back to the past with dread.

Vivian Grey was now about to join, for the second time, the great and agitated crowd of beings, who are all intent in the search after that undis-

coverable talisman—HAPPINESS. That he entertained the slightest hopes of being the successful inquirer, is not for a moment to be imagined. He considered that the happiest moment in human life is exactly the sensation of a sailor who has escaped a shipwreck; and that the mere belief that his wishes are to be indulged, is the greatest bliss enjoyed by man.

How far his belief was correct, how he prospered in this, his second venture on the great ocean of life, it is our business to relate. There were moments, when he wished himself neither experienced nor a philosopher—moments when he looked back to the lost paradise of his innocent boyhood—those glorious hours, when the unruffled river of his life mirrored the cloudless heaven of his hope!

CHAPTER II.

VIVIAN pulled up his horse, as he ascended through the fine beech wood, which leads immediately to the city of Frankfort, from the Darmstadt road. The crowd seemed to increase every moment, but as they were all hastening the same way, his progress was not much impeded. It was Frankfort fair; and all countenances were expressive of that excitement which we always experience at great meetings of our fellow-creatures; whether the assemblies be for slaughter, pleasure, or profit, and whether or not we ourselves join in the banquet, the battle, or the fair. At the top of the hill is an old Roman tower, and from this point the flourishing city of Frankfort, with its picturesque cathedral, its numerous villas, and beautiful gardens in the middle of the fertile valley of the Main, burst upon Vivian's sight. On crossing the bridge over the river, the crowd became almost impassable, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Vivian steered his way through the old, narrow, winding streets, full of tall, ancient houses, with heavy casements and notched gable ends. These structures did not, however, at the present moment, greet the traveller with their usual sombre and antique appearance: their outside walls were, in most instances, entirely covered with pieces of broad-cloth of the most showy colours; red, blue, and yellow predominating. These standards of trade were not merely used for the purpose of exhibiting the quality of the articles sold in the interior; but also of informing the curious traveller, the name and nation of their adventurous owners. Inscriptions in German, French, Russian, English, Italian, and even Hebrew, appeared in striking characters on each woollen specimen; and, as if these were not sufficient to attract the attention of the passenger, an active apprentice or assistant commented in eloquent terms on the peculiar fairness and honesty of his master. The public squares, and other open spaces, and indeed every spot which was secure from the hurrying wheels of the heavy old-fashioned coaches of the Frankfort aristocracy, and the spirited pawings of their sleek and long-tailed coach horses, were covered with large and showy booths, which groined under the accumulated treasures of all countries: French silks and French clocks rivalled Manchester cottons and Sheffield cutlery; and assisted to attract or entrap the gazer, in company with Venetian chains, Neapolitan coral, and Vienna pipe-

heads; here was the booth of a great bookseller, who looked to the approaching Leipsic fair for some consolation for his slow sale, and the bad taste of the people of Frankfort; and there was a dealer in Bologna sausages, who felt quite convinced that in some things the taste of the Frankfort public was by no means to be lightly spoken of. All was bustle, bargaining, and business: there were quarrels and conversation in all languages; and Vivian Grey, although he had no chance either of winning or losing money, was amused.

At last, Vivian gained the High street; and here, though the crowd was not less, the space was greater; and so in time he arrived at the grand hotel of "the Roman Emperor," where he stopped. It was a long time before he could be informed whether Baron Julius von Königstein at present honoured that respectable establishment with his presence; for, although Vivian did sometimes succeed in obtaining an audience of a hurrying waiter, that animal, when in a hurry, has a peculiar habit of never attending to a question which a traveller addresses to him. In this dilemma Vivian was saluted by a stately-looking personage above the common height. He was dressed in a very splendid uniform of green and gold, covered with embroidery and glittering with frogs. He wore a cocked hat, adorned with a flowing party-coloured plume, and from his broad golden belt was suspended a weapon of singular shape and costly workmanship. This personage was as stiff and stately as he was magnificent. His eyes were studiously preserved from the profanation of meeting the ground, and his well-supported neck seldom condescended to move from its perpendicular position. His coat was buttoned to the chin and over the breast, with the exception of one small aperture, which was elegantly filled up by a delicate white cambrie handkerchief, very redolent of rich perfumes. This gorgeous gentleman, who might have been mistaken for an elector of the German Empire, had the German empire been in existence, or the governor of the city at the least, turned out to be the chasseur of the Baron von Königstein; and, with his courtly assistance, Vivian soon found himself ascending the staircase of the Roman Emperor.

Vivian was ushered into an apartment, in which he found three or four individuals at breakfast. A middle-aged man of very elegant appearance, in a most *outré* morning gown of Parisian chintz, sprung up from a many cushioned easy chair of scarlet morocco, and seized his hand as he was announced.

"My dear Mr. Grey! and so you are really kind enough to call upon me—I was so fearful lest you should not come—Eugene was so desirous that we should meet, and has said so many things of you, that I should have been mortified beyond expression if we had missed. I have left notice for you at all the principal hotels in the city. And how is Eugene! his is wild blood for a young student, but a good heart, an excellent heart—and you have been so kind to him!—he feels under such particular obligations to you—under very particular obligations, I assure you—and will you breakfast!—Ah! I see you smile at my supposing a horseman unbreakfasted. And have you ridden here from Heidelberg this morning! impossible! Only from Darmstadt! I thought so! You were at the opera then last night. And

how is the little signora? We are to gain her though! Trust the good people of Frankfort for that! Pray be seated—but really I'm forgetting the commonest rules of breeding. Next to the pleasure of having friends is that of introducing them to each other: Prince, you will have great pleasure in being introduced to my friend, Mr. Grey—Mr. Grey—Prince Salvinski! my particular friend, Prince Salvinski. The Count von Altenburgh! Mr. Grey! my very particular friend, the Count von Altenburgh—and the Chevalier de Bœffleurs! Mr. Grey! my most particular friend, the Chevalier de Bœffleurs."

After this most hospitable reception from a man he had never seen before, Vivian Grey sat down. Baron Julius von Königstein was minister to the diet of Frankfort, from what is termed a "first-rate" German power. In person he was short, but most delicately formed, his head was a little bald, but as he was only five-and-thirty, this could scarcely be from age; and his remaining hair, black, glossy, and curling, proved that their companion ringlets had not been long lost. His features were small, but not otherwise remarkable; except a pair of luscious-looking, liquid, black eyes, of great size, which would have hardly become a stoic, and which gleamed with great meaning and perpetual animation.

"I understand, Mr. Grey, that you're a regular philosopher. Pray, who is the favourite master? Kant or Fichte? or is there any other new star who has discovered the origin of our essence, and proved the non-necessity of eating? Count, let me help you to a little more of these *saucisses aux choux*. I'm afraid, from Eugene's account, that you're almost past redemption; and I'm sorry to say, that although I'm very desirous of being your physician and effecting your cure, Frankfort will supply me with very few drugs to work your recovery. If you could but get me an appointment once again to your delightful London, I might indeed produce some effect; or were I even at Berlin, or at your delicious Vienna, Count Altenburgh! (the count bowed;) or at that paradise of women, Warsaw, Prince Salvinski!! (the prince bowed;) or at Paris!!! Chevalier, (the chevalier bowed;) why then, indeed, you should have some difficulty in finding an excuse for being in low spirits with Julius von Königstein! But Frankfort, my dear fellow, is really the most horrible of all human places! perfectly provincial—eh! de Bœffleurs!"

"O! perfectly provincial," sighed the French chevalier, who was also attached to a mission in this very city, and who was thinking of his own gay Boulevards, and his brilliant Tuileries.

"And the men, such brutes! mere citizens!" continued the baron, taking a long pinch of snuff,—"mere citizens! Do you take snuff? I merely keep this box for my friends;" and here he extended to Vivian a magnificent gold snuff-box, covered with the portrait of a crowned head, surrounded with diamonds: "A present from the king of Sardinia, when I negotiated the marriage of the duke of — and his niece, and settled the long agitated controversy about the right of anchovy fishing on the left bank of the Mediterranean: I merely keep it for my friends; my *own* snuff is *here*." And the baron pointed very significantly to his waistcoat-pocket eased with tin.

"But the women," continued the baron, "the

women—that is a different thing.—There's some amusement among the little bourgeois, who are glad enough to get rid of their commercial beaus; whose small talk, after a waltz, is about bills of exchange, mixed up with a little patriotism about their free city, and some chatter about what they call—the fine arts; their horrid collections of 'the Dutch school'—*School*, forsooth! a cabbage, by Gerard Dow! and a candlestick, by Mieris!—And now will you take a basin of soup, and warm yourself, while his highness continues his account of being frozen to death this spring at the top of Mont Blanc: how was it, prince?"

"I think I was at the second attempt?" asked the Pole, collecting himself after this long interruption.—He was, as all Poles are, a great traveller; had seen much and described more—though a great liar, he was a dull man; and the baron, who never allowed himself to be outdone in a good story, affected to credit the prince's, and returned him his thanks in kind, which his highness, in spite of his habitual mendacity on the point of his own travels, singularly enough, always credited.

"Did your highness ultimately ascend to the top of Mont Blanc?" asked Vivian.

"No—" said the prince, very slowly, as if he confessed the fact with reluctance: "I did not—I certainly did not; although I did reach a much higher point than I contemplated after my repulse; a point, indeed, which would warrant some individuals in asserting that they had even reached the summit; but in matters of science I am scrupulously correct, and I certainly cannot say that I did reach the *extreme* top. I say so, because, as I believe, I mentioned before, in matters of science I make it a point to be particularly correct. It is singular, but no less true, that after reaching the fifth glacier, I encountered a pyramidal elevation of, I should calculate, fifteen hundred feet in height. This pyramidal elevation was not perpendicular, but had an unhappy inclination forward, of about one inch in eight. It was entirely of solid, green, polished ice. Nature had formed no rut to assist the philosopher.—I paused before this pyramidal elevation of polished, slippery, green ice. I was informed that it was necessary for me to ascend this pyramidal elevation during the night; and this pyramidal elevation of solid, green, polished, slippery ice, Mr. Grey, with an unhappy inclination forward, of one inch in eight from the perpendicular, was the top of Mont Blanc. Saussure may say that he ascended it *forever*! For my part, when I beheld this pyramidal elevation, gentlemen, I was not surprised that there was some little variance as to the exact height of this mighty mountain, among all those philosophers who profess to have reached its summit." On this head the travelling Pole would have discoursed forever; but the baron, with his usual presence of mind, dexterously interfered.

"You were fortunate, prince; I congratulate you, I've heard of that iceberg before. I remember, my cousin, who ascended the mountain about ten years ago—was it ten years ago?—yes, ten years ago. I remember he slept at the foot of that very pyramidal elevation, in a miserable mountain-hut, intending to climb it in the morning. He was not so well-instructed as your highness, who, doubtless, avoided the diurnal ascent, from fear of the effect of the sun's rays on the slippery ice Well, my cousin, as I said before, slept in the

mountain-hut; and in the night there came such a fall of snow, that when he awoke, he found the cottage-door utterly blocked up. In fact, the whole building was encrusted in a coating of snow, of above forty feet thick. In this state of affairs, having previously made a nuncupative will, to which the guides were to be witnesses, in case of their escape, he resigned himself to his fate. But Providence interfered; a violent tornado arose. Among other matter, the gigantic snowball was lifted up in the air with as much ease as if it were merely a drop of sleet. It bounded from glacier to glacier with the most miraculous rapidity, and at length vaulted on the Mer-de-glace, where it cracked into a thousand pieces. My cousin was taken up by a couple of young English ladies, who were sketching the Montanvert, with three or four of the principal glaciers for a back-ground. The only inconvenience he sustained were a severe cold, and a slight contusion; and he was so enchanted with the manners of the youngest lady, who, by-the-by, had a very considerable fortune, that he married her the next week." Here the baron took a very long pinch of snuff.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the Polish prince, who affected French manners.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the Austrian count, who was equally refined.

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed the Frenchman; who, believing his own country superior in every possible particular, was above borrowing even an oath, or an ejaculation, from another land.

"Mr. Grey—I wish that Frankfort could have been honoured by your presence yesterday," said the baron; "there really was an entertainment at the president's which was not contemptible, and a fine display of women, a very fine display! eh, *de Bœffleurs?*"

"Remarkably so, indeed! but what a room!" said the chevalier, shrugging up his shoulders and elevating his eyebrows.

"We want the saloon of Wisbaden here," said the baron; "with that, Frankfort might be endurable. As it is, I really must give up my appointment; I cannot carry on public business in a city with such a saloon as we met in last night."

"The most imposing room, on the whole, that I ever was in," said Prince Salvinski, "is the chief hall of the seraglio at Constantinople. It's a most magnificent room?"

"You have been in the interior of the seraglio, then?" asked Vivian.

"All over it, sir, all over it! The women unfortunately were not there; they were at a summer palace on the Bosphorus, where they are taken regularly every year for an airing in large gold cages."

"And was the furniture of the room you are speaking of very gorgeous?"

"No, by no means; a great deal of gilding and carving, but rude, rude; very much like the exterior carving of a man-of-war; nothing exquisite. I remember the floor was covered with carpets, which, by-the-by, were English. To give you an idea of the size of the room, it might have taken, perhaps, sixty of the largest carpets that you ever saw to cover the floor of it."

"Does your highness take snuff?" asked the baron dryly.

"Thank you, no; I've left off snuff ever since I passed a winter at Baffin's Bay. You've no idea

how very awkward an accidental sneeze is near the pole."

"Your highness, I imagine, has been a great traveller;" said Vivian, to the baron's great annoyance. Unfortunately Vivian was not so much used to Prince Salvinski as his excellency.

"I have seen a little of most countries; these things are interesting enough when we are young; but when we get a little more advanced in life, the novelty wears off, and the excitement ceases. I have been in all quarters of the globe. In Europe I have seen every thing except the miracles of Prince Hohenlohe. In Asia I have seen every thing except the ruins of Babylon. In Africa I have seen every thing but Timbuctoo; and in America I have seen every thing except Croker's Mountains."

All this time the Austrian had not joined in the conversation; not, however, because his mouth was shut—that is never the fault of an Austrian. Count von Altenburgh had now, however, finished his breakfast. Next to eating, music is the business in which an Austrian is most interested. The count having had the misfortune of destroying, for the present, one great source of his enjoyment, became very anxious to know what chance there existed of his receiving some consolation from the other. Flinging down his knife and fork, as if he estimated those instruments very slightly, now that their services were useless, and pushing his plate briskly from him, he demanded with an anxious air—"Can any gentleman inform me what chance there is of the signora coming?"

"No news to-day," said the baron, with a mournful look, "I'm almost in despair;—what do you think of the last notes that have been interchanged?"

"Very little chance," said the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, shaking his head; "really these burghers, with all their affected enthusiasm, have managed the business exceedingly ill. No opera can possibly succeed, that is not conducted by a committee of noblemen."

"Certainly!" said the baron; "we're sure then to have the best singers, and be in the gazette the same season."

"Which is much better, I think, Von Konigstein, than paying our bills, and receiving no pleasure."

"But these burghers," continued the baron; "these clumsy burghers, with their affected enthusiasm, as you well observe, who could have contemplated such novices in diplomacy? Whatever may be the issue, I can at least lay my head upon my pillow, and feel that I have done my duty. Did not I, *de Bœffleurs*, first place the negotiation on a basis of acknowledged feasibility and mutual benefit? Who drew the protocol, I should like to know? Who baffled the intrigues of the English minister, the Lord Amelius Fitz-fudge Boroughby? Who sat up one whole night with the signora's friend, the Russian envoy, Baron Squallanoff—and who was it that first arranged about the extra chariot?" and here the representative of a first-rate German power looked very much like a resigned patriot, who feels that he deserves a riband.

"No doubt of it, my dear Von Konigstein," echoed the French charge d'affaires, "and I think, whatever may be the result, that I too may look back to this negotiation with no ungratified feelings. Had the arrangement been left, as I had wished, merely to the ministers of the Great Powers, I am

confident that the signora would have been singing this night in our opera house."

"What is the grand point of difference at present?" asked the Austrian.

"A most terrific one," said the baron; "the lady demanded six-and-thirty covers, two tables, two carriages, one of which I arranged should be a chariot;—that at least the town owes to me;—and, let me see, what else? merely a town mansion and establishment. Exerting myself day and night, these terms were, at length, agreed to by the municipality, and the lady was to ride over from Darmstadt to sign and seal. In the course of her ride, she took a cursed fancy to the country villa of a great Jew banker, and since that moment the arrangement has gone off. We have offered her every thing—the commandant's country castle—his lady's country farm—the villa of the director of the opera—the retreat of our present prima donna—all, in vain. We have even hinted at a temporary repose, a neighbouring royal residence—but all, all useless! The banker and the signora are equally intractable, and Frankfort is in despair."

"She ought to have signed and sealed at Darmstadt," said the count very indignantly.

"To be sure!—they should have closed upon her caprice, and taken her when she was in the fancy."

"Talking of opera girls," commenced the Polish prince, "I remember the Countess Katszinski—"

"Your highness has nothing upon your plate," quickly retorted the baron, who was in no humour for a story.

"Nothing more, I thank you," continued the prince: "as I was saying, I remember the Countess Katszinski—"

"Mr. Brinkel!" announced the chasseur; and the entrance of a very singular-looking personage saved the company from the Pole's long story.

Mr. Brinkel was a celebrated picture-dealer. He was a man about the middle size, with keen, black eyes, a sharp nose rather unduly reclining to his right cheek, and which somewhat singular contortion was, perhaps, occasioned by an habitual and sardonic grin which constantly illuminated his features, and lit up his shining, dark-brown face, which was of much the same tint as one of his own vanished, "deep-toned," modern antiques. There were odd stories about respecting Mr. Brinkel and his "undoubted originals," in which invaluable pieces of property he alone professed to deal. But the Baron von Konigstein was, at any rate, not one of Mr. Brinkel's victims; and his excellency was among the rare few, whom a picture-dealer knows it is in vain to attempt to take in: he was an amateur who thoroughly understood art, one of the rarest characters in existence. The baron and Brinkel were, however, great friends; and at the present moment, the picture-dealer was assisting the diplomatist in the accomplishment of a very crafty and splendid plan. Baron von Konigstein, for various reasons, which shall now be nameless, was generally in want of money. Now the baron, tired with his perpetual shifts, determined to make a fortune at one great coup. He had been in England, and was perfectly aware of the rising feeling for the arts which at the present moment daily flourishes in this country. The baron was generous enough to determine materially to assist in the formation of our national taste. He was, himself, forming at a cheap rate a very extensive collection of original pictures, which he intended to sell

at an enormous price to the National Gallery. Brinkel, in order to secure the *entrée* of the baron's room, which afforded various opportunities of getting off his "undoubted" originals on English and Russian travellers, was in return assisting the minister in his great operation, and acted as his general agent in the affair, on which he was also to get a respectable commission. This business was, of course, altogether a close secret.

And now, before Mr. Brinkel opens his mouth, I may, perhaps, be allowed to say a few words upon a subject in which we are all interested. We are now forming, at great expense, and with greater anxiety, a national gallery. What is the principal object of such an institution? Doubtless to elevate the productions of our own school by affording our artists an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the works of the great masters who have preceded them. Why, then, have we deviated from the course which has been pursued in the formation of all other national galleries? There we shall see arranged in chronological order, specimens of the art in all ages, from the period in which Cimabue rescued it from the Greek painters unto the present time. The excellent is doubtless to be conceived in the study of the excellent; but we should always remember that excellence is relative; and that to the philosopher, the frescos of Masaccio, are perhaps more marvellous than the frescos of the Vatican. Introduce a young and inexperienced painter to the Assumption of Titian, the Madonna della Pietà of Guido, the Leo of Raffiello, the St. Jerome of Domenichino; and, instead of being incited and inspired, he will leave the chamber in despair. But, before he witnesses these miracles, let him trace on the walls of the gallery the history of his art. Let him view the first hazardous efforts of the inexperienced, wavering, and timid pencil, depicting nummies rather than men—sticks, rather than trees; let him view the unrelieved surface—the ill-proportioned extremities—the harsh and unsubdued tints; then, let him watch perspective stealing into the back-ground; let him witness the attenuated forms, falling into graceless, but energetic groups, let him admire the first deception of *chiaro scuro*; then bring him to the correct design, the skilful foreshortening, the exact extremities; to the rounded limb—to the breathing mouth—to the kindled eye—to the moving group! Add to these all the magic of colour, and lo! a grand picture. We stand before the work with admiring awe; forgetting the means in the result; the artist, in the creator.

Thus gradually, I repeat, should our young artist be introduced to the great masters, whom then the wise pride of human nature would incite him to imitate. Then, too, he would feel that to become a great artist, he must also become a great student; that no sudden inspirations produced the Virgins of Raffiello; that, by slow degrees, by painful observation, by diligent comparison, by frequent experiment, by frequent failure, by the experience of many styles, the examination of all schools, the scholar of Perugino won for himself a name, than which no one is more deeply graven on fame's eternal tablets.

For half the sum that we are giving for a suspicious Correggio, the young English artist would be able to observe all this, and the efforts of the early Germans to boot. I make these observations with no disposition to disparage the management of our Gallery; nor in that carping humour which some

think it safe to assume, when any new measure is proposed, or is being carried into execution. I know the difficulties that the directors have to contend with. I know the greater difficulties that await them; and I have made these observations because I believe there is a due disposition, in the proper quarter, to attend to honest suggestions; and because I feel that the true interests of the arts, have, at this present time, in our monarch, a steady, a sincere, and powerful advocate; one who, in spite of the disheartening opposition of vulgar clamour, and uneducated prejudice, has done more in a short reign for the patronage of the fine arts, than all the dynasties of all the Medicis, Roman and Florentine, together. And now for Mr. Brinkel.

"My dear baron!" commenced the picture-dealer; and here seeing strangers he pulled up, in order to take a calm view of the guests, and see whether there were any unpleasant faces among them; any gentleman to whom he had sold a Leonardo da Vinci, or a Salvator Rosa. All looking very strange, and extremely amiable, Mr. Brinkel felt reassured, and proceeded.

"My dear baron! merely a few words."

"O, my dear Brinkel!—proceed—proceed."

"Another time; your excellency is engaged at present."

"My dear Brinkel! before these gentlemen you may say any thing."

"Your excellency's so kind," continued Mr. Brinkel, though with a hesitating voice, as if he thought that when the nature of the communication was known, the baron might repent his over-confidence. "Your excellency's so kind!"

"My dear little Rembrandt, you may really say any thing."

"Well, then," continued he, half-hesitating, and half in a whisper; "may it please your excellency, I merely stepped in to say, that I am secretly, but credibly informed, that there is a man just arrived from Italy, with a marble *Pietà* of Michel Angelo, stolen from a church in Genoa. The fact is not yet known, even to the police; and long before the Sardinian minister can apply for the acquirer's apprehension, he will be safely stowed in one of my cellars."

"A marble *Pietà*! by Michel Angelo," exclaimed the prince, with great eagerness. The Polish nobleman had a commission from the imperial viceroy of his country, to make purchases of all exquisite specimens of art that he could meet with; as the imperial government was very desirous of reforming the taste of the nation in matters of art, which indeed was in a particularly depraved state. Caricatures had been secretly circulated in the highest circles of Warsaw and Wilna, in which the emperor and his ministers did not look quite as dignified as when shrouded in the sacred sanctuary of the Kremlin; and although the knout, the wheel, and Siberia, suppressed these little intemperances for the moment, still it was imagined by the prime minister, who chanced to be a philosopher, that the only method of permanent prevention was directing the public taste to the study of the beautiful; and that therefore the only mode of saving the sovereign from being squibbed, was the formation of a national gallery. Ours, therefore, is not the only infant institute.

"A marble *Pietà*, by Michel Angelo!" exclaimed the prince; "but a great price, I suppose, demanded!"

"Dear—but cheap," oracularly answered Mr.

Brinkel; and the sinistral forefinger was significantly applied to the left side of his nose.

"I confess, I am no extravagant admirer of Michel Angelo," said the baron. "In the sacred shades of Santa Croce, sculpture, painting, and architecture mourn him as their lost master. Poetry might have been added to the charming sisters. But in all these glorious arts, though his performances were remarkable, they were not marvellous; and I look in vain for any production of Michel Angelo, which *per se* stamps him as a master spirit.

"It was his custom to treat sculpture as his profession, and in his profession he has left scarcely one finished work. The tombs of the Medicis are not completed, and although there is a mysterious, and undefinable moral in his 'Night and Day,' which may attract the contemplative, and interest the poet, yet I imagine few, who have preconceived that monument from the written descriptions, have looked on the original without disappointment. His Moses,—and for a moment I will grant that the legislator is as sublime as his warmest admirers maintain,—is only one finished figure of a monument, in which it was to have been not the most remarkable. But what, if this statue be only a kindred personification of the same conception which he has depicted in the brawny prophets of the Sistine chapel, where it would seem that the artist had mistaken contortion for inspiration, and largeness of stature for dilatation of soul! His marble *Pietàs* and *Madonnas* unfinished, abound in the Italian churches; and though I grant a striking simplicity is often observable in the countenances of his *Virgins*, yet that simplicity is often severe, and sometimes sullen. We look in vain for the subdued loveliness of the mother of God—for that celestial resignation which is not akin to despair. As for the corpse, it might suit the widow's child, or the deceased Lazarus; and if not always absolutely vulgar, the face is at best but that of a young, and not very intellectual rabbi. If we turn from sacred subjects to ancient mythology, I cannot forget that Michel Angelo was the first artist, who dared to conceive a god as less than a man; and in his 'Drunken Bacchus,' presented us with the sovereign of the grape, as the slave of his own subject, in a position too clumsy for a Faun, and too dull for a Silenus!

"Although sculpture was the profession of Michel Angelo, he is still more esteemed by his admirers as a painter. Notwithstanding Sir Joshua Reynolds ranks him even above Raffaele, it seems now pretty well understood that his fame as a painter must depend upon his Roman frescos, and his one oil painting—the 'Holy Family,' at Florence. Whether this painting really be in oil is doubtful, but that is of little moment. I will only ask, what mind unprejudiced by the doctrines, and uncontaminated by the babble of schools, has looked upon that hoisted treasure of the Tribune, with any other feeling except disgust? Where is the divinity of the boy? Where the inspiration of the mother! Where the proud felicity of the human husband!

"Of fresco-painting, Michel Angelo was confessedly ignorant, and once threw down the brush in disgust at his own incompetence. The theorist of art still finds some plan and order lurking in the inexplicable arrangement of the Sistine ceiling; but while he consoles himself for the absence of

hated German music with all his heart, and was now humming an air from the *Dame Blanche*.

"But mind, my dear fellows—this is a secret, a cabinet secret—the municipality are to have the gratification of announcing the event to the city in a public decree—it is but fair. I feel that I have only to hint, to secure your silence."

At this moment, with a thousand protestations of secrecy, the party broke up, each hastening to have the credit of first spreading the joyful intelligence through their circles, and of depriving the Frankfort senate of their hard-earned gratification. The baron, who was in high spirits, ordered the carriage to drive Vivian round the ramparts, where he was to be introduced to some of the most fashionable beauties, previous to the evening triumph. Mr. Brinkel, disappointed at present of increasing, through the assistance of the Polish prince, any collection in the North, directed his subtle steps up another flight of the staircase of the Roman Emperor, where lodged an English gentleman, for whom Mr. Brinkel had a very exquisite *morceau*; having received the night before from Florence a fresh consignment of Carlo Dolces.

CHAPTER III.

VIVIAN passed a week very agreeably at Frankfort. In the baron and his friends he found the companions that he had need of; their conversation and pursuits diverted his mind without engaging his feelings, and allowed him to pause and think. There were moments, indeed, when he found in the baron a companion neither frivolous nor uninteresting. His excellency had travelled in most countries, and had profited by his travels. His taste for the fine arts was equalled by his knowledge of them; and his acquaintance with many of the most eminent men of Europe enriched his conversation with a variety of anecdotes, to which his lively talents did ample justice. He seemed fond, at times, of showing Vivian that he was not a mere artificial man of the world, destitute of all feelings, and thinking only of himself: he recurred with satisfaction to moments of his life, when his passions had been in full play; and, while he acknowledged the errors of his youth with candour, he excused them with grace. In short, Vivian and he became what the world calls *friends*; that is to say, they were men who had no objection to dine in each other's company, provided the dinner were good; assist each other in any scrape, provided no particular personal responsibility were incurred by the assistant; and live under the same roof, provided each were master of his own time. Vivian and the baron, indeed, did more than this—they might have been described as *very particular friends*—for his excellency had persuaded our hero to accompany him for the summer to the baths of Ems, a celebrated German watering-place, situated in the dutchy of Nassau, in the vicinity of the Rhine.

On the morrow they were to commence their journey. The fair of Frankfort, which had now lasted nearly a month, was at its close. A bright sunshiny afternoon was stealing into twilight, when Vivian, escaping from the principal street, and the attractions of the Braunnfels, or chief shops under the Exchange, directed his steps to some of

the more remote and ancient streets. In crossing a little square, his attention was excited by a crowd, which had assembled round a conjuror; who, from the top of a small cart, which he had converted into a stage, was haranguing, in front of a green curtain, an audience with great fervency, and apparently with great effect; at least Vivian judged so, from the loud applauses which constantly burst forth. The men pressed nearer, shouted, and clapped their hands; and the anxious mothers struggled to lift their brats higher in the air, that they might early form a due conception of the powers of magic; and learn that the maternal threats which were sometimes extended to them at home, were not mere idle boasting. Altogether, the men with their cocked hats, stiff holiday coats, and long pipes; the women with their glazed gowns of bright fancy patterns, close lace caps, or richly chased silver head-gear; and the children with their gaping mouths and long heads of hair, offered very quaint studies for a Flemish painter. Vivian became also one of the audience, and not an uninterested one.

The appearance of the conjuror was very peculiar. He was not much more than five feet high, but so slightly formed, that he reminded you rather of the boy than the dwarf. The upper part of his face was even delicately moulded; his sparkling black eyes became his round forehead, which was not too much covered by his short, glossy, black hair; his complexion was clear, but quite olive; his nose was very small and straight, and contrasted singularly with his enormous mouth, the thin, bluish lips of which were seldom closed, and consequently did not conceal his large square teeth, which, though very white, were set apart, and were so solid that they looked almost like double teeth. This enormous mouth, which was supported by large jawbones, attracted the attention of the spectator so keenly, that it was some time before you observed the prodigious size of the ears, which also adorned this extraordinary countenance. The costume of this singular being was not less remarkable than his natural appearance. He wore a complete under-dress of pliant leather, which fitted close up to his throat, and down to his wrists and ankles, where it was clasped with large fastenings either of gold or some gilt material. This, with the addition of a species of hussar jacket of green cloth, which was quite unadorned, with the exception of its vivid red lining, was the sole covering of the conjuror; who, with a light cap and feather in his hand was now haranguing the spectators. The object of his discourse was a panegyric of himself, and a satire on all other conjurors. He was the only conjuror—the real conjuror—a worthy descendant of the magicians of old.

"Were I to tell that broad-faced Herr," continued the conjuror, "who is now gaping opposite to me, that this rod is the rod of Aaron, mayhap he would call me a liar; yet were I to tell him that he was the son of his father, he would not think it wonderful! And yet, can he prove it! My friends, if I am a liar, the whole world is a liar—and yet any one of you who'll go and proclaim that on the Braunnfels, will get his skull cracked. Every truth is not to be spoken, and every lie is not to be punished. I've told you that it's better for you to spend your money in seeing my tricks, than it is in swigging schnaps in the clumney corner; and yet, my friends, this may be a lie. I've

told you that the profits of this whole night shall be given to some poor and worthy person in this town; and perhaps I shall give them to myself. What then! I shall speak the truth; and you will perhaps crack my skull. Is this a reward for truth? O, generation of vipers! My friends, what is truth? who can find it in Frankfort? Suppose I call upon you, Mr. Baker, and sup with you this evening; you will receive me as a neighbourly man should, tell me to make myself at home, and do as I like. Is it not so? I see you smile, as if my visit would make you bring out one of the bottles of your best Asmanchausen."

Here the crowd laughed out; for we are always glad when there is any talk of another's hospitality being put to the test, although we stand no chance of sharing the entertainment ourselves. The baker looked foolish, as all men singled out in a crowd do.

"Well, well," continued the conjuror; "I've no doubt his wine would be as ready as your tobacco, Mr. Smith; or a wafala from your basket, my honest cakeseller;" and so saying, with a peculiarly long, thin wand, the conjuror jerked up the basket of an itinerant and shouting pastry-cook, and immediately began to thrust the contents into his mouth with a rapidity ludicrously miraculous.—The laugh now burst out again, but the honest baker now joined in it this time with an easy spirit.

"Be not disconcerted, my little custard-monger; if thou art honest, thou shalt prosper. Did I not say that the profits of this night were for the most poor, and the most honest? If thy stock in trade were in thy basket, my raspberry-pull, verily you are not now the richest there; and so, therefore, if your character be a fair one—that is to say, if you only cheat five times a day, and give a tenth of your cheaterly to the poor, you shall have the benefit. I ask you again, what is truth? If I sup with the baker, and he tells me to do what I like with all that is his, and I kiss his wife, he will kick me out; yet to kiss his wife might be my pleasure, if her breath were sweet. I ask you again, what is truth? Truth, they say, lies in a well; but perhaps this is a lie. How do we know that truth is not in one of these two boxes?" asked the conjuror, placing his cap on his head, and holding one small snuff-box to a tall, savage-looking one-eyed Bohemian, who, with a comrade, had walked over from the Austrian garrison at Mentz.

"I see but one box," growled the soldier.

"It is because thou hast only one eye, friend; open the other, and thou shalt see two," said the conjuror, in a slow, malicious tone, with his neck extended, and his hand with the hateful box outstretched in it.

"Now, by our black Lady of Altoting, I'll soon stop thy prate, chattering!" bellowed the enraged Bohemian.

"Murder! murder! murder!—the protection of the free city against the Emperor of Austria, the King of Bohemia, Hungary; and Lombardy!" and the knave retreated to the very extremity of the stage, and affecting the most agitating fear, hid himself behind the green curtain, from a side of which his head was alone visible, or rather an immense red tongue, which wagged in a'l shapes at the unlucky soldier, except when it retired to the interior of his mouth, to enable him to reiterate "*murder!*" and invoke the privileges of the free city of Frankfort.

When the soldier was a little cooled, the conjuror again came forward; and, having moved his small magical table to a corner, and lit two tapers, one of which he placed at each side of the stage, he stripped off his hussar jacket, and began to imitate a monkey; an animal which, by the faint light, in his singular costume, he very much resembled. How amusing were his pranks! He first plundered a rice plantation, and then he cracked cocoa-nuts; then he washed his face, and arranged his toilet with his right paw; and finally, he ran a race with his own tail, which humorous appendage to his body was very wittily performed for the occasion, by a fragment of an old tarred rope. His gambols were so diverting, that they even extracted applause from his enemy, the one-eyed sergeant; and emboldened by the acclamations, from monkeys the conjuror began to imitate men. He first drank like a Dutchman, and having reeled round with a thousand oaths, to the manifold amusement of the crowd, he suddenly began to smoke like a Prussian. Nothing could be more admirable than the look of complacent and pompous stolidity with which he accompanied each puff of his cigar. The applause was continued; and the one-eyed Bohemian sergeant, delighted at the ridicule which was heaped on his military rival, actually threw the mimic some groschen.

"Keep your pence, friend," said the conjuror; "you'll soon owe me more; we have not yet closed accounts. My friends, I have drunk like a Dutchman; I have smoked like a Prussian; and now—I will eat like an Austrian!"—and here the immense mouth of the actor seemed distended even a hundred degrees bigger, while with gloating eyes and extended arms, he again set to at the half-emptied wafala basket of the unhappy pastry-cook.

"Now, by our black Lady of Altoting, thou art an impudent varlet," growled the Austrian soldier.

"You are losing your temper again," retorted the glutton, with his mouth full; "how difficult you are to please!—Well, then, if the Austrians may not be touched, what say you to a Bohemian—a tall one-eyed Bohemian sergeant, with an appetite like a hog, and a liver like a lizard?"

"Now, by our black Lady of Altoting, this is too much!" and the frantic soldier sprang at the conjuror.

"Hold him! hold him!" cried Vivian Grey; for the mob, frightened at the soldier, gave way.

"There is a gentle's voice under a dark cloak!" cried the conjuror; "but I want no assistance;" and so saying, with a dexterous spring, the conjuror leapt over the heads of two or three staring children, and lighted on the nape of the sergeant's gigantic neck; placing his forefingers behind each of the soldier's ears, he threatened to slit them immediately, if he were not quiet. The sergeant's companion, of course, came to his rescue, but Vivian engaged him, and attempted to arrange matters. "My friends, my friends, surely, a gay word at a *kermis* is not to meet with military punishment! What is the use of living in the free city of Frankfort, or, indeed in any other city, if jokes are to be answered with oaths, and a light laugh met with a heavy blow? Avoid bloodshed, if possible; but stand by the conjuror. His business is gibes and jests, and this is the first time that I ever saw Merry Andrew arrested. Come, come, my good fellows!" said he to the soldiers, "we had better be

off. men so important as you and I should not be spectators of these mummeries." The Austrians, who understood Vivian's compliment literally, were not sorry to make a dignified retreat; particularly as the mob, encouraged by Vivian's interference, began to show fight. Vivian also took his departure as soon as he could possibly steal off unnoticed; but not before he had been thanked by the conjuror.

"I knew there was gentle blood under that cloak! If you like to see the Mystery of the Crucifixion, with the Resurrection, and real fireworks, it begins at eight o'clock, and you shall be admitted gratis. I knew there was gentle blood under that cloak, and some day or other when your highness is in distress, you shall not want the aid of ESSPER GEORGE!"

CHAPTER IV.

IT was late in the evening when a britschka stopped at the post-house of Coblenz. M. Maas, whom all English travellers must remember, for all must have experienced his genuine kindness, greeted its two inmates with his usual hospitality; but regretted that, as his house was very full, his excellency must have the condescension to sup in the public-room. The passage-boat from Bingen had just arrived; and a portly judge from the Danube, a tall, gaunt Prussian officer, a sketching English artist, two university students, and three or four travelling cloth-merchants, chiefly returning from Frankfort fair, were busily occupied at a long table in the centre of the room, at an ample banquet, in which sour-crust, cherry soup, and very savoury sausages were not wanting. So keen were the appetites, and so intense the attention of these worthies, that the entrance of the new comers was scarcely noticed; and the baron and his friend seated themselves very quietly at a small table in the corner of the room, where they waited with due patience for the arrival of one of Monsieur Maas's exquisite little suppers; although hunger, more than once, nearly induced them to join the table of the boat's crew; but as the baron facetiously observed, a due terror of the Prussian officer, who, the moment they arrived, took care to help himself to every dish at table, and a proper respect for Ernstorf, prevented a consummation which they devoutly wished for.

For half an hour nothing was heard but the sound of crashing jaws, and of rattling knives and forks. How singular is the sight of a dozen hungry individuals intent upon their prey! what a noisy silence! A human voice was at length heard. It proceeded from the fat judge from the Danube. He was a man at once convivial, dignified, and economical: he had not spoken for two minutes before his character was evident to every person in the room, although he flattered himself that his secret purpose was concealed from all. Tired with the thin Moselle which M. Maas gratuitously allowed to the table, the convivial judge from the Danube wished to comfort himself with a glass of more generous liquor; aware of the price of a bottle of good Rudesheimer, the economical judge from the Danube was desirous of forming a copartnership with one or two gentlemen in the bottle; still more aware of his exalted situation,

the dignified judge from the Danube felt it did not become him to appear in the eyes of any one as an unsuccessful suppliant.

"This Moselle is very thin," observed the judge, shaking his head.

"Very fair table-wine, I think," said the artist, refilling his tumbler, and then proceeding with his sketch, which was a rough likeness, in black chalk, of the worthy magistrate himself.

"Very good wine, I think," swore the Prussian, taking the bottle. With the officer there was certainly no chance.

The cloth-merchants mixed even this thin Moselle with water, and therefore they could hardly be looked upon as boon companions; and the students were alone left. A German student is no flincher at the bottle, although he generally drinks beer. These gentry, however, were no great favourites with the magistrate, who was a loyal man of regular habits, and no encourager of brawls, duels, and other still more disgraceful outrages to all which abominations, besides drinking beer and chewing tobacco, the German student is most remarkably addicted: but in the present case, what was to be done? He offered the nearest a pinch of snuff, as a mode of commencing his acquaintance and cultivating his *complaisance*. The German student dug his thumb into the box, and, with the additional aid of the forefinger, sweeping out half its contents, growled out something like thanks, and then drew up in his seat, as if he had too warmly encouraged the impertinent intrusion of a Philistine, to whom he had never been introduced.

The cloth-merchant, ceasing from sipping his meek liquor, and taking out of his pocket a letter, from which he tore off the back, carefully commenced collecting with his forefinger the particles of dispersed snuff in a small pyramid, which, when formed, was dexterously slipped into the paper, then folded up and put into his pocket; the prudent merchant contenting himself for the moment with the refreshment which was afforded to his senses by the truant particles which had remained in his nail.

"Kelner!"—never call a German waiter *garçon*, or else you'll stand a chance of going supperless to bed:—"Kelner! a bottle of Rudesheimer!" bellowed the convivial judge from the Danube, "and if any gentleman or gentlemen would like to join me; they may;" added the economical judge from the Danube, in a more subdued tone. No one answered, and the bottle was put down. The judge slowly poured out the bright yellow fluid into a tall bell glass, adorned with a beautiful and encircling wreath of vine leaves: he held the glass a moment before the lamp, for his eye to dwell with still greater advantage on the transparent radiance of the contents; and then deliberately poured them down his throat, and allowing them to dwell a moment on his palate, he uttered an emphatic "*bah!*" and sucking in his breath, leaned back in his chair. The student immediately poured out a glass from the same bottle, and drank it off. The dignified judge from the Danube gave him a look;—the economical judge from the Danube blessed himself that though his boon companion was a brute, still he would lessen the expense of the bottle, which nearly amounted to a day's pay; and the convivial judge from the Danube again filled his glass—but this was merely

to secure his fair portion. He saw the student was a rapid drinker; and, although he did not like to hurry his own enjoyment, he thought it most prudent to keep his glass well stored by his side.

"I hope your highnesses have had a pleasant voyage," halloed out a man, entering the room very rapidly as he spoke; and deliberately walking up to the table, he pushed between two of the cloth merchants, who quietly made way; and then placing a small square box before him, he immediately opened it, and sweeping aside all the dishes and glasses which surrounded him, he began to fill their places with cups, balls, rings, and other mysterious-looking matters which generally accompany a conjuror.

"I hope your highnesses have had a pleasant voyage. I've been thinking of you all the day. (Here the cups were arranged.) Next to myself, I'm interested for my friends. (Here the rice was sprinkled.) I came from Fairyland this morning. (Here the trick was executed.) Will any gentleman lend me a handkerchief? Now, sir, tie any knot you choose:—tighter—tighter—tight as you can—tight as you can:—now pull!—Why, sir, where's your knot?" Here most of the company good-naturedly laughed at a trick which had amused them before a hundred times. But the dignified judge from the Danube had no taste for such trivial amusements; and, besides, the convivial judge from the Danube thought that all this noise spoiled the pleasure of his wine, and prevented him from catching the flavour of his Rudesheimer. Moreover, the judge from the Danube was not in a very good humour. The German student appeared to have very little idea of the rules and regulations of a fair partnership; for not only did he not regulate his draughts by the moderate example of his bottle companion, but actually filled the glass of his University friend, and even offered the precious green flask to his neighbour, the cloth-merchant. That humble individual modestly refused the proffer. The very unexpected circumstance of having his health drunk by a stranger, seemed alone to have produced a great impression upon him; and adding a little more water to his already diluted potation, he bowed most reverently to the student, who, in return, did not notice him. All these little circumstances prevented the judge from the Danube from being in his usual condescending and amiable humour, and therefore the judge from the Danube did not laugh at the performances of our friend Essper George: for I need hardly mention that the conjuror was no other than that quaint personage. His ill-humour did not escape the lord of the cups and ball; who, as was his custom, immediately began to torment him.

"Will your highness choose a card?" asked the magician of the judge, with a most humble look.

"This was too much for the magistrate.

"No, sir!"

Essper George looked very penitent, as if he felt he had taken a great liberty by his application; and so, to compensate for his incorrect behaviour, he asked the magistrate whether he would have the goodness to lend him his watch. The judge was very irate, and determined to give the intruder a set down.

"No, sir; I am not one of those who can be amused by tricks that his grandfather knew."

"Grandfather!" shrieked Essper; "what a wonderful grandfather yours must have been! All my tricks are fresh from Fairyland this morning. Grandfather, indeed! Pray, is this your grandfather?" and here the conjuror, leaning over the table, with a rapid catch drew out from the fat paunch of the judge, a long grinning wooden figure, with great staring eyes, and the parrot nose of a punchinello. The laugh which followed this humorous specimen of sleight-of-hand, was loud, long, and universal. The judge lost his temper; and Essper George took the opportunity of the confusion to drink off the glass of Rudesheimer, which stood, as we have mentioned, ready-charged at the magistrate's elbow.

The kelner now went round to collect the money of the various guests who had partaken of the boat-supper; and, of course, charged the judge extra for his ordered bottle, bowing at the same time very low, as was proper to so good a customer. These little attentions at inns encourage expenditure. The judge tried at the same time the bottle, which he found empty, and applied to his two boon companions for their quota; but the students affected a sort of brutal surprise at any one having the presumption to imagine that they were going to pay their proportion; and flinging down their money for their own supper on the table, they retired; the frantic magistrate, calling loudly for M. Maas, followed them out of the room.

Essper George stood moralizing at the table, and emptying every glass whose contents were not utterly drained; with the exception of the tumblers of the cloth-merchants, of whose liquor he did not approve.

"Dear me! poor man! to get only one glass out of his own bottle! I wish I hadn't taken his wine; it was rather sour. Ay! call—call away for M. Maas: threaten—threaten—threaten as you will. Your grandfather will not help you here. Blood out of a wall and money out of a student come the same day.—Ah! is your highness here?" said Essper, turning round to our two travellers with affected surprise, although he had observed them the whole time. "Is your highness here? I've been looking for you through Frankfort this whole morning. *There!*—it will do for your glass. It is of chamois leather; and I made it myself from a beast I caught last summer in the valley of the Rhone." So saying, he threw over Vivian's neck a neat chain, or cord, of very curiously-worked leather.

"Who the devil's this, Grey?" asked the baron.

"A funny knave, whom I once saved from a threshing, or something of the kind, which I do him the justice to say he well deserved."

"Who the devil's this?" said Essper George. "Why that's exactly the same question I myself asked when I saw a tall, pompous, proud fellow, dressed like a peacock on a May morning, standing at the door just now. He looked as if he'd pass himself off for an ambassador at least; but I told him that if he got his wages paid, he was luckier than most servants. Was I right, your excellency?"

"Poor Ernstorff!" said the baron, laughing. "Yes; he certainly gets paid. Here,—you're a clever varlet; fill your glass."

"No, no, no, no wine—no wine.—Don't you hear the brawling, and nearly the bloodshed, which

are going on up-stairs about a sour bottle of Rudesheimer? and here I see two gentles who have ordered the best wine merely to show that they are masters and not servants of the green peacock—and lo! cannot get through a glass—Lord! Lord! what is man? If my fat friend and his grandfather would but come down stairs again, here is liquor enough to make wine and water of the Danube; for he comes from thence by his accent. No, no, I'll have none of your wine; keep it to throw on the sandy floor, that the dust may not hurt your delicate shoes, nor dirt the hand of the gentlemen in green and gold when he cleans them for you in the morning."

Here the baron laughed again, and, as he bore his impertinence, Essper George immediately became polite.

"Does your mighty highness go to Ems?"

"We hardly know, my friend."

"O! go there, gentlemen. I've tried them all—Aix-la-Chapelle, Spa, Wisbaden, Carlsbad, Piermont, every one of them; but what are these to Ems? there we all live in the same house, and eat from the same table. When there, I feel that you are all under my protection—I consider you all as my children. Besides, the country—how delightful! the mountains—the valleys—the rivers—the woods—and then the company, so select! no sharpers—no adventurers—no black-legs: at Ems you can be taken in by no one except your intimate friend. O! go to Ems, go to Ems, by all means. I'd advise you, however, to send the gentleman in the cocked hat on before you to engage rooms; for I can assure you that you'll have a hard chance; the baths are very full."

"And how do you get there, Essper?" asked Vivian.

"Those are subjects on which I never speak," answered the conjuror, with a solemn air.

"But have you all your stock in trade with you, my good fellow? Where's the mystery?"

"Sold, sir, sold! I never keep to any thing long. Variety is the mother of enjoyment. At Ems I shall not be a conjuror: but I never part with my box. It takes no more room than one of those medicine chests, which I dare say you've got with you in your carriage, to prop up your couple of shattered constitutions."

"By Jove! you're a merry, impudent fellow," said the baron; "and if you like to get up behind my britchska, you may."

"No, no, no; a thousand thanks to your mighty highnesses, I carry my own box, and my own body, and I shall be at Ems to-morrow in time enough to receive your lordships."

CHAPTER V.

Is a delightful valley of Nassau, formed by the picturesque windings of the Taunus mountains, and on the banks of the noisy river Lahn, stands an immense brick pile, of very irregular architecture, which nearly covers an acre of ground. This building was formerly a favourite palace of the ducal house of Nassau; but for reasons which I cannot give, and which the reader will perhaps not require, the present prince has thought proper to let out the former residence of his family, as a hotel

for the accommodation of the company, who in the season frequent this, the most lovely spot in his lovely little dutchy. This extensive building contains two hundred and thirty rooms, and eighty baths; and these apartments, which are under the management of an official agent, who lives in the "Princely Bathing House," for such is its present dignified title, are to be engaged at fixed prices, which are marked over the doors. All the rooms in the upper story of the Princely Bathing House open on, or are almost immediately connected with, a long corridor, which extends the whole length of the building. The ground floor, besides the space occupied by the baths, also affords a very spacious promenade, arched with stone, and surrounded with stalls, behind which are marshalled venders of all the possible articles which can be required by the necessities of the frequenters of a watering-place. There you are greeted by the jeweller of the Palais Royal, and the *marchante de mode* of the Rue de la Paix; the print-seller from Manheim, and the china-dealer from Dresden; and other little speculators in the various fancy articles which abound in Vienna, Berlin, Geneva, Basle, Strasburgh, and Lausanne; such as pipes, costumes of the Swiss peasantry, crosses of Mont Blanc crystal, and all varieties of national *bijouterie*. All things may here be sold, save those which administer to the nourishment of the body, or the pleasure of the palate. Let not those of my readers, who have already planned a trip to the sweet vales of the Taunus, be frightened by this last rather alarming sentence. At Ems, "eatables and drinkables" are excellent, and abounding; but all those are solely supplied by the *restaurateur*, who farms the monopoly from the duke. This gentleman, who is a pupil of Beauvillier's, and who has conceived an exquisite *cuisine*, by adding to the lighter graces of French cookery something of the more solid virtues of the German, presides in a saloon of immense size and magnificent decoration; in which, during the season, upwards of three hundred persons frequent the table d'hôte. It is the etiquette at Ems, that, however distinguished, or however humble, the rank of the visitors, their fare, and their treatment must be alike. In one of the most aristocratic countries in the world, the sovereign prince, and his tradesman subject, may be found seated in the morning at the same board, and eating from the same dish; as in the evening they may be seen staking on the same colour at the gaming-table, and sharing in the same interest at the Redoute.

I have said that the situation of Ems was delightful. The mountains which form the valley are not, as in Switzerland, so elevated that they confine the air, or seem to impede the facility of breathing. In their fantastic forms, the picturesque is not lost in the monotonous; and in the rich covering of their various woods, the admiring eye finds, at the same time, beauty and repose. Opposite the ancient palace, on the banks of the Lahn, are the gardens. In these, in a neat pavilion, a band of excellent musicians seldom cease from enchanting the visitors by their execution of the most favourite specimens of German and Italian music. Numberless acacia arbours, and retired sylvan seats are here to be found, where the student, or the contemplative, may seek refuge from the noise of his more gay companions, and the tedium of eternal conversation. Here too a tête-

d-tête will seldom be disturbed; and in some species of *lête-à-têtes*, we all know how very necessary and how very delightful are the perfumes of flowers, and the shade of secret trees, and the cooling sound of running waters. In these gardens, also, are the billiard-room, and another saloon, in which each night meet, not merely those who are interested in the mysteries of *rouge et noir*, and the chances of *roulette*; but, in general, the whole of the company, male and female, who are frequenting the baths. In quitting the gardens for a moment, we must not omit mentioning the interesting booth of our friend the *restaurateur*, where coffee, clear and hot, exquisite *confitures*, delicious *liqueurs*, and particularly genuine marsh-mallows of Zara are never wanting. Nor should I forget the glittering pennons of the gay boats which glide along the Lahn, nor the handsome donkeys, who, with their white saddles and red bridles, seem not unworthy of the princesses whom they sometimes bear. The gardens, with an alley of lime-trees, which are farther on, near the banks of the river, afford easy promenades to the sick and debilitated; but the more robust and active need not fear monotony in the valley of the Lahn. If they sigh for the champaign country, they can climb the wild passes of the encircling mountains, and from their tops enjoy the most magnificent views of the Rhineland. There they may gaze on that mighty river flowing through the prolific plain, which, at the same time, it nourishes and adorns,—bounded on each side by mountains of every form, clothed with wood or crowned with castles. Or, if they fear the fatigues of the ascent, they may wander farther up the valley, and in the wild dells, romantic forests, and gray ruins of Stein and Nassau, conjure up the old times of feudal tyranny, when the forest was the only free land; and he who outraged the laws, the only one who did not suffer from their authority.

Besides the Princely Bathing House, I must mention, that there was another old and extensive building near it, which, in very full seasons, also accommodated visitors on the same system as the palace. At present, this adjoining building was solely occupied by a Russian archduke, who had engaged it for the season.

Such is a faint description of Ems, a place almost of unique character; for it is a watering-place with every convenience, luxury, and accommodation; and yet without shops, streets, or houses.

The baron and Vivian were fortunate in finding rooms, for the baths were very full; the extraordinary beauty of the weather having occasioned a very early season. They found themselves at the baths early on the morning after their arrival at Coblenz, and at three o'clock in the same day, had taken their places at the dinner-table in the great saloon. At the long table upwards of two hundred and fifty guests were assembled, of different nations, and very different characters. There was the cunning, intriguing Greek, who served well his imperial master, the Russian. The order of the patron saint of Moscow, and the glittering stars of other nations which sparkled on his green uniform, told how well he had laboured for the interest of all other countries except his own; but his clear, pale complexion, his delicately-trimmed mustachios, his lofty forehead, his arched eyebrow,

and his Eastern eye, recalled to the traveller, in spite of his barbarian trappings, the fine countenances of the Ægean; and became a form which apparently might have struggled in Thermopylae. Next to him was the Austrian diplomatist, the Sosa of all cabinets; in whose gay address, and rattling conversation, you could hardly recognise the sophistical defender of unauthorized invasion and the subtle inventor of holy alliances, and imperial leagues. Then came the rich usurer from Frankfort, or the prosperous merchant from Hamburg; who, with his wife and daughters, were seeking some recreation from his flourishing counting-house, in the sylvan gayeties of a German bathing-place. Flirting with these, was an adventurous dancing-master from Paris, whose profession at present was kept in the background, and whose well-curled black hair, diamond pin, and frogged coat, hinted at the magnificence incog.; and also enabled him, if he did not choose in time to follow his own profession, to pursue another one, which he had also studied, in the profitable mystery of the Redoute. There were many other individuals, whose commonplace appearance did not reveal a character which perhaps they did not possess. There were officers in all uniforms,—and there were some uniforms without officers. But all looked perfectly *comme il faut*, and on the whole very select; and if the great persons endeavoured for a moment to forget their dignity, still these slight improprieties were amply made up by the affected dignity of those little persons who had none to forget.

“And how like you the baths of Ems?” asked the baron of Vivian; “we shall get better seats to-morrow, and perhaps be among those whom you shall know. I see many friends, and some agreeable ones. In the mean time, you must take to-day a good dinner, and I’ll amuse you, and assist your digestion by putting you up to all the curious characters whom you are dining with.” So saying, the baron seized the soup-ladle.

At this moment a party entered the room, who were rather late in their appearance, but who attracted the attention of Vivian so keenly, that he almost forgot the gay crowd on whom he was lately gazing with such amusement. The group consisted of three persons; a very handsome fashionable-looking young man, who supported on each arm a female. The lady on his right arm was apparently of about five-and-twenty years of age. She was of majestic stature; her complexion of untinged purity. Her features were like those conceptions of Grecian sculptors, which, in moments of despondency, we sometimes believe to be ideal. Her full eyes were of the same deep blue as a mountain-lake, and gleamed from under their long lashes, as that purest of waters beneath its fringing sedge. Her light brown hair was braided from her high forehead, and hung in long full curls over her neck; the mass gathered up into a Grecian knot, and confined by a bandeau of cameos. She wore a superb dress of the richest black velvet, whose folding drapery was confined round a waist which was in exact symmetry with the proportions of her full bust, and the polished roundness of her bending neck. On the little finger of an ungloved hand, sparkled a diamond of unknown value, which was linked by a small Venetian chain to a gorgeous bracelet of the most precious stones. The countenance of the lady was dignified, with-

out any expression of pride; and reserved without any of the harshness of austerity. In gazing on her, the enraptured spectator for a moment believed that Minerva had forgotten her severity, and had entered into a delightful rivalry with Venus.

Her companion was much younger, much shorter, and of slender form. The long tresses of her chestnut hair shaded her oval face. Her small aquiline nose, bright hazel eyes, delicate mouth, and the deep colour of her lips, were as remarkable as the transparency of her complexion. The flush of her cheek was singular—it was of a brilliant pink: you may find it in the lip of an Indian shell. The blue veins played beneath her arched forehead, like lightning beneath a rainbow. She was simply dressed in white, and a damask rose, half hid in her clustering hair, was her only ornament. This lovely creature glided by Vivian Grey almost unnoticed, so fixed was his gaze on her companion. Yet, magnificent as was the style of *LADY MADELEINE TREVOR*, there were few who preferred even her commanding graces to the softer beauties of *VIOLET FANE*.

This party having passed Vivian, proceeded to the top of the room, where places had been kept for them. Vivian's eye watched them till they were lost among surrounding visitors: their peculiar loveliness could not deceive him.

"English, no doubt," observed he to the baron; "who can they be?"

"I haven't the least idea—that is, I don't exactly know—that is, I think they are English," answered the baron, in such a confused manner that Vivian stared. Whether his excellency observed his friend's astonishment or not, I cannot say; but, after musing a moment, he recovered himself.

"The unexpected sight of a face we feel that we know, and yet cannot immediately recognise, is extremely annoying—it is almost agitating. They are English; the lady in black is *Lady Madeleine Trevor*; I knew her in London."

"And the gentleman?" asked Vivian, rather anxiously: "is the gentleman a *Mr. Trevor*?"

"No, no, no; *Trevor*, poor *Trevor* is dead, I think—is, I'm sure, dead. That, I am confident, is not he. He was of the ——— family, and was in office when I was in England. It was in my diplomatic capacity that I first became acquainted with him. *Lady Madeleine* was, and as you see is, a charming woman,—a very charming woman is *Lady Madeleine Trevor*."

"And the young lady with her?"

"The young lady with her—I cannot exactly say—I do not exactly know. Her face is familiar to me, and yet I cannot remember her name. She must have been very young, as you may see, when I was in England, she cannot now be above eighteen. *Miss Fane* must, therefore, have been very young when I was in England. *Miss Fane*!—how singular I should have mentioned her name!—that is her name—*Violet Fane*—a cousin, or some relation of *Lady Madeleine's*;—good family, very good family.—Shall I help you to some soup?"

Whether it was from not being among his friends, or some other cause, I know not, but the baron was certainly not in his usual spirits this day at dinner. Conversation, which with him was generally as easy as it was brilliant—like a fountain at the same time sparkling and fluent—was

evidently constrained. For a few minutes he talked very fast, and was then uncommunicative, absent, and dull. He moreover drank a great deal of wine, which was not his custom; but the grape did not inspire him. Vivian found amusement in his next neighbour, a forward, bustling man, clever in his talk, very fine, but rather vulgar. He was the manager of a company of Austrian actors, and had come to Ems on the chance of forming an engagement for his troop, who generally performed at Vienna. He had been successful in his adventure, the archduke having engaged the whole band at the New House, and in a few days the troop were to arrive; at which time, the manager was to drop the character of a travelling gentleman, and cease to dine at the table d'hôte of Ems. From this man Vivian learned that *Lady Madeleine Trevor* had been at the baths for some time before the season commenced; that at present, hers was the party which, from its long stay, and eminent rank, gave the tone to the amusements of the place; the influential circle, which those who have frequented watering-places have often observed, and which may be seen at Ems, Spa, or Piemont, equally as at Harrogate, Tunbridge Wells, or Cheltenham.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN dinner was finished, the party broke up, and most of them assembled in the gardens. The baron, whose countenance had assumed its wonted cheerfulness, and who excused his previous dullness by the usual story of a sudden headache, proposed to Vivian to join the promenade. The gardens were very full, and the baron recognised many of his acquaintance.

"My dear colonel,—who possibly expected to meet you here? why! did you dine in the saloon? I only arrived this morning—this is my friend, *Mr. Grey*—Colonel von Trumpetson."

"An Englishman, I believe?" said the colonel, bowing. He was a starch *militaire*, with a blue frock-coat buttoned up to his chin, a bald head with a few gray hairs, and long thin mustachios like a mandarin's. "An Englishman, I believe;—pray, sir, can you inform me whether the waistcoats of the household troops, in England, have the double braid?"

"Sir!" said Vivian.

"I esteem myself particularly fortunate in meeting with an English gentleman, your excellency. It was only at dinner to-day that a controversy arose between Major von Musquetoon, and the Prince of Buttonstein, about the waistcoats of the English household troops. As I said to the prince, you may argue forever, for at present we cannot decide the fact. How little did I think, when I parted from the major, that, in a few minutes, I should be able to settle this important question beyond a doubt;—I esteem myself particularly fortunate in meeting with an Englishman."

"I regret to say, colonel, that far from being able to decide this important question, I hardly know what household troops really are."

"Sir, I wish you good morning," said the colonel, very dryly; and, staring very keenly at Vivian, he walked away.

"Well, that's beautiful, Grey, to get rid of that horrible old bore with such exquisite tact—Double braid! an old dunderpate!—he should be drummed out of the regiment; but he's good enough to fight, I suppose," added the plenipotentiary, with a smile and shrug of the shoulders, which seemed to return thanks to Providence, for having been educated in the civil service.

At this moment Lady Madeleine Trevor, leaning on the arm of the same gentleman, passed, and the baron bowed. The bow was stiffly returned.

"You know her ladyship, then!—well!"

"I did know her," said the baron, "but I see from her bow, that I am at present in no very high favour. The truth is, she is a charming woman, but I never expected to see her in Germany, and there was some little commission of hers which I neglected—some little order for Eau de Cologne—or a message about a worked pocket handkerchief, or a fancy shawl, which I utterly forgot;—and then, I never wrote!—and you know, Grey, that these little sins of omission are never forgiven by women."

"My dear friend De Konigstein—one pinch! one pinch!" chirped out a little old, odd-looking man, with a very *poudré* head, and dressed in a costume in which the glories of *vieille cour* seemed to retire with reluctance. A diamond ring winked on the snuffy hand, which was encircled by a rich ruffle of dirty lace. The brown coat was not modern, and yet not quite such a one as was worn by its master, when he went to see the king dine in public, at Versailles, before the Revolution:—large silver buckles still adorned the well-polished shoes; and silk stockings, whose hue was originally black, were picked out, with clock-work of gold.

"My dear marquis—I'm most happy to see you; will you try the *boulangero*?"

"With pleasure!—with pleasure!—A-a-h! what a box! a *Louis-quateorze*, I think?"

"O, no! by no means so old."

"Pardon me, my dear fellow, my dear De Konigstein; I've studied the subject! I think a *Louis-quateorze*."

"I tell you I bought it in Sicily."

"A-a-h!" slowly exclaimed the little man: then shaking his head—"I think a *Louis-quateorze*?"

"Well, have it so, if you like, marquis."

"A-a-h! I thought so—I thought a *Louis-quateorze*. Will you try mine!—will your friend try a pinch?—does he take snuff!—what box has he got?—is it an old one?—is it a *Louis-quateorze*?"

"He doesn't take snuff at all."

"A-a-h! if he did, perhaps he'd have a box—perhaps it would be an old one—most likely a *Louis-quateorze*."

"Very probably," said the baron.

"A-a-h! I thought so," said the old man.

"Well, good afternoon," said the baron, passing on.

"My dear De Konigstein—one pinch—one pinch—you've often said you have a particular regard for me."

"My dear marquis!"

"A-a-h! I thought so—you've often said you'd serve me, if possible."

"My dear marquis, be brief."

"A-a-h! I will—there's a cursed crusty old

Prussian officer here—one Colonel de Trumpetson."

"Well, my dear marquis, what can I do? you're surely not going to fight him!"

"A-a-h! no, no, no—I wish you to speak to him."

"Well, well, what?"

"He takes snuff."

"What's that to me?"

"He's got a box."

"Well!"

"It's a *Louis-quateorze*—couldn't you get it for me?"

"Good morning to you," said the baron, pulling on Vivian.

"You've had the pleasure, Grey, of meeting this afternoon two men, who have each only one idea. Colonel von Trumpetson, and the Marquis de la Tabatière, are equally tiresome. But are they more tiresome than any other man who always speaks on the same subject? We are more irritable, but not more wearied, with a man who is always thinking of the pattern of a button-hole, or the shape of a snuff-box, than with one who is always talking about pictures, or chemistry, or politics. The true bore is that man who thinks the world is only interested in one subject, because he, himself, can only comprehend one."

Here the Lady Madeleine passed again, and this time the baron's eyes were fixed on the ground.

A buzz and a bustle at the other end of the gardens, to which the baron and Vivian were advancing, announced the entry of the archduke. His imperial highness was a tall man, with a quick piercing eye, which was prevented from giving to his countenance the expression of intellect which it otherwise would have done, by the dull and almost brutal effect of his flat, Calmuck nose. He was dressed in a plain, green uniform, adorned by a single star; but his tightened waist, his stiff stock, and the elaborate attention which had evidently been bestowed upon his mustachios, denoted the military fop. The archduke was accompanied by three or four stiff and stately-looking personages, in whom the severity of the martinet seemed suik in the severity of the aid-de-camp.

The baron bowed very low to the prince, as he drew near, and his highness, taking off his cocked-hat with an appearance of cordial condescension, made a full stop. The silent gentlemen in the rear, who had not anticipated this suspense in their promenade, almost foundered on the heels of their royal master; and frightened at the immensity of the profanation, forgot their stiff pomp in a precipitate retreat of half a yard.

"Baron," said his highness, "why have I not seen you at the New House?"

"I have but this moment arrived, may it please your imperial highness."

"Your companion," continued the archduke, pointing very graciously to Vivian.

"My intimate friend, my fellow-traveller, and an Englishman. May I have the honour of presenting Mr. Grey to your highness?"

"Any friends of the Baron von Konigstein I shall always feel great pleasure in having presented to me. Sir, I feel great pleasure in having you presented to me. Sir, you ought to be proud of the name of an Englishman—sir, the English are a noble nation—sir, I have the highest respect for the English nation!"

Vivian of course bowed very low, and of course made a very proper speech on the occasion, which, as all speeches of that kind should be, was very dutiful and quite inaudible.

"And what news from Berlin, baron? let us move on," and the baron, with Vivian on his arm, turned with the archduke. The silent gentlemen, settling their mustachios, followed in the rear. For about half an hour, anecdote after anecdote, scene after scene, caricature after caricature, were poured out with prodigal expenditure for the amusement of his highness; who did nothing during the exhibition but smile, stroke his whiskers, and at the end of the best stories fence with his forefinger at the baron's side—with a gentle laugh, and a mock shake of the head—and a "Eh! Von Königstein, you're too bad!" Here Lady Madeleine Trevor passed again, and the archduke's hat nearly touched the ground. He received a most gracious bow.

"Finish the story about Salvinski, baron, and then I'll introduce you for a reward to the most lovely creature in existence—a countrywoman of yours, Mr. Grey—Lady Madeleine Trevor."

"I have the honour of a slight acquaintance with her ladyship," said the baron; "I had the pleasure of knowing her in England."

"Indeed! O, most fortunate mortal! I see she has stopped, talking to some stranger. Let us turn and join her."

The archduke and the two friends accordingly turned, and of course the silent gentlemen in the rear followed with due precision.

"Lady Madeleine!" said his highness, "I flattered myself for a moment that I might have had the honour of presenting to you a gentleman for whom I have great esteem; but he has proved to me this moment that he is more fortunate than myself, since he had the honour before me of an acquaintance with Lady Madeleine Trevor."

"I have not forgotten Baron von Königstein," said her ladyship, with a serious air; "may I ask your highness how you prospered in your negotiation with the Austrian troop?"

"Perfectly successful!—perfectly successful!—Inspired by your ladyship's approbation, my steward has really done wonders. He almost deserves a diplomatic appointment for the talent which he has shown, but what should I do without Cracowsky? Lady Madeleine, can you conceive what I should do without Cracowsky?"

"Not the least," said her ladyship, very good-naturedly.

"Cracowsky is every thing to me—every thing. It is impossible to say what Cracowsky is to me. I owe every thing to Cracowsky. To Cracowsky I owe being here." The archduke bowed very low, for his eulogium on his steward also conveyed a compliment to her ladyship. The archduke was certainly right in believing that he owed his summer excursion to Ems to his steward. That wily Pole, regularly every year put his imperial master's summer excursion up at auction, and according to the biddings of the proprietors of the chief baths, did he take care that his master regulated his visit. The *restaurateur* of Ems, in collusion with the official agent of the Duke of Nassau, were fortunate this season in having the archduke knocked down to them.

"May I flatter myself that Miss Fane feels herself better?" asked the archduke.

"She certainly does feel herself much better, but my anxiety about her does not decrease. In her illness apparent convalescence is sometimes more fearful than actual suffering."

The archduke continued by the side of her ladyship for about twenty minutes, seizing every opportunity of uttering, in the most courtly tone, the most inane compliments; and then trusting that he might soon have her ladyship's opinion respecting the Austrian troop at the New House; and that Von Königstein and his English friend would not delay letting him see them there, his imperial highness, followed by his silent suite, left the gardens.

"I am afraid, your ladyship must have almost mistaken me for a taciturn lord chamberlain," said the baron, occupying immediately the archduke's vacated side.

"Baron von Königstein must be very changed, if silence be imputed to him as a fault," said Lady Madeleine, with rather a severe smile.

"Baron von Königstein is very much *changed* since last he had the pleasure of conversing with Lady Madeleine Trevor; more changed than her ladyship will perhaps believe; more changed than he can sometimes himself believe; I hope, I flatter myself, I feel sure, that he will not be less acceptable to Lady Madeleine Trevor, because he is no longer rash, passionate, and unthinking; because he has learned to live more for others and less for himself."

"Baron von Königstein does indeed appear changed; since, by his own account, he has become in a very few years, a being, in whose existence philosophers scarcely believe—a perfect man."

"My self-conceit has been so often reproved by your ladyship, that I will not apologize for a quality which I almost flattered myself I no longer possessed; but you will excuse, I am sure, one who in zealous haste to prove himself amended, has, I fear, almost shown that he has deceived himself."

Some strange thoughts occurred to Vivian, whose eyes had never quitted her ladyship's face while this conversation was taking place. "Is this a woman to resent the neglect of an order for Eau de Cologne? my dear Von Königstein, you're a very pleasant fellow, but this is not the way men apologize for a nonpurchase of a pocket handkerchief!"

"Has your ladyship been long at Ems?"

"Nearly a month; we are travelling in consequence of the ill-health of a relation. It was our intention to have gone to Pisa, but our physician, in consequence of the extreme heat of the summer, is afraid of the fatigue of travelling, and has recommended Ems. The air between these mountains is very soft and pure, and I have no reason to regret at present that we have not advanced farther on our journey."

"The lady who was with your party at dinner is, I fear, your invalid. She certainly does not look like one. I think," said the baron, with an effort, "I think that her face is not unknown to me. It is difficult, even after so many years, to mistake Miss——"

"Fane—," said Lady Madeleine, very firmly for it seemed that the baron required a little assistance at the end of his sentence.

"Ems," returned his excellency, with great rapidity of utterance,—“Ems is, indeed, a charming

place—at least to me. I have, within these few years, quite recurred to the feelings of my boyhood; nothing to me is more disgustingly wearisome than the gay bustle of a city. My present diplomatic appointment at Frankfort ensures a constant life among the most charming scenes of nature. Naples, which was offered to me, I refused. Eight years ago, I should have thought an appointment at Naples a paradise on earth.”

“Your excellency must indeed be changed,” remarked her ladyship.

“How beautiful is the vicinity of the Rhine! I have passed within these three days, for almost the twentieth time in my life, through the Rheingau; and yet how fresh, and lovely, and novel, seemed all its various beauties. My young travelling companion is very enthusiastic about this gem of Germany. He is one of your ladyship’s countrymen. Might I take the liberty of introducing to you—Mr. Grey?”

Her ladyship, as if it could now no longer be postponed, introduced to the two gentlemen, her brother, Mr. St. George. This gentleman, who, during the whole previous conversation, had kept his head in a horizontal position, looking neither to the right, nor to the left, and apparently unconscious that any one was conversing with his sister, because, according to the English custom, he was not “introduced”—now suddenly turned round, and welcomed his acquaintance with great cordiality.

“Mr. Grey,” asked her ladyship, “are you of Dorsetshire?”

“My mother is a Dorsetshire woman; her family name is Vivian, which name I also bear—Sir Hargrave Vivian, of Chester Grange.”

“Have you a father living, may I ask?”

“At present in England.”

“Then I think we are longer acquainted than we have been introduced. I met your father at Sir Hargrave Vivian’s only last Christmas. Of such a father you must indeed be proud. He spoke of you in those terms that make me congratulate myself that I have met the son. You have been long from England, I think?”

“Nearly a year and a half; and I only regret my absence from it, because it deprives me of the presence of my parents.”

The baron had resigned his place by Lady Madeleine, and was already in close conversation with Mr. St. George, from whose arm Lady Madeleine’s was disengaged. No one acted the part of Asmodeus with greater spirit than his excellency; and the secret history of every person whose secret history could be amusing, delighted Mr. St. George.

“There,” said the baron, “goes the son of an unknown father; his mother followed the camp, and her offspring was early initiated in the mysteries of military petty larceny. As he grew up, he became the most skilful plunderer that ever rifled the dying of both sides. Before he was twenty, he followed the army as a petty chapman, and amassed an excellent fortune by re-acquiring, after a battle, the very goods and trinkets which he had sold at an immense price before it. Such a wretch could do nothing but prosper, and in due time the sutler’s brat became a commissary-general. He made millions in a period of general starvation, and cleared at least a hundred thousand dollars, by embezzling the shoe-leather during a retreat. He is now a baron, covered with orders, and his daugh-

ters are married to some of our first nobles. There goes a Polish count, who is one of the greatest gamblers in Christendom. In the same season he lost to a Russian general, at one game of chess, his chief castle, and sixteen thousand acres of woodland; and recovered himself on another game, on which he won of a Turkish pasha one hundred and eighty thousand leopard skins. The Turk, who was a man of strict honour, paid the count by embezzling the tribute in kind of the province he governed; and, as on quarter-day he could not, of course, make up his accounts with the Divan, he joined the Greeks.”

While the baron was entertaining Mr. St. George, the conversation between Lady Madeleine and Vivian proceeded.

“Your father expressed great disappointment to me, at the impossibility of his paying you a visit, in consequence of your mother’s illness. Do you not long to see him?”

“More, much more than I can express. Did your ladyship think my father in good spirits?”

“Generally so; as cheerful as all fathers can be without their only son,” said her ladyship, smiling very kindly.

“Did he complain then of my absence?”

“He regretted it.”

“I linger in Germany with the hope of seeing him; otherwise I should have now been much farther south. You will be glad to hear that my mother has quite recovered; at least my last letters inform me so. Did you find Sir Hargrave as amusing as ever?”

“When is the old gentleman otherwise than the most delightful of old men? Sir Hargrave is one of my greatest favourites. I should like to persuade you to return and see them all. Can’t you fancy Chester Grange very beautiful now, Albert?” said her ladyship, turning to her brother, “what is the number of our apartments? Mr. Grey, the sun has now disappeared, and I fear the night air among these mountains. We have hardly yet summer nights, though we certainly have summer days. We shall be happy to see you at our rooms.” So saying, bowing very cordially to Vivian, and less stiffly to the baron than she had done, Lady Madeleine left the gardens.

“There goes the most delightful woman in the world,” said the baron; “how fortunate that you know her! for really, as you might have observed, I have no great claims on her indulgent notice. I was certainly very wild in England; but then, young men, you know, Grey!—and I didn’t leave a card, or call, before I went; and the English are very stiff and precise about those things; and the Trevors had been very kind to me. I think we’d better take a little coffee, now; and then, if you like, we’ll just stroll into the *REDOUTE*.”

In a brilliantly illuminated saloon, adorned with Corinthian columns, and casts from some of the most famous antique statues, assembled between nine and ten o’clock in the evening, many of the visitors at Ems. On each side of the room was placed a long, narrow table, one of which was covered with green baize, and unattended; while the variously-coloured leather surface of the other was very closely surrounded by an interested crowd. Behind this table stood two individuals of very different appearance. The first was a short, thick man, whose only business was dealing certain portions of playing-cards with quick suc-

ession, one after the other; and as the fate of the table was decided by this process, did his companion, an extremely tall, thin man, throw various pieces of money upon certain stakes, which were deposited by the bystanders on different parts of the table; or, which was much oftener the case, with a silver rake with a long ebony handle, sweep into a large enclosure near him, the scattered sums. This enclosure was called the bank, and the mysterious ceremony in which these persons were assisting, was the celebrated game of rouge-et-noir. A deep silence was strictly preserved by those who immediately surrounded the table; no voice was heard, save that of the little, short, stout dealer; and when, without an expression of the least interest, he seemed mechanically to announce the fate of the different colours. No other sound was heard, except the jingle of the dollars and Napoleons, and the ominous rake of the tall, thin banker. The countenances of those who were hazarding their money, were grave and gloomy: their eyes were fixed, their brows contracted, and their lips projected; and yet there was an evident effort visible, to show that they were both easy and unconcerned. Each player held in his hand a small piece of pasteboard, on which, with a steel pricker, he marked the run of the cards, in order, from his observations, to regulate his own play:—the rouge-et-noir player imagines that chance is not capricious. Those who were not interested in the game, promenaded in two lines within the tables; or, seated in recesses between the pillars, formed small parties for conversation.

As Vivian and the baron entered, Lady Madeleine Trevor, leaning on the arm of an elderly man, left the room; but as she was in earnest conversation she did not observe them.

"I suppose we must throw away a dollar or two, Grey?" said the baron, as he walked up to the table. "My dear De Konigstein—one pinch—one pinch!"

"Ah! marquis, what fortune to-night?"

"Bad—bad! I have lost my Napoleon: I never risk farther. There's that cursed crusty old De Trumpetor, persisting, as usual, in his run of bad luck; because he never will give in. Trust me, my dear De Konigstein, it'll end in his ruin; and then, if there's a sale of his effects, I shall, perhaps, get his snuff-box—a-a-h!"

"Come, Grey; shall I throw down a couple of Napoleons on joint account. I don't care much for play myself; but I suppose, at Ems, we must make up our minds to lose a few Louis. Here! now for the red—joint account, mind!"

"Done."

"There's the archduke! Let us go and make our bow; we needn't stick at the table as if our whole soul were staked with our crown pieces:—we'll make our bow, and then return in time to know our fate." So saying, the gentlemen walked up to the top of the room.

"Why, Grey!—Surely no—it cannot be—and yet it is. De Bœffleurs, how d'ye do?" said the baron, with a face beaming with joy, and a hearty shake of the hand. "My dear, dear fellow, how the devil did you manage to get off so soon? I thought you were not to be here for a fortnight: we only arrived ourselves to-day."

"Yes—but I've made an arrangement which I did not anticipate; and so I posted after you im-

mediately. Whom do you think I have brought with me?"

"Who?"

"Salvinski."

"Ah! And the count?"

"Follows immediately. I expect him to-morrow or next day. Salvinski is talking to the archduke; and see, he beckons to me. I suppose I am going to be presented."

The chevalier moved forward, followed by the baron and Vivian.

"Any friend of Prince Salvinski I shall always have great pleasure in having presented to me. Chevalier, I feel great pleasure in having you presented to me. Chevalier, you ought to be proud of the name of Frenchman. Chevalier, the French are a grand nation. Chevalier, I have the highest respect for the French nation."

"The most subtle diplomatist," thought Vivian, as he recalled to mind his own introduction, "would be puzzled to decide to which interest his imperial highness leans."

The archduke now entered into conversation with the prince, and most of the circle who surrounded him. As his highness was addressing Vivian, the baron let slip our hero's arm, and seizing hold of the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, began walking up and down the room with him, and was soon engaged in very animated conversation. In a few minutes, the archduke, bowing to his circle, made a move, and regained the side of a Saxon lady, from whose interesting company he had been disturbed by the arrival of Prince Salvinski—an individual of whose long stories and dull romances the archduke had, from experience, a particular dread: but his highness was always very courteous to the Poles.

"Grey, I've despatched De Bœffleurs to the house, to instruct his servant and Ernstorff to do the impossible, in order that our rooms may be altogether. You'll be delighted with De Bœffleurs when you know him, and I expect you to be great friends. O! by-the-by, his unexpected arrival has quite made us forget our venture at rouge-et-noir. Of course we're too late now for any thing; even if we had been fortunate, our doubled stake, remaining on the table, is, of course, lost: we may as well, however, walk up." So saying, the baron reached the table.

"That is your excellency's stake!—that is your excellency's stake!" exclaimed many voices as he came up.

"What's the matter, my friends? what's the matter?" asked the baron very calmly.

"There's been a run on the red! there's been a run on the red! and your excellency's stake has doubled each time. It has been 4—8—16—32—64—128—256—and now it's 512!" quickly rattled a little thin man in spectacles, pointing at the same time to his unparalleled line of punctures. This was one of those officious, noisy little men, who are always ready to give you unasked information on every possible subject; and who are never so happy as when they are watching over the interest of some stranger, who never thanks them for their unnecessary solicitude.

Vivian, in spite of his philosophy, felt the excitement and wonder of the moment. He looked very earnestly at the baron, whose countenance, however, was perfectly unmoved.

"Grey," said he, very coolly, "it seems we're in luck."

"The stake's then not all your own?" very eagerly asked the little man in spectacles.

"No part of it is yours, sir," answered the baron very dryly.

"I'm going to deal," said the short, thick man behind. "Is the board cleared?"

"Your excellency then allows the stake to remain?" inquired the tall thin banker, with affected nonchalance.

"O! certainly," said the baron, with real nonchalance.

"Three—eight—fourteen—twenty-four—thirty-four. Rouge 34—."

All crowded nearer; the table was surrounded five or six deep, for the wonderful run of luck had got wind, and nearly the whole room were round the table. Indeed, the archduke and Saxon lady, and of course the silent suite, were left alone at the upper part of the room. The tall banker did not conceal his agitation. Even the short, stout dealer ceased to be a machine. All looked anxious except the baron. Vivian looked at the table; his excellency watched, with a keen eye, the little dealer. No one even breathed as the cards descended—"Ten—twenty"—(Here the countenance of the banker brightened)—twenty-two—twenty-five—twenty-eight—thirty-one—Noir 31.—The bank's broke: no more play to-night. The roulette table opens immediately."

In spite of the great interest which had been excited, nearly the whole crowd, without waiting to congratulate the baron, rushed to the opposite side of the room in order to secure places at the roulette table.

"Put these five hundred and twelve Napoleons into a bag," said the baron; "Grey, this is your share, and I congratulate you. With regard to the other half, Mr. Hermann, what bills have you got?"

"Two on Gogel's house of Frankfort,—accepted of course,—for two hundred and fifty each, and these twelve Napoleons will make it right," said the tall banker, as he opened a large black pocket book, from which he took out two small bits of paper. The baron examined them, and after having seen them endorsed, put them calmly into his pocket, not forgetting the twelve Napoleons; and then taking Vivian's arm, and regretting extremely that he should have the trouble of carrying such a weight, he wished Mr. Hermann a very good night and success at his roulette, and walked with his companion quietly home. Thus passed a day at Ems!

CHAPTER VII.

ON the following morning, Vivian met with his friend Essper George, behind a small stall in the bazaar.

"Well, your highness, what do you wish? Here are eau-de-cologne, violet soap, and watch ribands; a smelling-bottle of Ems crystal; a snuff-box of fig-tree wood. Name your price, name your price: the least trifle that can be given by a man who breaks a bank, must be more than my whole stock in trade's worth."

"I have not paid you yet, Essper, for my glass chain. There is your share of my winnings: the

fame of which, it seems, has reached even you!" added Vivian, with no pleased air.

"I thank your highness for the nap; but I hope I have not offended by alluding to a certain event which shall be passed over in silence," continued Essper George, with a look of mock solemnity. "I really think your highness has but a faint appetite for good fortune. They deserve her most who value her least."

"Have you any patrons at Ems, Essper, that have induced you to fix on this place in particular for your speculations. Here, I should think, you have many active rivals," said Vivian, looking round the various stalls.

"I have a patron here, may it please your highness, a patron who has never deceived, and w'to will never desert me,—I want no other;—and that's myself. Now here comes a party: could your highness just tell me the name of that tall lady now?"

"If I tell you it is Lady Madeleine Trevor, what will it profit you?"

Before Vivian could well finish his sentence, Essper had drawn out a long horn from beneath his small counter, and sounded a blast which echoed through the arched passages. The attention of every one was excited, and no part of the following speech was lost.

"The celebrated Essper George, fresh from Fairyland, dealer in pomatum and all sorts of perfumery, watches, crosses, Ems crystal, coloured prints, Dutch toys, Dresden china, Venetian chains, Neapolitan coral, French crackers, chamois bracelets, tame poodles, and Cherokee corkscrews, mender of mandolins and all other musical instruments, &c. &c. &c. to her royal highness, Lady Madeleine Trevor, and all her royal family, has just arrived at Ems, where he only intends to stay two or three days, and a few more weeks besides.—Now your ladyship, what do you wish?"

"Mr. Grey," said her ladyship, smiling, "you can perhaps explain the reason of this odd greeting. Who is this singular being?"

"The celebrated Essper George, just"—again commenced the conjuror; but Vivian prevented the repetition.

"He's an old knave, Lady Madeleine, that I've met with before at other places. I believe I may add an honest one. What say you, Essper?"

"More honest than moonlight, my lady, for that deceives every one; and less honest than self-praise, my lady, for that deceives no one."

"My friend, you have a ready wit."

"My wit is like a bustling servant, my lady; always ready when not wanted; and never present at a pinch."

"Come, I must have a pair of your chamois bracelets. How sell you them?"

"I sell nothing, my lady; all here is gratis to beauty, virtue, and nobility; and these are my only customers."

"Thanks will not supply a stock-in-trade, though, Essper," said Vivian.

"Very true! your highness; but my customers are apt to leave some slight testimonies behind them of the obligations which they are under to me; and these, at the same time, are the prop of my estate, and the proof of their discretion. But who comes here?" said Essper, drawing out his horn. The sight of this terrible instrument reminded Lady Madeleine how greatly the effect of music is height-

ened by distance, and she made a speedy retreat. Her ladyship, with her companion, the elderly gentleman with whom she left the Redoute the preceding night, and Vivian, stopped one moment to watch the party to whom Essper George alluded. It was a family procession of a striking character.

Three daughters abreast, flanked by two elder sons formed the first file. The father, a portly, prosperous-looking man, followed with his lady on his arm. Then came two nursery maids, with three children, between the tender ages of five and six. The second division of the grand army, consisting of three younger sons, immediately followed. This was commanded by a tutor. A governess and two young daughters then advanced; and then came the extreme rear—the sutlers of the camp—in the persons of two footmen in rich laced liveries, who each bore a basket on his arm filled with various fancy articles which had been all purchased during the promenade of this nation through only part of the bazaar.

“Who can they be?” said her ladyship.

“English,” said the elderly gentleman; who had been already introduced by Lady Madeleine to Vivian as her uncle, Mr. Sherborne.

The trumpet of Essper George produced a due effect upon the great party. The commander-in-chief stopped at his little stall, and, as if this were the signal for general attack and plunder, the files were all immediately broken up. Each individual dashed at his prey, and the only ones who struggled to maintain a semblance of discipline, were the nursery maids, the tutor, and the governess, who experienced the greatest difficulty in suppressing the early taste which the detachment of light infantry indicated for booty. But Essper George was in his element: he joked, he assisted, he exhibited, he explained: tapped the cheeks of the children, and complimented the elder ones; and, finally, having parted at a prodigious profit with nearly his whole stock, paid himself out of a large and heavy purse, which the portly father, in his utter inability to comprehend the complicated accounts and the debased currency, with great frankness deposited in the hands of the master of the stall, desiring him to settle his own claims.

“The tradesman is more singular even than his customers,” said Mr. Sherborne; “I think you said you knew something of him, Mr. Grey?”

“I knew him, sir, before, as a conjuror at Frankfort fair.”

“By a conjuror, do you mean, Mr. Grey, one of those persons who profess an ability to summon, by the adjuration in a sacred name, a departed spirit; or merely one, who, by his dexterity in the practice of sleight-of-hand, produces certain optical delusions on the sight and senses of his fellow-men?”

“I met Essper George certainly only in your latter capacity, Mr. Sherborne.”

“Then, sir, I cannot agree with you in your definition of his character. I should rather style him a *juggler*, than a *conjuror*. Would you call that man a *conjuror* who plays a trick with a cup and balls, a sprinkling of rice, or a bad shilling?”

“You are, perhaps, sir, critically speaking, right; but the world in general are not such purists as Mr. Sherborne. I should not hesitate to describe Essper George as a *conjuror*. It is a use of the word which common parlance has sanctioned. We must always remember that custom is stronger than etymology.”

“Sir, are you aware that you’re giving loose to very dangerous sentiments! I may be too precise, I may be too particular; but sir, I read Addison—and, sir, I think Pope a poet.”

“Then, sir, I am happy to say that our tastes agree,” said Vivian, bowing.

“I’m very happy to hear it—I’m very glad of it—sir, I congratulate you—give me your hand—you’re the first bearable young man that I’ve met with for these last twenty years. Sir, they sometimes talk of our laws and constitution being in danger, which is seldom true—how is it that no one calls out that our language is in danger? A noble poet, whom I honour for his defence of Pope, and who, in my opinion, has gained more glory by that letter of his, than by all the rhapsodies of false brilliancy, bad taste, and exaggerated feeling, which ever claimed the attention of the world under the title of Eastern Tales, has called this the *AGE OF BRONZE*—why didn’t he call it the *AGE OF SLANG*!”

“But, my dear uncle,” said Lady Madeleine, “now that you and Mr. Grey understand each other, you surely will not maintain that his use of the word *conjuror* was erroneous. Custom surely has some influence upon language. You would think me very affected, I’m sure, if I were to talk of putting on a *neck-kerchief*.”

“My dear, Mr. Grey was right, and I was wrong: I carried the point a little too far; but I feel it my duty to take every opportunity of informing the youth of the present day that I hold them in absolute contempt. Their affectation, their heartlessness, their artificial feelings, their want of all real, genuine, gentlemanly, English sentiments,—and, above all, their slang—have disgusted me—I’m very glad to find that Mr. Grey is not guilty of these follies. I’m very glad to find that he believes that a man older than himself is not quite a fool—I wish I could say as much for Albert. Mr. Grey was certainly right:—next to being correct, a man should study to be candid—I haven’t met with a candid man these fifty years—no one now will own, by any chance, they’re ever wrong. Now, for myself, it’s very odd, I never form a hasty opinion, and yet I’m not always right: but I always own it—I make it the principle of my life to be candid.”

“I hope I may be allowed to ask after Miss Fane, although I have not the honour of her acquaintance.”

“She continues much better; my uncle and myself are now about to join her in the Lime-walk, where, by this time, she and Albert must have arrived; if you are not otherwise engaged, and will join our morning stroll, it will give us much pleasure.”

Nothing in the world could give Vivian greater pleasure; he felt himself irresistibly impelled to the side of Lady Madeleine; and only regretted his acquaintance with the baron, because he felt conscious that there was some secret cause, which prevented that intimacy from existing between his excellency and the Trevor party, which his amusing talents and his influential rank would otherwise have easily produced. When they reached the Lime-walk, Miss Fane and her cousin were not there, although the time of appointment was considerably past.

“I hope nothing has happened,” said Lady Madeleine; “I trust she is not taken unwell.”

“Quite improbable!” said Mr. Sherborne;

"there must be some other reason: if she were unwell, the servant would have been here."

"Let us return," said Lady Madeleine.

"By no means, my dear," said Mr. Sherborne, who had the greatest affection for his nieces; "Mr. Grey will, I have no doubt, have the goodness to remain with your ladyship, and I will fetch Violet; you may depend upon it, *she* is ready to come;" so saying, Mr. Sherborne stalked off at a very quick pace.

"My dear uncle is rather a character, Mr. Grey; but he is as remarkable for his excellence of heart, as for any little peculiarities in his habits. I am glad that you have made a favourable impression upon him; because, as I hope you will be much in his company, you stand now no chance of being included in the list of young men whom he delights to torment, at the head of which, I regret to say, is my brother. By-the-by, I do not know whether I may be allowed to congratulate you upon your brilliant success at the Redoute last night. It is fortunate that all have not to regret your arrival at Eins as much as poor Mr. Hermann."

"The run of fortune was certainly most extraordinary. I'm only sorry that the goddess should have showered her favours on one who neither deserves nor desires them; for I've no wish to be rich; and as I never lost by her caprices, it is hardly fair that I should gain by them."

"You do not play then, much?"

"I never played in my life, till last night. Gambling has never been one of my follies; although my catalogue of errors is fuller, perhaps, than most men's."

"I think Baron von Konigstein was your partner in the exploit."

"He was; and apparently as little pleased at the issue as myself."

"Indeed!—Have you known the baron long?"

"You will be surprised to hear that we are only friends of a week. I have been living, ever since I was in Germany, a most retired life. A circumstance of a most painful nature drove me from England—a circumstance of which, I can hardly flatter myself, and can hardly wish, that your ladyship should be ignorant."

"I am not unacquainted, Mr. Grey," said Lady Madeleine, much moved, "with an unhappy event, which we need not again mention. Believe me, that I learned the sad history from one, who, while he spoke the rigid truth, spoke of the living sufferer in terms of the fondest affection."

"A father!" said Vivian, with an agitation which he did not affect to suppress, "a father can hardly be expected to be impartial."

"Such a father as yours must always be so. He is one of those men who must be silent, or speak truth. I only wish that he was with us now, to assist me in bringing about what he must greatly desire—your return to England."

"It cannot be—it cannot be—I look back to the last year which I spent in that country with feelings of such disgust, I look forward to a return to that country with feelings of such repugnance—that—but I feel I'm trespassing beyond all bounds, in dwelling on these subjects to your ladyship. They are those on which I have never yet conversed with human being; but the unexpected meeting with a friend—with a friend of my father, I mean, has surprised me into a display of feelings which I thought were dead within me; and for

which, I am sure, the custom of society requires an apology."

"O! do not say so, Mr. Grey—do not say so! When I promised your father, that in case we met, I should even seek your society, I entered into an engagement, which, though I am surprised I am now called upon to fulfil, I did not form in a careless spirit. Let us understand each other: I am inclined to be your friend, if you will permit it; and the object which I wish to obtain by our friendship, I have not concealed: at least, I am frank. I have suffered too much myself, not to understand how dangerous, and how deceitful is the excess of grief. You have allowed yourself to be overcome by that which Providence intended as a lesson of instruction—not as a sentence of despair. In your solitude you have increased the shadow of those fantasies of a heated brain, which converse with the pure sunshine of the world would have enabled you to dispel."

"The pure sunshine of the world, Lady Madeleine!—would that it had never lighted me! My youth flourished in the unwholesome sultriness of a blighted atmosphere, which I mistook for the resplendent brilliancy of a summer day. How deceived I was, you may judge, not certainly from finding me here; but I am *here*, because I have ceased to suffer, only in having ceased to hope."

"You have ceased to hope, Mr. Grey, because hope and consolation are not the visible companions of solitude, which are of a darker nature. Hope and consolation spring from those social affections, which your father, among others, has taught me to believe imperishable. With such a parent, are you justified in acting the part of a misanthrope? Ought you not rather to hope, to believe that there are others, whose principle of being is as benevolent, if not as beneficial as his own?"

"Lady Madeleine, I do believe it; if I had doubted it, my doubts must end this day; but you mistake in believing that I am a misanthrope. It is not sorrow now that makes me sad; but thought that has made me grave. I have done with grief; but my release from suffering has been gained at a high price. The ransom which freed me from the slavery of sorrow was—HAPPINESS."

"I am no metaphysician, Mr. Grey, but I fear you have embraced a dark philosophy. Converse with the world, now that your passions are subdued, and your mind matured, will do more for you than all the arguments of philosophers. I hope yet to find you a believer in the existence of that good which we all worship, and all pursue. Happiness comes when we least expect it, and to those who strive least to obtain it—as you were fortunate yesterday at the Redoute, when you played without any idea of winning. The truth seems, that after all, we are the authors of our own sorrow. In an eager pursuit to be happy, and to be rich, men do many unwise, and some unprincipled actions; it ends in their becoming miserable, and continuing poor. The common course of events will bring to each mortal his fair share of fortune. The whole secret of life seems to be to restrain our passions, and let the common course of events have its run. But I will not enter into an argument which I have not the vanity to suppose that I possess the ability to maintain; and yet which I feel that I ought not to have the weakness to lose. But here comes my uncle, and Violet too! Well, my dear sir, you've brought the truant, I see!"

"Brought her, indeed, dear little thing! I knew it was not her fault; I said she was not unwell; I wonder what St. George will do next! Mr. Grey, this is my niece Violet, Miss Fane: and Violet, my dear, this is Mr. Grey, and I wish all persons of his age were like him. As for the Honourable Mr. St. George, he gets more unbearable every day. I suppose soon he'll 'cut' his own family."

"Well, I regret, uncle, that I think in this business you are entirely wrong," said Miss Fane.

"Now, Violet! now how can you be so wilful! to contradict me so, when you have not a shadow of a defence for your cousin's unprincipled conduct!"

"My dear uncle, is it so unprincipled to break an appointment? I think it is one of the most agreeable and pleasant habits in the world. No young man is expected to keep an appointment."

"Now Violet! how can you go on so? You know if there's one thing in the world that I detest more than another, it is breaking an appointment—a vice, which, as far as I can observe, has originated in your *young men* of the present day. And who the devil are these young men, that the whole system of civilized society is to be disorganized for their convenience? *Young men*, indeed! I hate the phrase. I wish I could hear of more *young gentlemen*, and fewer *young men*. There isn't a young man in the world for whom I haven't the most sovereign contempt; I don't mean you, Mr. Grey. I've the highest respect for you. I mean that mass of half-educated, inexperienced, insolent, conceited puppies, who think every man's a fool who's older than themselves; whose manners are a mixture of the vices of all nations, and whose talk is the language of none; at the head of whom is my nephew—your brother, Lady Madeleine Trevor—your cousin, Violet Fane—I mean Mr. Albert St. George."

Mr. Sherborne had now worked himself into a terrible passion; and the two ladies increased his irritability, by their incessant laughter.

"Well, I confess I do not see that Albert deserves this tirade," continued Miss Fane; "only think, my dear uncle, how many unexpected demands a man has upon his time. For all we know, unforeseen business may have peremptorily required Albert's attention. How do you know that he hasn't been looking at a horse for a friend; or completing the purchase of a monkey; or making some discoveries in the highest branches of experimental philosophy? perhaps he *has* succeeded in lighting his cigar with a burning glass."

"Miss Fane!"

"Mr. Sherborne!"

"If I were here alone, if Lady Madeleine were only here, I could excuse this; but how you are to answer to your conscience giving a stranger, Mr. Grey, a young gentleman for whom I have the highest respect, the impression that you, my niece, can tolerate for a moment, the existence of such monstrous absurdities is to me the most unaccountable thing that—"

"My dear uncle! how do you know that Mr. Grey has not got a monkey himself! You really should remember who is present, when you are delivering these philippics on the manners of the present century, and be cautious, lest, at the same time, you are not only violent but personal."

"Now, Violet, my dear!"

"My dear sir!" said Lady Madeleine, "Violet

is exerting herself too much; you know you are an enchanted lady at present, and may neither laugh, speak, nor sing."

"Well then, dear uncle, let us talk no more of poor Albert's want of memory. Had he come, I should very likely have been unwell, and then he would have stayed at home the whole morning for no earthly good. As it is, here I am; with the prospect of a very pleasant walk, not only feeling quite well, but decidedly better every day,—so now let us make an apology to Mr. Grey, for having kept him so long standing."

"Violet, you're an angel! though I'm your uncle, who says so;—and perhaps, after all, as it wasn't a positive appointment, St. George is not so much to blame. And I will say this for him, that with all his faults, he is on the whole very respectful to me, and I sometimes try him hard. I'm not in the habit of making hasty observations, but if ever I find myself doing so, I'm always ready to own it. There's no excuse, however, for his not fetching you, my dear!—what business had he to be going about with that Baron von Konigstein—that foreign—"

"Friend of Mr. Grey's, my dear uncle," said Lady Madeleine.

"Humph!"

As Mr. Sherborne mentioned the baron's name, the smiling face of Lady Madeleine Trevor became clouded, but the emotion was visible only for a moment, as the soft shadow steals over the sunny wood. Miss Fane led on her uncle, as if she were desirous to put an end to the conversation.

"You would scarcely imagine, Mr. Grey, from my cousin's appearance, and high spirits, that we are travelling for her health; nor do her physicians, indeed, give us any cause for serious uneasiness—yet I confess, that at times, I cannot help feeling very great anxiety. Her flushed cheek, and the alarming languor which constantly succeeds any exertion or excitement, make me fear that her complaint is more deeply seated than they are willing to acknowledge."

"Let us hope that the extraordinary heat of the weather may account, in a great degree, for this distressing languor."

"We are willing to adopt any reasoning that gives us hope, but I cannot help remembering that her mother died of consumption."

"Oh! my Lady Madeleine," said Miss Fane, looking back, "do not you think I'm strong enough to walk as far as the New Spring? My uncle says, he is sure that I should be much better if I took more exercise, and I really want to see it. Can't we go to-morrow? I dare say, as Albert played truant to-day, he will condescend to escort us."

"Condescend, indeed! when I was a young man—"

"You a young man! I don't believe you ever were a young man," said Miss Fane, putting her small hand before a large open mouth, which was about to deliver the usual discourse on the degeneracy of the "present day."

The walk was most agreeable; and, with the exception of one argument upon the principles of the picturesque, which Mr. Sherborne insisted upon Vivian's entering into, and in which, of course, that gentleman soon had the pleasure of proving himself candid, by confessing himself confuted, it passed over without any disturbance from that most worthy and etymological individual.

This was the first day for nearly a year and a half, that Vivian Grey had joined with beings whose talents and virtues he respected, in calm and rational conversation; this was nearly the first day in his life that Vivian Grey had conversed with any individuals, with no sinister view of self-advancement, and self-interest. He found his conversation, like his character, changed;—treating of things, rather than men; of nature, rather than society. To-day there was no false brilliancy to entrap the unwary; no splendid paradoxes to astound the weak; no poignant scandal to amuse the vile. He conversed calmly, without eagerness, and without passion; and delivering with ability his conscientious opinion upon subjects which he had studied, and which he understood, he found that while he interested others, he had also been interested himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the walking party returned home, they found a crowd of idle domestics assembled opposite the house, round a group of equipages, consisting of two enormous crimson carriages, a britchska, and a large caravan, on all which vehicles the same coat of arms was most ostentatiously blazoned.

"Some great arrival!" said Miss Fane.

"It must be the singular party that we watched this morning in the bazaar," said Lady Madeleine. "O! Violet! I've such a curious character to introduce you to, a particular friend of Mr. Grey's, who wishes very much to have the honour of your acquaintance, MR. ESSPER GEORGE."

"What an odd name! Is he an Englishman?"

"His appearance is still more singular than his title. You shall see him to-morrow."

"These carriages, then, belong to him?"

"Not exactly," said Vivian.

In an hour's time, the party again met at dinner in the saloon. By the joint exertions of Ernstorff and Mr. St. George's servants, the baron, Vivian, and the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, were now seated next to the party of Lady Madeleine Trevor.

"My horses fortunately arrived from Frankfort this morning," said the baron. "Mr. St. George and myself have been taking a ride very far up the valley. Has your ladyship yet been to the Castle of Nassau?"

"I am ashamed to say we have not. The expedition has been one of those plans, often arranged, and never executed."

"O! you should go by all means; it was one of my favourite spots: I took Mr. St. George there this morning. The ruin is one of the finest in Germany, which, as your ladyship is well aware, is the land of ruins. An expedition to Nassau Castle would be a capital foundation for a pic-nic. Conceive, Miss Fane, a beautiful valley which was discovered by a knight, in the middle ages, following the track of a stag—how exquisitely romantic! The very incident vouches for his sweet seclusion. Cannot you imagine the wooded mountains, the old gray ruin, the sound of the unseen river? What more should we want, except agreeable company, fine music, and the best provisions, to fancy ourselves in Paradise?"

"You certainly give a most glowing description," said Miss Fane. "Why, Mr. Grey, this lovely valley would be a model for the solitude we were planning this morning. I almost wish that your excellency's plan were practicable."

"I take the whole arrangement upon myself; there is not a difficulty. The ladies shall go on donkeys, or we might make a water excursion of it part of the way, and the donkeys can meet us at the pass near Stein, and then the gentlemen may walk; and if you fear the water at night, which is, perhaps, dangerous, why then the carriages may come round: and if your own be too heavy for mountain roads, my britchska is always at your command. You see there is not a difficulty."

"Not a difficulty," said Mr. St. George: "Madeleine, we only wait for your consent."

"Which will not be withheld a minute, Albert—but I think we had better put off the execution of our plan till June is a little more advanced. I must have a fine summer night for Violet."

"Well, then, I hold the whole party present, engaged to follow my standard whenever I have permission from the high authority to unfold it," said the baron, bowing to Lady Madeleine: "and lest, on cool reflection, I shall not possess influence enough to procure the appointment, I shall, like a skilful orator, take advantage of your feelings, which gratitude for this excellent plan must have already enlisted in my favour, and propose myself as master of the ceremonies." The baron's eye caught Lady Madeleine's as he uttered this, and something like a smile, rather of pity than derision, lighted up her face.

Here Vivian turned round to give some directions to an attendant, and, to his horror, found Essper George standing behind his chair.

"Is there any thing your highness wants?"

Essper was always particularly neat in his appearance, but to-day the display of clean linen was quite ostentatious; and to make the exposure still more terrific, he had, for the purpose of varying his costume, turned his huzzar-jacket inside-out, and now appeared in a red coat, lined with green.

"Who ordered you here, sir?"

"My duty."

"In what capacity do you attend?"

"As your highness' servant."

"I insist upon your leaving the room directly."

Here Essper looked very suppliant, and began to pant like a hunted hare.

"Ah! my friend, Essper George," said Lady Madeleine, "are you there? What's the matter, is any one ill-treating you?"

"This then is Essper George!" said Violet Fane, "what kind of creature can he possibly be? Why, Mr. Grey, what's the matter?"

"I'm merely discharging a servant, at a moment's warning, Miss Fane; and if you wish to engage his constant attendance upon yourself, I have no objection to give him a character for the occasion."

"What do you want, Essper?" said Miss Fane.

"I merely wanted to see whether your walk this morning had done your highness' appetite any good," answered Essper, looking very disconsolate, "and so I thought I might make myself useful at the same time; and though I don't bring in the soup in a cocked hat, and carve the venison with

a *couteau-de-chasse*," continued he, bowing very low to Ernstorff, who, standing stiff behind his master's chair, seemed utterly unaware that any person in the room could experience a necessity; "still I can change a plate, or hand the wine, without cracking the first, or drinking the second."

"And very good qualities too!" said Miss Faie. "Come, Essper, you shall put your accomplishments into practice immediately, so change my plate."

This Essper did with the greatest dexterity and quiet, displaying at the same time a small white hand, on the back of which was marked a comet and three daggers. As he had the discretion not to open his mouth, and performed all his duties with great skill, his intrusion in a few minutes was not only pardoned but forgotten.

"There has been a great addition to the visitors to-day, I see," said Lady Madeleine: "pray, who are the new-comers?"

"English," said the chevalier, who, seated at a considerable distance from her ladyship, had not spoken a word during the whole dinner.

"I'll tell you all about them," said the baron. "This family is one of those, whose existence astounds the Continent much more than any of your mighty dukes and earls, whose fortunes, though colossal, can be conceived; and whose rank is understood. Mr. Fitzloom is a very different personage; for, thirty years ago he was a journeyman cotton-spinner: some miraculous invention in machinery entitled him to a patent, which has made him one of the most important landed proprietors in Great Britain. He has lately been returned a member for a great manufacturing city; and he intends to get over the two first years of his parliamentary career, by successively monopolizing the accommodation of all the principal cities of France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy; and by raising the prices of provisions and post-horses through a track of five thousand miles. My information is authentic, for I had a casual acquaintance with him in England. There was some talk of a contract for supplying our army from England, and I saw Fitzloom often on the subject; I have spoken to him to-day. This is by no means the first of the species that we have had in Germany. I can assure you, that the plain traveller feels seriously the inconvenience of following such a caravan. Their money flows with such unwise prodigality, that real liberality ceases to be valued; and many of your nobility have complained to me, that, in their travels, they are now often expostulated with, on account of their parsimony, and taunted with the mistaken extravagance of a stocking-maker, or a porter-brewer."

"What pleasure can such people find in travelling?" wondered the honourable and aristocratic Mr. St. George.

"As much pleasure, and more profit, than half the young men of the present day. In my time, travelling was undertaken on a very different system to what it is now. The English youth then travelled to frequent what Lord Bacon says are 'especially to be seen and observed—the courts of princes.' You all travel now, it appears, to look at mountains, and catch cold in spouting trash on lakes by moonlight. You all think you know every thing, none of you know any thing."

"But, my dear sir!" said the baron, "although I willingly grant you, that one of the great advan-

tages of travel is the opportunity which it affords us of becoming acquainted with human nature in all its varieties, as developed by different climates, different customs, different governments, and consequently of becoming enabled to form an opinion as to the general capabilities of men; and which knowledge is, of course, chiefly gained where human beings most congregate—great cities, and as you say, the courts of princes: still, sir, we must also not the less forget, that one of the great benefits of travel is, that it enlarges a man's experience not only of his fellow-creatures in particular, but of nature in general. And this not merely by enabling him to see a quantity and a variety of landscape, but by permitting him to watch nature at various times and seasons. Many men pass through life without seeing a sunrise: a traveller cannot. If human experience be gained by seeing men in their undress, not only when they are conscious of the presence of others; natural experience is only to be acquired by studying nature at all periods, not merely when man is busy and beasts asleep."

"But what's the use of this deep experience of nature? Men are born to converse with men, not with stocks and stones. He who has studied *Le Sage*, will be more happy and more successful in this world, than the man who muses over *Rousseau*."

"There I agree with you, Mr. Sherborne, I have no wish to make man an anchorite. But as to the utility, the benefit of a thorough experience of nature, it appears to me to be evident. It increases our stock of ideas—"

"So does every thing."

"But it does more than this, sir. It calls into being new emotions, it gives rise to new and beautiful associations; it creates that salutary state of mental excitement which renders our ideas more lucid, our conceptions more vivid, and our conclusions more sound. Can we too much esteem a study which, at the same time, renders our imagination more active, and our judgment more correct?"

"Well, sir, there may be something in what you say, but not much."

"But, my dear sir," said Lady Madeleine, "if his excellency will allow me to support an argument, which in his hands can require no assistance, do not you think that a full communion with nature is calculated to elevate our souls, and purify our passions, to—"

"So is reading your Bible, my dear. A man's soul should always be elevated; and his passions would then require little purification. If they are not, he might look at mountains forever, but I should not trust him a jot more."

"But, sir," continued the baron, with unusual warmth; "I am clear that there are cases in which the influence of nature has worked what you profess to treat as an impossibility, or a miracle. I am myself acquainted with an instance of a very peculiar character. A few years ago, a gentleman of high rank found himself exposed to the unhappy suspicion of being connected with some disgraceful and dishonourable transactions, which took place in the highest circles of England. Unable to find any specific charge which he could meet, he added one to the numerous catalogue of those unfortunate beings who have sunk in society, the victims of a surmise. He quitted Eng-

and; and disgusted with the world, became the profligate which he had been falsely believed to be. At the house of Cardinal * * * * *, at Naples, celebrated even in that city for its midnight orgies, and not only for its bacchanal revels, this gentleman became a constant guest. He entered with a mad eagerness into every species of dissipation, although none gave him pleasure; and his fortune, his health, and the powers of his mind, were all fast vanishing. One night, one horrible night of frantic dissipation, a mock election of master of the sports was proposed, and the hero of my tale had the splendid gratification of being chosen by unanimous consent to his new office. About two o'clock of the same night, he left the palace of the cardinal, with an intention of returning. His way on his return led by the Chiaja, which you, Mr. Sherborne, who have been in Naples, perhaps remember. It was one of those nights which we witness only in the South. The blue and brilliant sea was sleeping beneath a cloudless sky; and the moon not only shed her light over the orange and lemon trees, which, springing from their green banks of myrtle, hung over the water, but added fresh lustre to the white dome, and glittering towers of the city; and flooded Vesuvius and the distant coast with light, as far even as Capua. The individual of whom I am speaking, had passed this spot on many nights when the moon was not less bright, the waves not less silent, and the orange trees not less sweet; but to-night—to-night something irresistible impelled him to stop. What a contrast to the artificial light, and heat, and splendour of the palace to which he was returning. He mused in silence. Would it not be wiser to forget the world's injustice, in gazing on a moonlit ocean, than in discovering in the illuminated halls of Naples, the baseness of the crowd which forms the world's power? To enjoy the refreshing luxury of a fanning breeze which now arose, he turned and gazed on the other side of the bay. Upon his right stretched out the promontory of Pausilippo; there were the shores of Baia. But it was not only the loveliness of the land which now overcame his spirit: he thought of those whose fame had made us forget even the beauty of these shores, in associations of a lighter character, and a more exalted nature. He remembered the time when it was his only wish to be numbered among them. How had his early hopes been fulfilled! What just account had he rendered to himself and to his country—that country that had expected so much—that self that had aspired even to more!

"Day broke over the city, and found him still pacing down the Chiaja. He did not return to the cardinal's palace; and in two days he had left Naples. I can myself, from personal experience, aver that this individual is now a useful and honourable member of society. The world speaks of him in more flattering terms."

The baron spoke with great energy and animation. Violet Fane, who had been very silent, and who certainly had not encouraged, by any apparent interest, the previous conversation of the baron, listened to this anecdote with the most eager attention; but the effect it produced upon Lady Madeleine Trever was most remarkable. At one moment Vivian thought that her ladyship would have fainted.

"Well!" said Mr. Sherborne, who first broke silence, "I suppose you think I'm wrong: I should

like to hear your opinion, Mr. Grey, of this business. What do you think of the question?"

"Yes, pray give us your opinion, Mr. Grey," said Lady Madeleine with eagerness; as if she thought that conversation would give her relief. The expression of her countenance did not escape Vivian.

"I must side against you, Mr. Sherborne," said he; "his excellency, has, I think, made out his point. It appears to me, however, that there is one great argument in favour of the study of nature, and, indeed, of travelling, which I think I have never seen used. It matures a man's mind, because it teaches him to distrust his judgment. He who finds that his preconceptions of natural appearances are erroneous, will in time suspect that his opinions of human nature may be equally incorrect: in short, that his moral conceptions may be as erroneous as his material ones."

"Well, I suppose I must give up. It's very odd, I never form a hasty opinion, and yet I'm sometimes wrong. Never above owning it, though—never above owning it—not like the young men of the present day, who are so confidently addicted to every species of error, that, for my own part, whenever they seem to suspect that they're wrong, I am always sure that they're right."

Here the party broke up. The promenade followed—the archduke—his compliments—and courtiers—then came the Redoute. Mr. Hermann bowed low as the gentlemen walked up to the table. The baron whispered Vivian that it was "expected" that they should play, and give the tables a chance of winning back their money. Vivian staked with the carelessness of one who wishes to lose. As is generally the case under such circumstances, he again left the Redoute a most considerable winner. He parted with the baron at his excellency's door, and proceeded to the next, which was his own. Here he stumbled over something at the door-way, which appeared like a large bundle. He bent down with his light to examine it, and found Essper George, lying on his back, with his eyes half-open. It was some moments before Vivian perceived he was asleep; stepping gently over him, he entered his apartment.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Vivian rose in the morning, a gentle tap at his door announced the presence of an early visitor, who being desired to enter, appeared in the person of Essper George.

"Does your highness want any thing?" asked Essper, with a very submissive air.

Vivian stared at him for a moment, and then ordered him to come in.

"I had forgotten, Essper, until this moment, that on returning to my room last night, I found you sleeping at my door. This also reminds me of your conduct in the saloon yesterday; and as I wish to prevent the repetition of such improprieties, I shall take this opportunity of informing you once for all, that if you do not in future conduct yourself with more discretion, I must apply to the Maitre d'Hotel. Now, sir, what do you want?"

Essper was silent, and stood with his hands

crossed on his breast, and his eyes fixed on the ground.

"If you do not want any thing, quit the room immediately."

Here the singular being began to weep and sob most bitterly.

"Poor fellow!" thought Vivian, "I fear with all thy wit, and pleasantry, and powers, thou art, after all, but one of those capricious, which nature sometimes indulges in; merely to show how superior is her accustomed order to eccentricities, even accompanied with the rarest and most extraordinary powers."

"What is your wish, Essper?" continued Vivian, in a kinder tone. "If there be any service, any real service, that I can do you, you will not find me backward. Are you in trouble? you surely are not in want?"

"No, no, no!" sobbed Essper; "I wish to be— to be your highness's servant," here he hid his face in his hands.

"My servant! why, surely, if, as I have reason to suppose, you can maintain yourself with ease by your exertions, it is not very wise conduct, voluntarily to seek out a dependence on any man. I'm afraid that you've been keeping company too much with the set of lazy, indolent, and insolent lacqueys, that are always loitering about these bathing places. Ernstorff's green livery and sword, have they not turned your brain, Essper?— how is it? tell me."

"No, no, no! but I want to be your highness's servant, only your highness's servant, I am tired of living alone."

"But, Essper, remember, that to gain a situation as a servant, you must be a person of regular habits and certain reputation. I have myself a very good opinion of you, but I have myself seen very little of you, though more than any one here; and I am a person of a peculiar turn of mind. Perhaps there is not another individual in this house, who would even allude to the possibility of engaging a servant without a character."

"Does the ship ask the wind for a character, when he bears her over the sea without hire, and without reward? and shall your highness require a character from me, when I request to serve you without wages, and without pay?"

"Such an engagement, Essper, it would be impossible for me to enter into, even if I had need of your services, which at present I have not. But I tell you, frankly, that I see no chance of your suiting me. I should require an attendant of steady habits and experience; not one whose very appearance would attract attention when I wished to be unobserved, and acquire a notoriety for the master which he detests. There is little likelihood of my requiring any one's services, and with every desire to assist you, I warmly advise you to give up all idea of entering into a state of life, for which you are not the least suited. If, on consideration, you still retain your wish of becoming a servant, and remain at the Baths with the expectation of finding a master, I recommend you to assume, at least for the moment, a semblance of regularity of habits. I have spoken to a great many ladies here, about your chamois bracelets, for which I think you will find a great demand. Believe me, your stall will be a better friend than your master. Now leave me."

Essper remained one moment with his eyes still

fixed on the ground; then walking very rapidly up to Vivian, he dropped on his knee, kissed his hand, and disappeared.

Mr. St. George breakfasted with the baron, and the gentlemen called on Lady Madelaine early in the morning to propose a drive to Stein Castle; but her ladyship excused herself, and Vivian following her example, the baron and Mr. St. George "patronised" the Fitzlooms, because there was nothing else to do. Vivian again joined the ladies in their morning walk; but Violet Fane was not in her usual high spirits—she complained more than once of her cousin's absence, and this, connected with some other circumstances, gave Vivian the first impression that her feelings towards Mr. St. George were not merely those of a relation: As to the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, Vivian soon found that it was utterly impossible to be on intimate terms with a being without an idea. The chevalier was certainly not a very fit representative of the gay, gallant, mercurial Frenchman: he rose very late, and employed the whole of the morning in reading the French newspapers, and playing billiards alternately with Prince Salvinski, and Count von Altenburgh.

These gentlemen, as well as the baron, Vivian, and Mr. St. George, were to diné this day at the New House.

They found assembled, at the appointed hour, a party of about thirty individuals. The dinner was sumptuous, the wines superb. At the end of the banquet, the company adjourned to another room, where play was proposed, and immediately commenced. His imperial highness did not join in the game; but, seated in a corner of the apartment, was surrounded by five or six aide-camps, whose only business was to bring their master constant accounts of the fortunes of the table, and the fate of the bets. His highness did not stake.

Vivian soon found that the game was played on a very different scale at the New House to what it was at the Redoute. He spoke most decidedly to the baron of his detestation of gambling, and expressed his unwillingness to play; but his excellency, although he agreed with him in his sentiments, advised him to conform to the evening to the universal custom. As he could afford to lose, he consented, and staked boldly. This night very considerable sums were lost and won; but none returned home greater winners than Mr. St. George and Vivian Grey.

CHAPTER X.

THE first few days of an acquaintance with a new scene of life, and with new characters, generally appear to pass very slowly; not certainly from the weariness which they induce, but rather from the keen attention which every little circumstance commands. When the novelty has worn off, when we have discovered that the new characters differ little from all others we have met before, and that the scene they inhabit is only another variety of the great order we have so often observed, we relapse into our ancient habits of inattention; we think more of ourselves, and less of those we meet; and musing our moments away

in rever, or in a vain attempt to cheat the coming day of the monotony of the present one, we begin to find that the various-vested hours have bounded, and are bounding away in a course at once imperceptible, uninteresting, and unprofitable. Then it is, that terrified at our nearer approach to the great river, whose dark windings it seems the business of all to forget, we start from our stupor to mourn over the rapidity of that collective sum of past time, every individual hour of which we have in turn execrated for its sluggishness.

Vivian had now been three weeks at Ems, and the presence of Lady Madeleine Trevor and her cousin alone induced him to remain. Whatever was the mystery existing between her ladyship and the baron, and that there was some mystery Vivian could not for a moment doubt, his excellency's efforts to attach himself to her party had been successful. The great intimacy subsisting between the baron and her ladyship's brother materially assisted in bringing about this result. For the first fortnight, the baron was Lady Madeleine's constant attendant in the evening promenade, and often in the morning walk; and though there were few persons whose companionship could be preferred to that of Baron von Konigstein, still Vivian sometimes regretted that his friend and Mr. St. George had not continued their morning rides. The presence of his excellency seemed always to have an unfavourable influence upon the spirits of Violet Fane, and the absurd and evident jealousy of Mr. St. George, prevented Vivian from finding, in her agreeable conversation, some consolation for the loss of the sole enjoyment of Lady Madeleine's exhilarating presence. Mr. St. George had never met Vivian's advances with cordiality, and he now treated him with studied coldness.

The visits of the gentlemen to the New House had been frequent. The saloon of the archduke was open every evening, and in spite of his great distaste for the fatal amusement which was there invariably pursued, Vivian found it utterly impossible to decline frequently attending, without subjecting his motives to painful misconception. His fortune, his extraordinary fortune did not desert him, and rendered his attendance still more a duty. The baron was not so successful as on his first evening's venture at the Redoute; but Mr. St. George's star remained favourable. Of Essper George, Vivian had seen little. In passing through the bazaar one morning, which he seldom did, he found to his surprise that the former conjuror had doffed his quaint costume, and was now attired in the usual garb of men of his condition of life. As Essper was busily employed at the moment, Vivian did not stop to speak to him; but he received a most respectful bow. Once or twice, also, he had met Essper in the baron's apartments; and he seemed to have become a very great favourite with the servants of his excellency and the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, particularly with his former butt, Ernstorff, to whom he now behaved with the greatest deference.

I said, that for the first fortnight, the baron's attendance on Lady Madeleine was constant. It was after this time that his excellency began to slacken in his attentions. He first disappeared from the morning walks, and yet he did not ride; he then ceased from joining the party at Lady Madeleine's apartments in the evening, and never omitted

increasing the circle at the New House for a single night. The whole of the fourth week the baron dined with his imperial highness. Although the invitation had been extended to all the gentlemen from the first, it had been agreed that it was not to be accepted, in order that the ladies should not find their party in the *salon* less numerous or less agreeable. The baron was the first to break through a rule which he had himself proposed; and Mr. St. George and the Chevalier de Bœffleurs soon followed his example.

"Mr. Grey," said Lady Madeleine one evening, as she was about to leave the gardens, "we shall be happy to see you to-night, if you are not engaged.—Mr. Sherborne only will be with us."

"I thank your ladyship, but I fear that I am engaged," said Vivian; for the receipt of some letters from England made him little inclined to enter into society.

"O, no! you can't be engaged," said Violet Fane; "pray come! pray come! I know you only want to go to that terrible New House; I wonder what St. George can find to amuse him there so keenly? I fear no good: men never congregate together for any beneficial purpose. I am sure, with all his gastronomical affectations, he would not, if all were right, prefer the most *exquis* dinner in the world to our society. As it is, we scarcely see him a moment. I think, Mr. Grey, that you are the only one who has not deserted the *salon*. For once, give up the New House—I'm sure you are not in your usual spirits; you will be more amused, more innocently amused at least, even if you go to sleep like Mr. Sherborne, than you will with playing at that disgusting rouge-et-noir, with a crowd of suspicious-looking men in *mustachios*."

Vivian smiled at Miss Fane's warmth, and was too flattered by the interest which she seemed to take in his welfare, to persist in his refusal, although she did dilate most provokingly on the absence of her cousin. Vivian soon joined them.

"Lady Madeleine is assisting me in a most important work, Mr. Grey. I am making drawings of the whole valley of the Rhine; I know that you are very accurately acquainted with the scenery; you can, perhaps, assist me with your advice about this view of Old Hatto's Castle; I am sure I'm not quite right."

Vivian was so completely master of every spot in the Rhine-land, that he had no difficulty in suggesting the necessary alterations. The drawings, unlike most young ladies' sketches, were vivid representations of the scenery which they professed to depict; and Vivian forgot his melancholy as he attracted the attention of the fair artist to points of interest, unknown or unnoticed by the Guide-books and the Diaries.

"You must look forward to Italy with great interest, Miss Fane!"

"The greatest! I shall not, however, forget the Rhine, even among the Apennines."

"Our intended fellow-travellers, Lord Mounteney and his family, are already at Milan," said Lady Madeleine to Vivian; "we were to have joined their party.—Lady Mounteney is a Trevor."

"I have had the pleasure of meeting Lord Mounteney in England, at Sir Berdmore Scrope's—do you know him?"

"Very slightly. The Mounteney's pass the

winter at Rome, where I hope we shall join them. Do you know the family intimately?"

"Mr. Ernest Clay, a nephew of his lordship's, I have seen a great deal of; I suppose, according to the adopted phraseology, I ought to describe him as my friend, although I am utterly ignorant where he is at present; and, although, unless he is himself extremely altered, there scarcely can be two persons who now more differ in their pursuits and tempers than ourselves."

"Ernest Clay! is he a friend of yours?—He's somewhere on the Continent now; I forget where; with some diplomatic appointment, I think. Indeed, I'm sure of the fact, although I'm perfectly ignorant of the place, for it was through Mr. Trevor's interest that he obtained it. I see you smile at the idea of Ernest Clay drawing up a protocol!"

"Lady Madeleine, you have never read me Caroline Mouteney's letter, as you promised," said Miss Fane; "I suppose full of raptures—'the Alps, and Apennines, the Pyrenean, and the river Po.'"

"By no means: the whole letter of four sides, double crossed, is filled with an account of the ballet at La Scala: which, according to Caroline, is a thousand times more interesting than Mont Blanc, or the Simplon."

"One of the immortal works of Vigano, I suppose," said Vivian; "he has raised the ballet of action to an equality with tragedy. I have heard my father mention the splendid effect of his *Vestale* and his *Othello*."

"And yet," said Violet Fane, "I do not like *Othello* to be profaned. It is not for operas and ballets. We require the thrilling words."

"It is very true; yet Pasta's acting in the opera, and in an opera acting is only a secondary point, was a grand performance; and I have myself seldom witnessed a more masterly effect produced by any actor in the world, than I did a fortnight ago, at the opera at Darmstadt, by Wild in *Othello*."

"I think the history of *Desdemona* is the most affecting of all tales," said Miss Fane.

"The violent death of a woman, young, lovely, and innocent, is assuredly the most terrible of tragedies," observed Vivian; "and yet, I know not why, I agree with you that *Desdemona*'s is the most affecting of fates—more affecting than those of *Cordelia*, or *Juliet*, or *Ophelia*."

"It is," said Lady Madeleine, "because we always contrast her misery with her previous happiness. The young daughter of Lear is the child of misfortune: Juliet has the anticipation, not the possession of happiness; and the characters in *Hamlet* seem so completely the sport of a mysterious but inexorable destiny, that human interest ceases for those whose conduct does not appear to be influenced by human passions. The exquisite poetry—the miraculous philosophy of *Hamlet*, will always make us read it with delight, study it with advantage; but for *Ophelia* we do not mourn. We are interested in the fortunes of a fictitious character, because in witnessing a representation of a scene of human life, we form our opinion of the proper course to be pursued by the imaginary agents; and our attention is excited, in order to ascertain whether their conduct and our opinions agree. But where the decree of fate is visibly being fulfilled, or the interference of a supernatural power is revealed, we know that human faculties can no

longer be of avail; that prudence can no longer protect—courage no longer defend. We witness the tragedy with fear, but not with sympathy."

"I have often asked myself," said Miss Fane, "which is the most terrible destiny for a young woman to endure:—to meet death after a life of trouble, anxiety, and suffering; or suddenly to be cut off in the enjoyment of all things that make life delightful; with a heart too pure to be tainted by their possession, and a mind too much cultivated to over-appreciate their value?"

"For my part," said Vivian, "in the last instance, I think that death can scarcely be considered an evil. The pure spirit would only have to sleep until the Great Day; and then—as Dryden has magnificently said, 'wake an angel still.' How infinitely is such a destiny to be preferred to that long apprenticeship of sorrow and suffering, at the end of which men are generally as unwilling to die as at the commencement!"

"And yet," said Miss Fane, "there is something fearful in the idea of sudden death."

"Very fearful!" muttered Vivian: "very fearful in some cases;" for he thought of one whom he had sent to his great account before his time.

"Violet, my dear!" said Lady Madeleine, in a very agitated voice; "have you finished your drawing of the *Bingenloch*?" But Miss Fane would not leave the subject.

"Very fearful in *all* cases, Mr. Grey. How few of us are prepared to leave this world without warning! And if from youth, or sex, or natural disposition, or from the fortunate union of the influence of all these three, a few may chance to be better fitted for the great change than their companions, still, I always think that in those cases in which we view our fellow-creatures suddenly departing from this world, apparently without a bodily or mental pang, there must be a moment of suffering which none of us can understand; suffering occasioned by a consciousness of immediately meeting death in the very flush of life and earthly thoughts—a moment of suffering, which, from its intense and novel character, may appear an eternity of anguish. I shall, perhaps, not succeed in conveying my peculiar feelings on this subject to you. I have always looked upon such an end as the most terrible of dispensations."

"I enter into your feelings," answered Vivian; "although the light in which you view this subject is new to me. Terrible, however, as we may universally consider the event of a sudden death, I still do not believe that a long and painful illness ever exempts man from the suffering which you mention; but that he always quits life with the same unwillingness to die."

"I cannot agree with you, Mr. Grey, in this opinion, which you seem to entertain of the inefficacy of a long apprenticeship of sorrow and suffering." From my own experience, I should say that it robbed death of all its terrors. Death is most dreadful at a distance—illness weakens the mind in a wise proportion with the body; and therefore, at a certain period the feelings are too enervated by debility, or too blunted by personal suffering, to experience *that* which in health appears the greatest trial in our dissolution—the parting with our friends. In the enjoyment of every pleasure which health and affluence can afford, I confess that it appears most dreadful to encounter the agonies of disease; and parting

with all we love here, to sink into the grave and be forgotten by those of whose every thought, when living, we seemed to be the centre. But when we are worn out with pain, the selfishness of our nature makes us look upon those around us with little more interest than as ministers of our wants. We forget all but the present suffering, and only look forward to the future as a release from it. If ever you have experienced a long and dangerous illness, Mr. Grey, I am confident that on reflection, you will agree with me."

"My dear Violet," said Lady Madeleine; "I thought that Mr. Grey came here to-night to forget his melancholy. These surely are subjects which do not make men gay."

"I assure you, Lady Madeleine," said Vivian, "that I take great—the greatest interest in this subject. I have endured a most dangerous illness, Miss Fane, but it was not one of the kind you allude to. It was a violent fever, and I was not sensible of my disease till its danger was past. I have no very clear conception of my state of mind when I recovered; but I think, if I remember right, that I dreaded life as much as I feared death."

"That was a peculiar case," said Miss Fane; "a case in which death, from the state of mind, could have had no terrors. Of course my argument refers to the generality of long and dangerous illnesses, when the patient is only too sensible of the daily increasing debility. For myself, I distinctly remember being reduced to such fearful weakness, that the physicians and nurses round my bed believed me dying, if not dead; and from my complete inattention, entirely past a knowledge of what was going on around me. They were deceived, however, in this. I heard them say that I was dying; more than once they thought that all was over; but it produced no emotion in my mind,—neither fear, nor sorrow, nor hope. I felt my breath fluttering fainter and fainter. I could not move even my finger; and I thought, indeed, that all would soon be over; but it brought no pang for the sufferers who surrounded my bed, no anxiety or desire for myself. At last I sunk into a deep sleep; and after a length of time I awoke with quickened feelings. My natural affections returned, and then I had a strong longing for life. Here I am now, enjoying excellent health, in spite of my dear physician's grave looks," said Miss Fane, putting her arm round Lady Madeleine's neck; "and not only health, but every blessing which youth can give me. Nevertheless, dreading death, as I do now, with the feelings of health and a happy life, I sometimes almost regret that I ever awoke from that perfect calm of every earthly passion."

As Vivian was thinking that Violet Fane was the most beautiful creature he had ever beheld, Lady Madeleine Trevor bent down, and kissed her forehead. Her ladyship's large blue eyes were full of tears. A woman's eye never seems more bright than when it glances through a tear—as the light of a star seems more brilliant when sparkling on a wave.

"Violet, my dear," said her ladyship, "let us alk no more of death."

"Who was talking of death?" said Mr. Sherborne, waking from a refreshing nap; "I'm sure I wasn't. Let me see—I forget what my last obser-

vation was; I think I was saying, Lady Madeleine, that a little music would refresh us all. Violet, my dear, will you play me one of my favourites?"

"What shall it be, dear sir? I really think I may sing to-night. What think you, Lady Madeleine? I have been silent a fortnight." So saying, Miss Fane sat down to the piano.

Mr. Sherborne's favourite ensued. It was a lively air, calculated to drive away all melancholy feelings, and cherishing those bright sunny views of human life which the excellent old man had invariably professed. But Rosina's muse did not smile to-night upon her who invoked its gay spirit; and ere Lady Madeleine could interfere, Violet Fane had found more congenial emotions in one of Weber's prophetic symphonies.

O! Music! miraculous art, that makes the poet's skill a jest; revealing to the soul inexpressible feelings, by the aid of inexplicable sounds! A blast of thy trumpet, and millions rush forward to die; a peal of thy organ, and uncounted nations sink down to pray. Mighty is thy three-fold power!

First, thou canst call up all elemental sounds, and scenes, and subjects, with the definiteness of reality. Strike the lyre! Lo! the voice of the winds—the flash of the lightning—the swell of the wave—the solitude of the valley!

Then thou canst speak to the secrets of a man's heart as if by inspiration. Strike the lyre! Lo!—our early love—our treasured hate—our withered joy—our flattering hope!

And, lastly, by thy mysterious melodies, thou canst recall man from all thought of this world and of himself—bringing back to his soul's memory, dark but delightful recollections of the glorious heritage which he has lost, but which he may win again. Strike the lyre! Lo! paradise, with its palaces of inconceivable splendour, and its gates of unimaginable glory!

When Vivian left the apartment of Lady Madeleine, he felt no inclination to sleep; and instead of retiring to rest, he bent his steps towards the gardens. It was a rich summer night; the air, recovered from the sun's scorching rays, was cool—not chilling. The moon was still behind the mountains; but the dark L'ue heavens were studded with innumerable stars, whose tremulous light quivered on the face of the river. All human sounds had ceased to agitate; and the note of the nightingale, and the rush of the waters, banished monotony without disturbing reflection. But not for reflection had Vivian Grey deserted his chamber: his heart was full—but of indefinable sensations; and forgetting the world in the intensity of his emotions, he felt too much to think.

How long he had been pacing by the side of the river he knew not, when he was awakened from his reverie by the sound of voices. He looked up, and saw lights moving at a distance. The party at the New House had just broke up. He stopped beneath a branching elm-tree for a moment, that the sound of his steps might not attract their attention; and at this very instant the garden gate opened, and closed with great violence. The figure of a man approached. As he passed Vivian, the moon rose up from above the brow of the mountain, and lit up the countenance of the baron. Despair was stamped on his distracted features.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Vivian awoke in the morning, he found that the intenseness of his emotions had subsided; and that his sensations were not quite so indefinite as on the preceding night—he found himself in love—with whom, however, was perhaps still doubtful. The image of Violet Fane had made his dreams delicious; but it must be confessed, that the eidolon sometimes smiled with the features of Lady Madeleine Trevor:—but that he looked on the world with new feelings, and a changed spirit,—with hope, and almost with joy,—was certain. The sweet summer morning had succeeded to the soft summer night. The sun illumined as yet only the tops of the western mountains; and the morning breeze, unheated by his beams, told that it was June by the odours which it wafted around. At such a moment the sense of existence alone is happiness; but to Vivian it seemed that the sun was about to light up a happier world, and that the sweet wind blew from Paradise.

Young love! young love, “thy birth was of the womb of morning dew, and thy conception of the joyous prime!”—so Spenser sings; and there are few, perhaps, who, on this subject, have not scribbled some stray stanzas in their time, if not as sweet, it may be more sincere. They will understand feelings which none can describe. How miraculous is that power, which, in an instant, can give hope to the desperate, and joy to the forlorn; which, without an argument, can vanquish all philosophy; and without a gibe silence all wit; which turns the lighthearted serious, while it makes the sorrowful smile; which is braver than courage and yet more cautious than fear; which can make the fool outwit wisdom, and wisdom envy the fool!

It was in one of those sweet bowers, with which, as we have before mentioned, the gardens of Ems wisely abound, that Vivian Grey had spent more than three hours, unconscious of the passing of a moment. A rustling among the trees first attracted his attention; and on looking quickly up the winding walk, he thought he saw Essper George vanish in the shrubbery. Was he watched?—But he soon forgot his slight anger in another fit of abstraction, from which he was awakened, as he imagined by the same sound. “This time, I’ll catch you,” thought Vivian. He jumped suddenly up, and nearly knocked down Lady Madeleine Trevor, who had entered the arbour.

“I hope I’ve not disturbed you, Mr. Grey,” said her ladyship, who saw that he was confused; “I am in want of an escort, and I have come to reclaim a truant knight. You forget that I had your pledge yesterday, to accompany me to the New Spring.”

Vivian made a violent struggle to recover himself, and began to talk a quantity of nonsense to her ladyship, by way of apology for his negligence, and thanks for her kindness; Lady Madeleine listened, with her usual gentle smile, to a long and muttered discourse, in which the words “Essper George, Miss Fane, and fine morning,” were alone intelligible.

“Shall we have the pleasure of Miss Fane and Mr. Sherborne’s company in our walk to-day?” asked Vivian.

“No! they are not going with us,” said Lady Madeleine. “You will join our party at the archduke’s to-night, I hope, Mr. Grey,” continued her ladyship.

“Yes—I don’t know:—that is, are you going, Lady Madeleine?”

“Why, my dear sir, isn’t this the fête night?”

“Ah! ah! I understand—I remember—it will give me the greatest pleasure to join the party at your ladyship’s rooms.”

Lady Madeleine looked very earnestly at her companion, and then talked about the weather, and the beauty of summer, and the singing of birds, and a thousand other little topics, by which she soon restored him to his usual state of mind. In a quarter of an hour Vivian had quite recovered his senses, and only regretted the part which he necessarily took in the conversation, because it prevented him from listening to the soft tones of her ladyship’s voice, who, he thought, to-day looked a thousand times more beautiful than ever. He began also to think, that he should like to walk to the New Spring alone with her every morning of his life.

Vivian had been so occupied by his own feelings, that he and his companion had completed nearly half their walk, before it struck him that something was dwelling on the mind of Lady Madeleine. In the midst of the gayest conversation, her features more than once appeared to be in little accordance with the subject of discussion; and her voice often broke off abruptly at the commencement of a sentence—some sentence which it seemed she had not courage to finish.

“Mr. Grey,” said her ladyship, suddenly; “I cannot conceal any longer, that I am thinking of a very different subject to the archduke’s ball. As you form part of my thoughts at this moment, I shall not hesitate to disburthen my mind to you: although, perhaps, I run the risk of being considered at the same time both impertinent and officious. Understand me, however, distinctly, that whatever I may say, you are not, for a moment, to believe that I am ostentatiously presuming to give you advice. There are many points, however, to which the hint or intimation of a friend may attract our attention with advantage; and although our conversation to-day may not be productive of any to you, believe me that I should very much grieve, if my gentle suggestion were construed into an unwarrantable interference.”

“Any thing that Lady Madeleine Trevor can do, surely cannot be construed by any one as unwarrantable—any thing that Lady Madeleine Trevor can be kind enough to address to me, must always be received with the most respectful, the most grateful attention.”

“I wish not to keep you in suspense, Mr. Grey. It is of the mode of life which I see my brother, which I see you pursuing here, that I wish to speak,” said her ladyship, with an agitated voice.

“May I—may I *really* speak with freedom?”

“Any thing—every thing, with the most perfect unreserve and confidence,” answered Vivian.

“You are aware, Mr. Grey, that Ems is not the first place at which I have met Baron von Konigstein.”

“I am not ignorant that his excellency has been in England.”

“It cannot have escaped you, Mr. Grey, that I acknowledge his acquaintance with reluctance.”

“I should judge, with the *greatest* reluctance, Lady Madeleine.”

“And yet it was with still more reluctance, Mr. Grey, that I prevailed upon myself to believe you

were his friend. I experienced the greatest delight, when you told me how short and accidental had been your acquaintance. I have experienced the greatest pain in witnessing to what that acquaintance has led; and it is with extreme sorrow, for my own weakness, in not having had courage to speak to you before, and with a hope of yet benefiting you, that I have been induced to speak to you now."

"Lady Madeleine, I trust there is no cause either for your sorrow or your fear; but much, much cause for my gratitude. Do not fear to be explicit."

"Now that I have prevailed upon myself to speak, Mr. Grey, and have experienced from you the reception that I gave you credit for; do not fear that there will be any want of openness on my part. I have observed the constant attendance of yourself, and my brother, at the New House, with the greatest anxiety. I have seen too much of the world, not to be perfectly aware of the danger—the terrific danger, which young men and young men of honour must always experience at such places. Alas! I have seen too much of Baron von Konigstein, not to know that at such places especially, his acquaintance is fatal. The evident depression of your spirits yesterday, determined me on a step which I have for the last few days been considering. Your abstraction this morning frightened me. I can learn nothing from my brother. I fear that I am even now too late; but I trust that whatever may be your situation, you will remember, Mr. Grey, that you have friends; that you will decide on nothing rash."

"Lady Madeleine," said Vivian, "I have too much respect for your feelings to stop even one moment to express the gratitude—the pride—the honourable pride, which your generous conduct allows me to feel. This moment repays me for a year of agony. I affect not to misunderstand one syllable of your meaning. My opinion, my detestation of the gaming-table has always, and must always be the same. I do assure you this, and all things, upon my honour. Far from being involved, my cheek burns while I confess, that I am master of a considerable sum—a most considerable sum, acquired by this unhallowed practice. But for this I am scarcely to be blamed. You are yourself aware of the singular fortune which awaited my first evening at Ems; that fortune was continued at the New House, the very first day I dined with his highness, and when, unexpectedly, I was forced to play; that fatal fortune has rendered my attendance at the New House absolutely necessary. I found that it was impossible to keep away, without subjecting myself to the most painful observations. I need scarcely say now, that my depression of yesterday was occasioned by the receipt of letters from England; and as to my abstraction this morning, believe me, Lady Madeleine, it was not a state of mind which grew out of any disgust to the world, or its inhabitants. I am ashamed of having spoken so much about myself, and so little about those for whom you are more interested. As far as I can judge, you have no cause, at present, for any serious uneasiness with regard to Mr. St. George. You may, perhaps, have observed that we are not very intimate, and therefore I cannot speak with any precision as to the state of his fortunes; but I have reason to believe that they are by no means unfavourable. And now for the baron, Lady Madeleine."

"Yes, yes!"

"I hardly know what I am to infer from your observations respecting him. I certainly should infer something extremely bad, were not I conscientious, that, after the experience of five weeks, I, for one, have nothing to complain of him. The baron, certainly, is fond of play—plays high, indeed. He has not had equal fortune at the New House as at the Redoute; at least I imagine so, for he has given me no cause to believe, in any way, that he is a loser; and I need not tell Lady Madeleine Trevor, that at the table of an archduke, losses are instantly paid."

"Now that I know the truth—the joyful truth, Mr. Grey," said her ladyship, with great earnestness and animation; "I feel quite ashamed of my boldness; must I say my suspicions? But if you could only understand the relief, the ease, the happiness, that I feel at this moment, I am sure you would not wonder that I prevailed upon myself to speak to you. It may still be in my power, however, to prevent evil."

"Yes—yes, certainly! After what has passed, I would, without any fear of my motives being misinterpreted, submit to your ladyship, that the wisest course now, would be to speak to me frankly respecting Von Konigstein; and if you are aware of any thing which has passed in the circles in England, of a nature which may render it more prudent for——"

"O! stop, stop!" said Lady Madeleine, in the greatest agitation. Vivian was silent, and many minutes elapsed before his companion again spoke. When she did, her eyes were fixed on the ground, and her tones were low; but her voice was calm, and steady. It was evident that she had mastered her emotion.

"I am going to accept, Mr. Grey, the confidence which you have proffered me. I feel, I am convinced, that it is due to you now, that I should say all; but I do not affect to conceal that I speak, even now, with reluctance—an effort, and it will soon be over. It is for the best." Lady Madeleine paused one moment, and then resumed with a firm voice:—

"Upwards of six years, Mr. Grey, have now passed since Baron von Konigstein was appointed minister to London, from the court of —— . Although apparently young for such an important mission, he had already eminently distinguished himself as a diplomatist; and with all the advantages of brilliant talents, various accomplishments, rank, reputation, person, and a fascinating address, I need not tell you, that he immediately became of consideration, even in the highest circles. Mr. Trevor—I was then just married—was at this period high in office, and was constantly in personal communication with the baron. They became intimate, and his excellency our constant guest. The baron had the reputation of being a man of pleasure. Few men ever existed, for whose indiscretions there could be greater excuse; nor had any thing ever transpired which could induce us to believe, that Baron von Konigstein could be guilty of any thing, but an indiscretion. At this period a relation, and former ward of Mr. Trevor's, a young man of considerable fortune, and one whom we all most fondly loved, resided in our family. Trevor and myself considered him as our brother. With this individual, Baron von Konigstein formed a strong friendship; they were

seldom apart. Our relation was not exempted from the failings of all young men. He led a very dissipated, an alarmingly dissipated life; but he was very young; and as, unlike most relations, we never allowed any conduct on his part for an instant to banish him from our society; we trusted that the contrast which his own family afforded to his usual companions, would in time render his tastes more refined, and his habits less irregular. We had now known Baron Konigstein for upwards of a year and a half, most intimately. Nothing had transpired during this period to induce Mr. Trevor to alter the opinion which he had entertained of him from the first; he believed him to be a man of the purest honour, and, in spite of a few imprudences, of the correctest principles. Whatever might have been my own opinion of his excellency at this period, I had no reason to doubt the natural goodness of his disposition; and though I could not hope that he was one who would assist us in our plans for the reformation of Augustus, I still rejoiced to observe, that in the baron he would at least find a companion very different from the unprincipled and selfish beings by whom he was too often surrounded. Something occurred at this time, Mr. Grey, which it is necessary for me only to allude to; but which placed Baron von Konigstein, according to his own declaration, under the most lasting obligations to myself. In the warmth of his heart he asked if there was any real, and important service which he could do me. I took advantage of the moment to speak to him about our young friend; I detailed to him all our anxieties; he anticipated all my wishes, and promised to watch over him; to be his guardian; his friend—his real friend. Mr. Grey," continued her ladyship, "I struggle to restrain my feelings; but the recollections of this period of my life are so painful, that for a moment I must stop to recover myself."

For a few minutes they walked on in silence; Vivian did not speak, his heart was too full; and when her ladyship resumed her tale, he, unconsciously, pressed her arm.

"Mr. Grey, I study to be brief. About three months after the baron had given me the pledge which I mentioned, Mr. Trevor was called up at an early hour one morning with the alarming intelligence, that his late ward was supposed to be at the point of death at a neighbouring hotel. He instantly accompanied the messenger, and on the way the fatal truth was broken to him—our young friend had committed suicide! He had been playing all night with one whom I cannot now name." Here Lady Madeleine's voice died away, but with a struggle she again spoke firmly.

"I mean, Mr. Grey—with the baron—some foreigners also, and an Englishman—all intimate friends of Ven Konigstein, and scarcely known to Captain —, I mean the deceased. Our friend had been the only sufferer; he had lost his whole fortune, and more than his fortune: and with a heart full of despair and remorse, had, with his own hand terminated his unhappy life. The whole circumstances were so suspicious, that public attention was keenly attracted, and Mr. Trevor spared no exertion to bring the offenders to punishment. The baron had the hardihood to call upon us the next day; admittance was, of course, refused. He wrote the most violent letters, protesting by all that was sacred that he was innocent; that he was asleep during most

of the night, and accusing the others who were present of a conspiracy. The unhappy business now attracted universal attention. Its consequence on me was an alarming illness of a most unfortunate kind; I was therefore prevented from interfering, or, indeed, knowing any thing that took place; but Trevor informed me that the baron was involved in a correspondence in the public prints; that the accused parties recriminated, and that finally he was convinced that Von Konigstein, if there were any difference, was, if possible, the most guilty. However this might be, he soon obtained his recall from his own government. He wrote to myself and to Trevor before he left England; but I was too ill to hear of his letters, until Mr. Trevor informed me that he had returned them unopened. And now, Mr. Grey, I am determined to give utterance to that which as yet has always died upon my lips—the victim—the unhappy victim, was the brother of Miss Fane!"

"O, God!"

"And, Mr. St. George," continued Vivian, "Mr. St. George knowing all this, which surely he must have done; how came he to tolerate for an instant the advances of such a man?"

"My brother," said Lady Madeleine, "is a very good, and a very excellent young man, with a kind heart and warm feelings; but my brother has not much knowledge of the world, and he is too honourable himself ever to believe that what he calls a gentleman can be dishonest. My brother was not in England when the unhappy event took place, and of course the various circumstances have not made the same impression upon him as upon us. He has heard of the affair only from me; and young men, Mr. Grey, young men too often imagine that women are apt to exaggerate in matters of this nature, which, of course, few of us can understand. Von Konigstein had not the good feeling, or perhaps had not the power, connected as he was with the archduke, to affect ignorance of our former acquaintance, or to avoid a second one. I was obliged formally to introduce him to my brother. I was quite perplexed how to act. I thought of writing to Von Konigstein the next morning, a letter—a calm letter; impressing upon him, without the expression of any hostile feeling, the utter impossibility of the acquaintance being renewed: but this proceeding involved a thousand difficulties. How was a man of his distinction—a man, who not only from his rank, but from his disposition, is always a remarkable, and a remarked character, wherever he may be,—how could he account to the archduke, and to his numerous friends, for his not associating with a party with whom he was perpetually in contact. Explanations—painful explanations, and worse, much worse than these must have been the consequence. I could hardly expect him to leave Ems; it was, perhaps, out of his power: and for Miss Fane to leave Ems at this moment, was most strenuously prohibited by our physician. While I was doubtful and deliberating, the conduct of Von Konigstein himself prevented me from taking any step whatever. Feeling all the awkwardness of his situation, he seized with eagerness the opportunity of becoming intimate with a member of the family whom he had not before known. His amusing conversation and insinuating address immediately enlisted the feelings of my brother in his favour. You know yourself that the very morning after

their introduction they were riding together. As they became more intimate, the baron boldly spoke to St. George, in confidence, of his acquaintance with us in England, and of the unhappy circumstances which led to its termination. St. George was deceived by this seeming courage and candour. He has become the baron's friend, and has adopted his version of the unhappy story: and as the baron has had too much delicacy to allude to the affair in defence of himself to me, he calculated that the representations of St. George, who, he was conscious, would not preserve the confidence which Von Königstein has always intended him to betray, would assist in producing in my mind an impression in his favour. The Neapolitan story which he told the other day at dinner, was of himself; relating it, as he might with truth, of a gentleman of rank, who was obliged to leave England, he blinded all present except Miss Fane and myself. I confess to you, Mr. Grey, that though I have not for a moment doubted the guilt of the baron, still I was weak enough to consider that his desire to become reconciled to me was at least an evidence of a repentant heart; and the Neapolitan story deceived me. Women are so easily to be deceived. We always hail with such credulous pleasure the prospect of the amendment of a fellow-creature. Actuated by these feelings, and acting as I thought wisest under existing circumstances, I ceased to discourage the attentions of the baron to myself and my friends. Your acquaintance, which we all desired to cultivate, was another reason for enduring his presence. His subsequent conduct has undeceived me: I am convinced now, not only of his former guilt, but also that he is not changed, and that with his accustomed talent, he has been acting a part which for some reason or other he has no longer any object in maintaining. Both Mr. Sherborne and myself have remonstrated with my brother; but the only consequence of our interference has been, that he has quarrelled with his uncle, and treated both my own and Miss Fane's interposition with indifference or irritability."

"And Miss Fane," said Vivian, "she must know all?"

"She knows nothing in detail; she was so young at the time, that we had no difficulty in keeping the particular circumstances of her brother's death, and the sensation which it excited, a secret from her. As she grew up, I have thought it proper that the mode of his death should no longer be concealed from her; and she has learned from some incautious observations of St. George's, enough to make her look upon the baron with horror. It is for Violet," continued Lady Madeleine, "that I have the severest apprehensions. For the last fortnight her anxiety for her cousin has produced an excitation of mind, which I look upon with more dread than any thing that can happen to her. She has entreated both Mr. Sherborne and myself, to speak to St. George, and also to you, Mr. Grey; and since our unsuccessful interference with my brother, we have been obliged to have recourse to deceit to calm her mind, and banish her apprehensions. Mr. Sherborne has persuaded her, that, at the New House play is seldom pursued; and when pursued, that the limit is very moderate. The last few days she has become more easy and serene. She accompanies us to-night; the weather is so beautiful that the night air is scarcely to

be feared: and a gay scene well I am convinced, have a favourable influence upon her spirits. Your depression last night did not however escape her notice. Once more let me say how I rejoice at hearing what you have told me. I have such confidence in your honour, Mr. Grey, that I unhesitatingly believe all that you have said. I have such confidence in your sense and courage, Mr. Grey, that I have now no apprehensions for the future. For God's sake, watch St. George. I have no fear for yourself."

Here they had reached home: Vivian parted with her ladyship at the door of her apartments, and pressed her hand as he refused to come in. He hastened to the solitude of his own chamber. His whole frame was in a tumult; he paced up and down his room with wild steps; he pressed his hand to his eyes to banish the disturbing light; and tried to call up the image of her who was lately speaking—of her, for whom alone he now felt that he must live. But what chance had he of ever gaining this glorious creature? what right? what claims? His brow alternately burnt with maddening despair, and exciting hope. How he cursed himself for his foul sacrifice of his talents! those talents, the proper exercise, the wise administration of which might have placed happiness in his power,—the enjoyment of a state of feeling, whose existence he had once ridiculed, because his imperfect moral sense was incapable of comprehending it,—once, and once only, it darted across his mind, that feelings of mere friendship could not have dictated this confidence, and occasioned this anxiety on her part; but the soft thought dwelt on his soul only for an instant—as the shadow of a nightingale flits over the moonlit moss.

CHAPTER XII.

THE company at the archduke's fete was *most select*; that is to say, it consisted of every single person who was then at the Baths: those who had been presented to his highness having the privilege of introducing any number of their friends; and those who had no friend to introduce them, purchasing tickets at an enormous price from Cracowsky—the wily Polish intendant. The entertainment was most imperial; no expense and no exertion were spared to make the hired lodging-house look like an hereditary palace; and for a week previous to the great evening, the whole of the neighbouring town of Wisbaden, the little capital of the dutchy, had been put under contribution. What a harvest for Cracowsky!—What a commission from the *restaurateur* for supplying the refreshments!—What a per centage on hired mirrors and dingy hangings!

The archduke, covered with orders, received every one with the greatest condescension, and made to each of his guests a most flattering speech. His suit, in new uniforms, simultaneously bowed directly the flattering speech was finished.

"Madame von Furstenburg, I feel the greatest pleasure in seeing you. My greatest pleasure is to be surrounded by my friends. Madame von Furstenburg, I trust that your amiable and delightful family are quite well. [The party passed on.] Cravatscheff!" continued his highness, inclining

his head round to one of his aid-de-camps, "Cravatscheff! a very fine woman is Madame von Furstenburg. There are few women whom I more admire than Madame von Furstenburg."

"Prince Salvinski, I feel the greatest pleasure in seeing you. My greatest pleasure is to be surrounded by my friends. Poland honours no one more than Prince Salvinski. Cravatscheff! a remarkable bore is Prince Salvinski. There are few men of whom I have a greater terror than Prince Salvinski."

"Baron von Konigstein, I feel the greatest pleasure in seeing you. My greatest pleasure is to be surrounded by my friends. Baron von Konigstein, I have not yet forgotten the story of the fair Venetian. Cravatscheff! an uncommonly pleasant fellow is Baron von Konigstein. There are few men whose company I more enjoy than Baron von Konigstein's."

"Count von Altenburgh, I feel the greatest pleasure in seeing you. My greatest pleasure is to be surrounded by my friends. You will not forget to give me your opinion of my Austrian troop. Cravatscheff! a very good billiard player is Count von Altenburgh. There are few men whose play I'd sooner bet upon than Count von Altenburgh's."

"Lady Madeleine Trevor, I feel the greatest pleasure in seeing you. My greatest pleasure is to be surrounded by my friends. Miss Fane, your servant—Mr. Sherborne—Mr. St. George—Mr. Grey. Cravatscheff! a most splendid woman is Lady Madeleine Trevor. There is no woman whom I more admire than Lady Madeleine Trevor; and Cravatscheff! Miss Fane, too! a remarkably fine girl is Miss Fane."

The great saloon of the New House afforded excellent accommodation for the dancers. It opened on the gardens, which, though not very large, were tastefully laid out; and were this evening brilliantly illuminated with coloured lamps. In the smaller saloon, the Austrian troop amused those who were not fascinated by waltz or quadrille, with acting proverbs: the regular dramatic performance was thought too heavy a business for the evening. There was sufficient amusement for all; and those who did not dance, and to whom proverbs were no novelty, walked and talked, stared at others, and were themselves stared at; and this perhaps was the greatest amusement of all. Baron von Konigstein did certainly to-night look neither like an unsuccessful gamester, nor a designing villain. Among many who were really amusing, he was the most so; and, apparently without the least consciousness of it, attracted the admiration of all. To the Trevor party he had attached himself immediately, and was constantly at her ladyship's side, introducing to her, in the course of the evening, his own and Mr. St. George's particular friends—Mr. and Mrs. Fitzloom. Among many smiling faces, Vivian Grey's was clouded; the presence of the baron annoyed him. When they first met, he was conscious that he was stiff and cool—extraordinarily cool. One moment's reflection convinced him of the folly of his conduct, and he made a struggle to be very civil—extraordinarily civil. In five minutes' time he had involuntarily insulted the baron, who stared at his friend, and evidently did not comprehend him.

"Grey," said his excellency, very quietly, "you're not in a good humour to night. What's

the matter? This is not at all a temper to come to a fête in. What! won't Miss Fane dance with you?" asked the baron, with an arch smile.

"I wonder what can induce your excellency to talk such nonsense!"

"Your excellency!—by Jove! that's good. Excellency! why, what the deuce is the matter with the man? It is Miss Fane, then—eh?"

"Baron von Konigstein, I wish you to understand—"

"My dear fellow, I never could understand any thing. I think you have insulted me in a most disgraceful manner, and I positively must call you out, unless you promise to dine at my rooms with me to-morrow, to meet De Bœffleurs."

"I cannot."

"Why not? you've no engagement with Lady Madeleine I know, for St. George has agreed to come."

"Yes?"

"De Bœffleurs leaves Ems next week. It is sooner than he expected, and I wish to have a quiet evening together before he goes. I should be very vexed if you were not there. We've scarcely been enough together lately. What with the New House in the evening, and riding parties in the morning, and those Fitzloom girls, with whom St. George is playing a most foolish game—he'll be taken in now, if he's not on his guard—we really never meet, at least not in a quiet friendly way; and so now, will you come?"

"St. George is positively coming?"

"O yes! positively; don't be afraid of his gaining ground on the little Violet in your absence."

"Well, then, my dear Von Konigstein, I will come."

"Well, that's yourself again. It made me quite unhappy to see you look so sour and melancholy; one would have thought that I was some troublesome bore, Prince Salvinski at least, by the way you spoke to me. Well, mind you come—it's a promise:—good. I must go and say just one word to the lovely little Saxon, and, by-the-by, Grey, one word before I'm off. List to a friend, you're on the wrong scent about Miss Fane; St. George, I think, has no chance there, and now no wish to succeed. The game's your own, if you like; trust my word, she's an angel. The good powers prosper you!" so saying the baron ran off.

Mr. St. George had danced with Miss Fane the only quadrille in which Lady Madeleine allowed her to join. He was now waltzing with Aurelia Fitzloom, and was at the head of a band of adventurous votaries of Terpsichore; who, wearied with the commonplace convenience of a saloon, had ventured to invoke the muse on the lawn.

"A most interesting sight, Lady Madeleine Trevor!" said Mr. Fitzloom, as he offered his arm to her ladyship, and advised her instant presence as patrons of the "*Fête du village*," for such Baron von Konigstein had most happily termed it. "A delightful man that Baron von Konigstein, and says such delightful things! *Fête du village!* how very good!"

"That is Miss Fitzloom, then, whom my brother is waltzing with!" asked Lady Madeleine, in her usual kind tone.

"Not exactly, my Lady Madeleine," said Mr. Fitzloom, "not exactly *Miss* Fitzloom, rather *Miss* Aurelia Fitzloom, my third daughter; *our third eldest*, as Mrs. Fitzloom sometimes says; for re

ally it is necessary to distinguish, with such a family as ours, you know, my Lady Madeleine!"

"But don't you think, Mr. Fitzloom, that your *third* daughter is a sufficiently definite description?" asked her ladyship.

"Why, you know, my Lady Madeleine, there *might* be a mistake. There's the third youngest! and if one say the *third* merely, why, as Mrs. Fitzloom sometimes says, the question is, *which is which?*"

"That view of the case, I confess, did not strike me before."

"Mr. Grey," said Miss Fane, for she was now leaning upon his arm; "have you any objection to walk up and down the terrace? the evening is deliciously soft, but even with the protection of a cachemere I scarcely dare venture to stand still. Lady Madeleine seems very much engaged at present. What amusing people these Fitzlooms are!"

"Mrs. Fitzloom; I've not heard her voice yet."

"No; Mrs. Fitzloom does not talk. St. George says she makes it a rule never to speak in the presence of a stranger. She deals plenteously, however, at home, in domestic apothegms. If you could but hear him imitating them all! Whenever she does speak, she finishes all her sentences by confessing that she is conscious of her own deficiencies; but that she has taken care to give her daughters the very best education. They are what St. George calls fine dashing girls, and I'm very glad he's made friends with them; for, after all, he must find it rather dull here. By-the-by, Mr. Grey, I'm afraid that you can't find this evening very amusing; the absence of a favourite pursuit always makes a sensible void; and these walls must remind you of more piquant pleasures than waltzing with fine London ladies, or promenading up a dull terrace with an invalid."

"Miss Fane, I fear that you are a bitter satirist; but I assure you that you are quite misinformed as to the mode in which I generally pass my evenings."

"I hope, I am, Mr. Grey!" said Miss Fane, in rather a serious tone; "I wish I could also be mistaken in my suspicions of the mode in which St. George spends his time. He's sadly changed. For the first month that we were here, he seemed to prefer nothing in the world to our society, and now—I was nearly saying that we had not seen him for one single evening these three weeks. I cannot understand what you find at this house of such absorbing interest. Although I know you think I am much mistaken in my suspicions, still I feel very anxious, very anxious indeed. I spoke to St. George to-day, but he scarcely answered me; or said that which it was a pleasure for me to forget."

"Mr. St. George should feel highly gratified in having excited such an interest in the—mind of Miss Fane."

"He cannot—he should not feel more gratified than all who are my friends; for all who are such, I must ever experience the liveliest interest."

"How happy must those be who feel that they have a right to count Miss Fane among their friends?"

"I have the pleasure then, I assure you, of making many happy, and among them, Mr. Grey."

Vivian was surprised that he did not utter some usual complimentary answer; but he knew not

why the words stuck in his throat; and, instead of speaking, he was thinking of what had been spoken. In a second he had mentally repeated Miss Fane's answer a thousand times—it rang in his ears—it thrilled his blood. In another moment he was ashamed of being such a fool.

"How brilliant are these gardens!" said Vivian, looking at the sky.

"Very brilliant!" said Violet Fane, looking on the ground. Conversation seemed nearly extinct, and yet neither offered to turn back.

"Good heavens! you are ill, Miss Fane," suddenly exclaimed Vivian, when, on accidentally turning to his companion, he found she was in tears. "Shall we go back, or will you wait here!—Can I fetch any thing?—I fear you are very ill!"

"No, no! not very ill, but very foolish; let us walk on, Mr. Grey, walk on—walk on." Here Vivian thought that she was going into hysterics; but heaving a deep sigh, she seemed suddenly to recover.

"I am ashamed, Mr. Grey, of myself—this trouble, this foolishness—what can you think? but I am so agitated, so nervous—I hope you'll forget—I hope—"

"Perhaps the air has suddenly affected you—had we not better go in?—Pray, pray, compose yourself. I trust that nothing I have said—that nothing has happened—that no one has dared to say, or do, any thing to offend you—to annoy you! Speak, pray, speak, Miss Fane—dear Miss Fane, the—the—"—the words died on Vivian's lips, yet a power he could not withstand urged him to speak—"the—the—the baron?"

"O!" almost shrieked Miss Fane—"No, no, stop one second—let me compose myself—an effort, and I must be well—nothing, nothing has happened, and no one has done or said any thing; but it is of something that should be said—of something that should be done, that I was thinking, and it overcame me."

"Miss Fane," said Vivian, "if there be any service which I can do—any advice which I can give—any possible way that I can exert myself for you, O, speak!—O, speak—speak with the most perfect confidence—with firmness—with courage; do not fear that your motives will be misconceived—that your purpose will be misinterpreted—that your confidence will be misunderstood. You are addressing one who would lay down his own life for you—who is willing to perform all your commands, and forget them when performed. I beseech you to trust me—believe me that you shall not repent."

She answered not, but holding down her head, covered her face with her small white hand; her lovely face which was crimsoned with her flashing blood. They were now at the end of the terrace—to return was impossible. If they remained stationary, they must be perceived and joined. What was to be done! O moment of agony!—He led her down a solitary walk still further from the house. As they proceeded in silence, the bursts of the music, and the loud laughter of the joyous guests became fainter and fainter, till at last the sounds died away into echo—and echo into silence.

A thousand thoughts dashed through Vivian's mind in rapid succession; but a painful one to him, to any man,—always remained the last. His companion would not speak; yet to allow her to

return home without freeing her mind of the burthen, the fearful burthen, which evidently overwhelmed it, was impossible. At length he broke a silence which seemed to have lasted an age.

"Miss Fane, do not believe for an instant that I am taking advantage of an agitated moment, to extract from you a confidence which you may repent. I feel assured that I am right in supposing that you have contemplated in a calmer moment the possibility of my being of service to you; that, in short, there is something in which you require my assistance, my co-operation—an assistance, Miss Fane, a co-operation, which, if it produce any benefit to you, will make me at length feel that I have not lived in vain. I cannot, I cannot allow any feelings of false delicacy to prevent me from assisting you in giving utterance to thoughts, which you have owned it is absolutely necessary should be expressed. Remember, remember that you have allowed me to believe that we are friends: do not, do not prove by your silence, that we are friends only in name."

"I am overwhelmed—I cannot speak—my face burns with shame; I have miscalculated my strength of mind—perhaps my physical strength; what, what must you think of me?" She spoke in a low and smothered voice.

"Think of you, Miss Fane! every thing which the most devoted respect dare think of an object which it reverences. O! understand me; do not believe that I am one who would presume an instant on my situation—because I have accidentally witnessed a young and lovely woman betrayed into a display of feeling which the artificial forms of cold society cannot contemplate, and dare to ridicule. You are speaking to one who also has felt; who, though a man, has wept; who can comprehend sorrow; who can understand the most secret sensations of an agitated spirit. Dare to trust me. Be convinced that hereafter, neither by word, nor look, hint, nor sign on my part, shall you feel, save by your own wish, that you have appeared to Vivian Grey in any other light than as the accomplished Miss Fane, the idol of an admiring circle."

"You are too, too good—generous, generous man, I dare trust any thing to you that I dare trust to human being; but—" here her voice died away.

"Miss Fane, it is a painful, a most painful thing for me to attempt to guess your thoughts, to anticipate your confidence; but, if—if—it be of Mr. St. George that you are thinking, have no fear respecting him—have no fear about his present situation—trust to me that there shall be no anxiety for his future one. I will be his unknown guardian, his unseen friend; the promoter of your wishes, the protector of your—"

"No, no, Mr. Grey," said Miss Fane, with firmness, and looking quickly up, as if her mind were relieved by discovering that all this time Vivian had never imagined she was thinking of him. "No, no, Mr. Grey, you are mistaken; it is not of Mr. St. George, of Mr. St. George only, that I am thinking. I—I—I am much better now; I shall be able in an instant to speak—be able, I trust, to forget how foolish—how very foolish I have been.

"Let us walk on," continued Miss Fane; "let us walk on; we can easily account for our absence if it be remarked; and it is better, much better, that it should be all over: I feel quite well, quite, quite well; and shall be able to speak quite firmly now."

"Do not hurry; compose yourself, I beseech you; there is no fear of our absence being remarked, Lady Madeleine is so surrounded."

"After what has passed, Mr. Grey, it seems ridiculous in me to apologize, as I had intended, for speaking to you on a graver subject than what has generally formed a point of conversation between us. I feared that you might misunderstand the motives which have dictated my conduct: I have attempted not to appear agitated, and I have been overcome. I trust that you will not be offended if I recur to the subject of the New House. Do not believe that I ever would have allowed my fears, my girlish fears, so to have overcome my discretion,—so to have overcome, indeed, all propriety of conduct on my part,—as to have induced me to have sought an interview with you, to moralize to you about your mode of life. No, no, it is not of this that I wish to speak, or rather that I will speak. I will hope, I will pray, that St. George and yourself have never found in that which you have followed as an amusement, the source, the origin, the cause of a single unhappy, or even anxious moment; Mr. Grey, I will believe all this."

"Dearest Miss Fane, believe it, believe it with confidence. Of St. George, I can with sincerity aver, that it is my firm opinion, that far from being involved, his fortune is not in the slightest degree injured. Believe me, I will not attempt to quiet you now, as I would have done at any other time, by telling you that you magnify your fears, and allow your feelings to exaggerate the danger which exists. There has been danger—there is danger;—play, very high, tremendously high play, has been, and is pursued at this New House, but Mr. St. George has never been a loser; and, believe me, if the exertions of man can avail, never shall—never shall, at least, unfairly. Of the other individual, Miss Fane, whom you have honoured by the interest which you have kindly professed in his welfare, allow me to say one word: no one can detest, more thoroughly detest, any practice which exists in this world—Miss Fane cannot detest impurity with a more perfect antipathy—than he does the gaming-table. You know the miserable, but miraculous fortune, which made my first night here notorious. My luck has stuck by me like a curse, and from the customs of society, from which it is impossible to emancipate ourselves; a man in my situation cannot cease to play without incurring a slur upon his reputation. You will smile at the reputation which depends almost upon the commission of a vile folly; we have not time to argue these subtle points at present. It is sufficient for me to say, that I cannot resist this custom without being prepared to chastise the insolence of those who will consequently insult me. In that case, my reputation, already tarnished by the non-commission of a folly, will, according to the customs of society, be utterly ruined, unless it be re-burnished by the commission of a crime. I have no pistol now, Miss Fane, for my fellow-creatures,—my right hand is still red with the blood of my friend. To play, therefore, with me has been a duty: I still win—the duty continues—but, believe me, that I shall never lose; and I look forward, with eagerness to the moment when this thralldom shall cease."

"O! you've made me so happy! I feel so persuaded that you have not deceived me—the tones of your voice, your manner, your expression, con-

vince me that you have been sincere, and that I am happy—happy at least for the present.”

“For ever I trust, Miss Fane.”

“Let me, let me now prevent all future misery—let me speak about that which has long dwelt on my mind like a nightmare—about that which I did fear it was almost too late to speak. Not of your pursuit, Mr. Grey—not even of that fatal and horrid pursuit, do I now think, but of your companion in this amusement, in all amusements—it is he, he that I dread, that I look upon with horror, even to him, I cannot say, with hatred!”

“The baron!” said Vivian, calmly.

“I cannot name him—O! dread him, fear him, avoid him! it is he that I mean, he of whom I thought that you were the victim. Possessing, as he does, all the qualifications which apparently would render a man’s society desirable—you must have been surprised, you must have wondered at our conduct towards him. O! Mr. Grey, when Lady Madeleine turned from him with coolness, when she answered him in tones which to you might have appeared harsh; she behaved to him, in comparison to what is his due, and what we sometimes feel to be our duty, with affection—actually with affection and regard. O! no human being can know what horror is, until he looks upon a fellow-creature with the eyes that I look upon that man.” She leaned upon Vivian’s arm with her whole weight, and even then he thought she must have sunk—neither spoke. How solemn is the silence of sorrow!

“I am overcome,” continued Miss Fane; “the remembrance of what he has done overwhelms me—I cannot speak it—the recollection is death—yet you must know it. That you might know it, I have before attempted. I wished to have spared myself the torture which I now endure. It would perhaps have been more consistent with my dignity, it would perhaps have been more correct, to have been silent—but I felt it—I felt it a duty which I owed to a fellow-creature—and your conduct, your kind, your generous conduct to me this evening, repays me even for all this pain. You must know it, you must know it. I will write—ay! that will do. I will write—I cannot speak now, it is impossible, but beware of him; you, you are so young!”

“I have no words now to thank you, Miss Fane, for this. Had I been the victim of Von Konigstein, I should have been repaid for all my misery by feeling that you regret its infliction; but I trust that I am in no danger;—though young, though very young, I fear that I am one who must not count my time by calendars. I may truly say of myself, ‘an aged interpreter, though young in days.’ Would that I could be deceived! Fear not for your cousin. Trust to one whom you have made think better of this world, and of his fellow-creatures.”

The sound of approaching footsteps, and the light laugh of pleasure, told of some who were wandering like themselves.

“We had better return,” said Miss Fane; “I fear that Lady Madeleine will observe that I look unwell. Some one approaches.—No!—they pass only the top of the walk.” It was St. George and Aurelia Fitzloom.

Quick flew the brilliant hours; and soon the dance was over, and the music mute. Lady Madeleine Trevor and Miss Fane retired long before

the party broke up, and Vivian accompanied them and Mr. Sherborne. He did not return to the gay saloon, but found himself walking in the same gardens, by the side of the same river, lighted by the same moon, and listening to the same nightingale, as on the preceding night. How much had happened to him in the course of one day’s circle! How changed were his feelings; not merely from yesternight, but even from a few hours since. She loved him!—yes, she must love him. All was forgotten: he felt as if his dilated soul despised its frail and impure tenement. Now, indeed, he was in love. The interview with Violet Fane came, after his conversation with Lady Madeleine, like incense after music. Think not that he was fickle, inconstant, capricious: his love for the first had insensibly grown out of his admiration of the other; as a man gazing on a magnificent sunset, remains, when the heavens have ceased to glow, with his eyes fixed on the evening star.

It was late when he retired. As he opened his door he was surprised to find lights in his chamber. The figure of a man appeared seated at the table. It moved—it was Essper George.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE reader will remember that Vivian had agreed to dine, on the day after the fête, with the baron, in his private apartments. This was an arrangement which, in fact, the custom of the house did not permit; but the irregularities of great men who are attended by chasseurs, are occasionally winked at by a supple maître d’hôtel. Vivian had various reasons for regretting his acceptance of the invitation; and he never shook hands with the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, apparently with greater cordiality, than on the day on which he met him at dinner at the Baron von Konigstein’s. Mr. St. George had not arrived.

“Past five!” said his excellency; “riding out, I suppose, with the Fitzlooms. Aurelia is certainly a fine girl; but I should think that Lady Madeleine would hardly approve the connexion. The St. Georges have blood in their veins; and would, I suppose, as soon think of marrying a Fitzloom, as we Germans should of marrying a woman without a *von* before her name. We’re quite alone, Grey, only the chevalier and St. George. I had an idea of asking Salvinski; but he is such a regular steam engine, and began such a long story last night about his interview with the king of Ashantee, that the bare possibility of his taking it into his head to finish it to-day, frightened me. You were away early from the archduke’s last night. The business went off well.”

“Very well, indeed!” said the Chevalier de Bœffleurs; completing by this speech the first dozen of words which he had uttered since his stay at Ems.

“I think that last night Lady Madeleine Trevor looked perfectly magnificent; and a certain lady too, Grey, eh!—Here’s St. George. My dear fellow, how are you! Has the fair Aurelia recovered from the last night’s fatigues? All in that quarter goes on quite well, I hope. Now, Ernstorff,—dinner, soon as possible.”

The baron made up to-day, certainly, for the

silence of his friend, the chevalier. Story after story, adventure after adventure, followed each other with the most exciting haste. In fact, the baron never ceased talking the whole dinner, except when he refreshed himself with wine, which he drank copiously. A nice observer would perhaps have considered the baron's high spirit artificial, and his conversation an effort. Yet his excellency's temper, though lively, was generally equable; and his ideas, which always appeared to occur easily, were usually thrown out in fluent phraseology. The dinner was long, and a great deal of wine was drunk; more, much more, than most of the parties present for a long time had been accustomed to. About eight o'clock the chevalier proposed going to the Redoute, but the baron objected.

"Let's have an evening altogether: surely we've had enough of the Redoute. In my opinion one of the advantages of the fête is, that there is no New House to-night. Conversation is a novelty. On a moderate calculation, I must have told you to-day at least two thousand original anecdotes. I've done my duty. It's the chevalier's turn now. Come, De Bœffleurs—a choice one."

"I remember a story Prince Salvinski once told me."

"No, no—that's too bad—none of that Polish bear's romance; if we have his stories, we may as well have his company."

"But it's a very curious story," continued the chevalier, with a little animation.

"O! so is every story according to the storier."

"I think, Von Konigstein, you imagine no one can tell a story but yourself," said De Bœffleurs, actually indignant. Vivian had never heard him speak so much before, and really began to believe that he was not quite an automaton.

"Let's have it!" said St. George.

"It's a story told of a Polish nobleman—a count somebody:—I never can remember their crack-jaw names! Well! the point is this," said the silent little chevalier, who apparently already repented of the boldness of his offer, and, misdoubting his powers, wished to begin with the end of his tale: "the point is this—he was playing one day at *écarté* with the Governor of Wilna—the stake was trifling; but he had a bet, you see with the governor, of a thousand rubles; a bet with the governor's secretary—never mind the amount, say two hundred and fifty, you see; then, he went on the turn-up with the commandant's wife; and took the pips on the trumps with the Archbishop of Warsaw. To understand the point of the story, you see, you must have a distinct conception how the game stood. You see, St. George, there was the bet with the governor, one thousand rubles; the governor's secretary—never mind the amount, say two hundred and fifty; the turn-up with the commandant's lady, and the pips with the Archbishop of Warsaw. Proposed three times—one for the king—the governor drew ace—the governor was already three and the ten. When the governor scored king, the archbishop gave the odds—drew knave queen one hand—the count offered to propose fourth time—governor refused. King to six, ace fell to knave—queen cleared on—governor lost, besides bets with the whole *etat-major*; the secretary gave his bill; the commandant's lady pawned her jewels; and the archbishop was done on the pips!"

"By Jove, what a Salvinski!"

"How many trumps had the governor?" asked St. George.

"Three," said the chevalier.

"Then it's impossible: I don't believe the story; it couldn't be."

"I beg your pardon," said the chevalier; "you see the governor had—"

"For heaven's sake, don't let us have it all over again!" said the baron. "Well! if this be your model for an after-dinner anecdote, which ought to be as piquant as an anchovy toast, I'll never complain of your silence in future. I'm sure you never learned this in the Palais-Royal!"

"The story's a true story," said the chevalier, "have you got a pack of cards, Von Konigstein? I'll show it you."

"There is not such a thing in the room," said the baron.

"Well, I never heard of a room without a pack of cards before," said the chevalier; "I'll send for one to my own apartments."

"O! by-the-by, perhaps Ernstorff has got a pack. Here, Ernstorff, have you got a pack of cards? That's good; bring it immediately."

The cards were brought, and the chevalier began to fight his battle over again; but could not satisfy Mr. St. George. "You see there was the bet with the governor, and the pips, as I said before, with the Archbishop of Warsaw."

"My dear De Bœffleurs, let's no more of this. If you like to have a game of *écarté* with St. George, well and good; but as for quarrelling the whole evening about some blundering lie of Salvinski's, it really is too much. You two can play, and I can talk to Don Vivian, who, by-the-by, is rather of the rueful countenance to-night. Why, my dear fellow, I haven't heard your voice this evening:—frightened by the fate of the Archbishop of Warsaw, I suppose!"

"*Écarté* is so devilish dull," said St. George: "and it's such a trouble to deal."

"I'll deal for both, if you like," said De Bœffleurs; "I'm used to dealing."

"O! no—I won't play *écarté*; let's have something in which we can all join."

"Rouge-et-noir," suggested the chevalier, in a careless tone, as if he had no taste for the amusement.

"There isn't enough—is there?" asked St. George.

"O! two are enough, you know—one deals,—much more four."

"Well, I don't care—rouge-et-noir then—let's have rouge-et-noir:—Von Konigstein, what say you to rouge-et-noir? De Bœffleurs says we can play it here very well. Come, Grey!"

"O! rouge-et-noir, rouge-et-noir," said the baron; "haven't you both had rouge-et-noir enough? A'n't I to be allowed one holiday! Well, any thing to please you; so rouge-et-noir, if it must be so."

"If all wish it, I have no objection," said Vivian.

"Well, then, let's sit down; Ernstorff has, I dare say, another pack of cards, and St. George will be dealer, I know he likes that ceremony."

"No, no, I appoint the chevalier."

"Very well," said De Bœffleurs; "the plan will be for two to bank against the table; the table to play on the same colour by joint agreement. You can join me, Von Konigstein, and pay or receive with me, from Mr. St. George and Grey."

"I'll bank with you, if you like, chevalier," said Vivian, very quietly.

"O! certainly, Mr. Grey—certainly, Grey—most certainly; that is, if you like:—but perhaps the baron is more used to banking; you perhaps don't understand it."

"Perfectly; it appears to me to be very simple."

"No—don't you bank, Grey," said St. George; "I want you to play with me against the chevalier and the baron—I like your luck."

"Luck is very capricious, remember, Mr. St. George."

"O, no! I like your luck; I like your luck—don't bank."

"Be it so."

Playing commenced: an hour elapsed, and the situation of none of the parties was materially different to what it had been when they began the game. Vivian proposed leaving off; but Mr. St. George avowed that he felt very fortunate, and that he had a presentiment that he should win. Another hour elapsed, and he had lost considerably.—Eleven o'clock.—Vivian's luck had also deserted him. Mr. St. George was losing desperately.—Midnight.—Vivian had lost back half his gains on the season. St. George still more desperate; all his coolness had deserted him. He had persisted obstinately against the run on the red; then floundered, and got entangled in a see-saw, which alone cost him a thousand.

Ernstorf now brought in refreshments; and for a moment they ceased playing. The baron opened a bottle of champagne; and St. George and the chevalier were stretching their legs and composing their minds in very different ways—the first in walking rapidly up and down the room, and the other by lying very quietly at his full length on the sofa. Vivian was employed in building houses with the cards.

"Grey," said the Chevalier de Bœffleurs, "I can't imagine why you don't for a moment try to forget the cards; that's the only way to win. Never sit musing over the table."

But Grey was not to be persuaded to give up building his pagoda; which, now many stories high, like a more celebrated, but scarcely more substantial structure, fell with a crash. Vivian collected the scattered cards into two divisions.

"Now!" said the baron, seating himself, "for St. George's revenge."

The chevalier and the greatest sufferer took their places.

"Is Ernstorf coming in again, baron?" asked Vivian, very calmly.

"No! I think not."

"Let us be sure: it's disagreeable to be disturbed at this time of night, and so interested as we are."

"Lock the door, then;" said St. George.

"A very good plan," said Vivian; and he locked it accordingly.

"Now, gentlemen," said Vivian, rising from the table, and putting both packs of cards into his pocket—"Now, gentlemen, I have another game to play." The chevalier started on his chair—the baron turned quite pale, but both were silent. "Mr. St. George," continued Vivian, "I think that you are in debt to the Chevalier de Bœffleurs upwards of two thousand pounds; and to Baron von Königstein, something more than half that sum. I have to inform you, sir, that it is utterly unnes-

sary for you to satisfy the claims of either of these gentlemen, which are founded neither in law, nor in honour."

"Mr. Grey, what am I to understand?" asked the quiet Chevalier de Bœffleurs, with the air of a wolf, and the voice of a lion.

"Understand, sir!" answered Vivian, sternly; "that I am not one who will be bullied by a black-leg."

"Grey! good God! Grey! what do you mean?" asked the baron.

"That which it is my duty, not my pleasure, to explain, Baron von Königstein."

"If you mean to insinuate," burst forth the chevalier, "if you mean to insinuate—"

"I mean to insinuate nothing, sir; I leave insinuations and innuendoes to shuffling *chevaliers d'industrie*. I mean to prove every thing."

Mr. St. George did not speak, but seemed as utterly astounded and overwhelmed as Baron von Königstein himself; who, with his arm leaning on the table, his hands clasped, and the forefinger of his right hand playing convulsively on his left, was pale as death, and did not even breathe.

"Gentlemen," said Vivian, "I shall not detain you long, though I have much to say that is to the purpose. I am perfectly cool, and believe me perfectly resolute. Let me recommend to you all the same temperament—it may be better for you. Rest assured, that if you flatter yourselves that I am one to be pigeoned, and then bullied, you are mistaken. In one word, I am aware of every thing that has been arranged for the reception of Mr. St. George and myself this evening. Your marked cards are in my pocket, and can only be obtained by you with my life. Here are two of us against two; we are equally matched in number, and I, gentlemen, am armed. If I were not, you would not dare to go to extremities. Is it not, then, the wisest course to be temperate, my friends?"

"This is some vile conspiracy of your own, fellow," said De Bœffleurs; "marked cards indeed! a pretty tale, forsooth! The ministers of a first-rate power playing with marked cards! The story will gain credit, and on the faith of whom! An adventurer that no one knows; who, having failed this night in his usual tricks, and lost money which he cannot pay, takes advantage of the marked cards, which he has not succeeded in introducing, and pretends, forsooth, that they are those which he has stolen from our table; our own cards being, previously to his accusation, concealed in a secret pocket."

The impudence of the fellow staggered even Vivian. As for Mr. St. George, he stared like a wild man. Before Vivian could answer him, the baron had broke silence. It was with the greatest effort that he seemed to dig his words out of his breast.

"No—no—this is too much! it is all over! I am lost; but I will not add crime to crime. Your courage and your fortune have saved you, Mr. Grey, and your friend, from the designs of villains. And you! wretch, said he, turning to De Bœffleurs, sleep now in peace; at length you have undone me." He leaned on the table, and buried his face in his hands.

"Chicken-hearted fool!" said the chevalier, "is this the end of all your promises, and all your pledges! But remember, sir! remember. I have no taste for scenes. Good night, gentlemen. Baron, I expect to hear from you."

"Stop, sir!" said Vivian; "no one leaves this room without my permission."

"I am at your service, sir, when you please," said the chevalier, throwing down his card.

"It is not my intention to detain you long, sir; far from it; I have every inclination to assist you in your last exit from this room, had I time, it should not be by the door; as it is, go! in the devil's name." So saying, he hurled the adventurous Frenchman half down the corridor.

"Baron von Konigstein," said Vivian, turning to the baron; "you have proved yourself, by your conduct this evening, to be a better man than I imagined you. I confess that I thought you had been too much accustomed to scenes, to be sensible of the horror of detection."

"Never!" said the baron, with emphasis, with energy. The firm voice and manner in which he pronounced this single word, wonderfully contrasted with his delivery when he had last spoken, but his voice immediately died away.

"'Tis all over! 'tis all over! I have no wish to excite your pity, gentlemen, or gain your silence, by practising upon your feelings. Be silent; I am not the less ruined; not the less disgraced; not the less utterly undone. Be silent; my honour, all the same in four and twenty hours, has gone for ever: I have no motive then to deceive you. You must believe what I speak; even what I speak, the most degraded, the vilest of men. I say again, never, never, never, never, never was my honour before sullied, though guilty of a thousand follies. You see before you, gentlemen, the unhappy victim of circumstances; of circumstances which he has in vain struggled to control; to which he has at length fallen a victim. I am not pretending, for a moment, that my crimes are to be accounted for by an inexorable fate, and not to be expiated by my everlasting misery: No, no! I have been too weak to be virtuous; but I have been tried; tried most bitterly. I am the most unfortunate of men; I was not born to be a villain. Four years have passed since I was banished from the country in which I was honoured; my prospects in life blasted; my peace of mind destroyed; and all because a crime was committed, of any participation in which I am as innocent as yourselves. Driven in despair to wander, I tried, in the wild dissipation of Naples, to forget my existence and my misery. I found my fate in the person of this vile Frenchman, who never since has quitted me. Even after two years of madness in that fatal place, my natural disposition rallied; I struggled to save myself; I quitted it. I was already involved to De Bœffleurs; I became still more so, in gaining from him the means of satisfying all claims against me. Alas! I found I had sold myself to a scoundrel; a most unadulterated villain; a devil, a very devil; with a heart like an adder's. Incapable of a stray generous sensation, he has looked upon mankind during his whole life, with the eyes of a bully of a gaming-house. I still struggled to free myself from this man; and I indemnified him for his advances, by procuring him a place in the mission to which, with the greatest difficulty and perseverance, I had at length procured my appointment. In public life I yet hoped to forget my private misery. At Frankfort I felt, that though not happy, I might be calm. I determined never again even to run the risk of enduring the slavery of debt. I forswore, with the most solemn oaths, the gaming-table; and had it

not been for the perpetual sight of De Bœffleurs, I might, perhaps, have felt at ease; though the remembrance of my blighted prospects, the eternal feeling that I experienced of being born for noble ends, was quite sufficient perpetually to embitter my existence. The second year of my Frankfort appointment, I was tempted to this unhappy place. The unexpected sight of faces which I had known in England, though they called up the most painful associations, strengthened me, nevertheless, in my resolution to be virtuous. My unexpected, my extraordinary fortune at the Redoute, the first night, made me forget all my resolves, and has led to all this misery. I make my sad tale brief. I got involved at the New House: De Bœffleurs once more assisted me; though his terms were most severe. Yet, yet again, I was mad enough, vile enough, to risk what I did not possess. I lost to Prince Salvinski and a Russian gentleman, a considerable sum on the night before the *fete*. It is often the custom of the New House, as you know, among men who are acquainted, to pay and receive all losses which are considerable on the next night of meeting. The *fete* gave me breathing time: it was not necessary to redeem my pledge till the fourth night. I rushed to De Bœffleurs; he refused to assist me; alleging his own losses, and his previous advance. What was to be done? No possibility of making any arrangement with Salvinski. Had he won of me as others have done, an arrangement, though painful, would perhaps have been possible; but, by a singular fate, whenever I have chanced to be successful, it is of this man that I have won. De Bœffleurs then was the only chance. He was inexorable. I prayed to him; I promised him every thing; I offered him any terms; I besought him on my knees;—in vain! in vain! At length, when he had worked me up to the point of last despair, he whispered *hope*. I listened,—let me be quick!—why finish—why finish; you know I fell!" The baron again covered his face, and appeared perfectly overwhelmed.

"By God! it's too horrible," said St. George "Grey, let's do something for him?"

"My dear St. George," said Vivian, "be calm—you are taken by surprise: I was prepared for all this. Believe me, it is better for you to leave us. If, on consideration, we think that any thing,—any real benefit can be done to this unhappy gentleman, I am sure that we shall not be backward. But I cannot permit your generous feelings to be taken advantage of by a gamester—a madman, who, if freed from his present difficulties this moment, will commit the same follies and the same crimes to-morrow. I recommend you to retire, and meet me in the morning; breakfast with me at eight, we can then arrange every thing."

Vivian's conduct had been so decisive, and evidently so well matured, that St. George felt, that in the present case it was for him only to obey; and squeezing Vivian's hand very warmly, he retired, with wonder still expressed on his countenance; for he had not yet, in the slightest degree, recovered from the first surprise.

"Baron von Konigstein," said Vivian to the unhappy man, "we are alone. Mr. St. George has left the room; you are freed from the painful presence of the cousin of Captain Fane."

"You know all, then!" exclaimed the baron, quickly looking up; "or you have read my secret thoughts. How wonderful! at that very moment

I was thinking of my friend. Would I had died with him! You know all, then; and now—now you must believe me guilty. Yet, Mr. Grey, at this moment—at this moment of deepest affliction, of annihilating sorrow; when I can gain nothing by deceit; when, whatever may have been my loose expressions in a lighter hour, I am thinking of another world: I swear—and if I swear falsely, may I fall down a livid corpse at your feet,—I swear that I was guiltless of the crime for which I suffered, guiltless as yourself. Dare I ask if you believe me?"

He awaited Vivian's answer with the most eager anxiety; his mouth was open; his eyes half started from their sockets; had his life or reputation depended upon the answer, he could not have gaped with more convulsive agony.

"I do believe you."

"Then God be thanked! I owe you the greatest favour that I yet owe human being. What may be my fate—my end—I know not. Probably a few hours, and all will be over. Yet, before we part, sir, it would be a relief; you would be doing a kind and Christian service to a dying man, to bear a message from me to one with whom you are acquainted—to one whom I cannot now name."

"Lady Madeleine Trevor, sir!"

"Again you have read my thoughts! Lady Madeleine!—is it she who told you of my early history? Answer me, I beseech you."

"I cannot answer. All that I know is known to many."

"I must speak! if you have time, Mr. Grey, if you can listen for half an hour to a miserable being, it would be a consolation to me. I should die with ease, if I thought that Lady Madeleine could believe me innocent of that first great offence."

"Your excellency may address any thing to me, if it be your wish, even at this hour of the night. It may be better; after what has passed, we neither of us can sleep, and this business must be arranged at once."

"My object, Mr. Grey, is, that Lady Madeleine shall receive from me at this moment, at a time when I can have no interest to deceive, an account of the particulars of her cousin's, and my friend's death. I sent it written after the horrid event, but she was ill; and Trevor, who was very bitter against me, returned the letters unopened. For four years, I have never travelled without these rejected letters; this year I have them not. But you could convey to Lady Madeleine my story as now given to you; to you at this horrid moment. For God's sake do, sir, I beseech you!"

"Speak on, speak on!"

"I must say one word of my connexion with the family, to enable you fully to understand the horrid event, of which, if, as I believe, you only know what all know, you can form but a most imperfect conception. When I was minister at the court of London, I became acquainted—became, indeed, intimate with Mr. Trevor, then in office, the husband of Lady Madeleine. Her ladyship was just married. Trevor was an able and honourable man, but advanced in years; had he been younger, he was not the man to have riveted the affections of any woman. As it was, his marriage was a mere political match. I will not stop now to moralize on these unhappy connections, in which the affections on neither side are consulted; but assuredly, in the present instance, Trevor had

been more cautious in securing the boroughs of the earl, than the heart of the earl's daughter. I saw all this, Mr. Grey; I, still young, and with such blood flowing in my veins, that the youth of common men was actually old age in comparison with my sensations: I saw all this in the possession of all those accomplishments and qualities, which, according to the world, work such marvels with women. I saw all this, Mr. Grey: I, a libertine by principle. Of Lady Madeleine's beauty, of her soul, I need not speak. You have the happiness of being the friend of that matchless creature. Of myself, at that time, I may say, that though de-praved, I was not heartless; and that there were moments when I panted to be excellent. Lady Madeleine and myself became friends: she found in me a companion, who not only respected her talents, and delighted in her conversation, but one who in return was capable of instructing, and was overjoyed to amuse her. I loved her; but when I loved her, sir, I ceased to be a libertine. At first I thought that nothing in the world could have tempted me to have allowed her for an instant to imagine that I dared to look upon her in any other light than as a friend; but the negligence, the coldness of Trevor, the overpowering mastery of my own passions, drove me one day past the line, and I wrote that which I dared not utter. But understand me, sir; it was no common, no usual letter that I wrote. It never entered into my mind for an instant to insult such a woman with the commonplace sophistry—the disguised sentiments of a ribald. No! no! I loved Lady Madeleine with all my spirit's strength. I would have sacrificed all my virtues in life—my ambition—my family—my fortune—my country, to have gained her; and I told her this in terms of the most respectful admiration. I worshipped the divinity, even while I attempted to profane the altar. Sir, when I had sent this letter, I was in despair. Conviction of the perfect insanity of my conduct flashed across my mind. I expected never to see her again. There came an answer; I opened it with the greatest agitation; to my surprise—an appointment. Why, why trouble you with a detail of my feelings at this moment—my mad hope—my dark despair! The moment for the interview arrived. I was received neither with affection, nor anger. In sorrow, in sorrow she spoke. I listened in despair. I was more madly in love with her than ever. That very love made me give her such evidences of a contrite spirit, that I was pardoned. I rose with a resolution to be virtuous—with a determination to be her friend; then, then I made the fatal promise which you know of—to be doubly the friend of a man, whose friend I already was; it was then that I pledged myself to Lady Madeleine to be the guardian spirit of her cousin."—Here the baron was so overpowered by his emotions that he leaned back in his chair, and ceased to speak. In a few minutes he resumed.

"Mr. Grey, I did my duty; by all that's sacred I did my duty! night, and day, I was with young Fane. A thousand times he was on the brink of ruin—a thousand times I saved him. One day—one never to be forgotten day,—one most dark and damnable day, I called on him, and found him on the point of joining a coterie of the most desperate character. I remonstrated with him;—I entreated;—I supplicated him not to go—in vain. At last, he agreed to forego his engagement, on condition

that I dined with him. There were reasons that day of importance for my not staying with him; yet every consideration vanished, when I thought of her for whom I was exerting myself. I stayed with him. Fane was frantic this day; and, imagining, of course, that there was no chance of his leaving his home, I did not refuse to drink freely—to drink deeply! My doing so was the only chance of keeping him at home. On a sudden he started up, and would quit the house. My utmost exertions could not prevent him. At last I prevailed upon him to call upon the Trevors, as I thought that there, at least, he would be safe. He agreed. As we were passing down Pall Mall, we met two foreigners of distinction, and a noble of your country; they were men of whom we both knew little. I had myself introduced Fane to the foreigners a few days before, being aware that they were men of high rank. After some conversation, they asked us to join them at supper, at the house of their English friend. I declined; but nothing could induce Fane to refuse them; and I finally accompanied him. Play was introduced after supper; I made an ineffectual struggle to get Fane home; but I was too full of wine to be energetic. After losing a small sum, I got up from the table, and staggering to a sofa, fell fast asleep. Even as I passed Fane's chair in this condition, my master-thought was evident, and I pulled him by the shoulder; all was useless,—I woke to madness!"—It was terrible to witness the anguish of Von Konigstein.

"Could you not clear yourself?" asked Vivian, for he felt it necessary to speak.

"Clear myself! Every thing told against me. The villains were my friends, not the sufferers; I was not injured; my dining with him was part of the conspiracy; he was intoxicated previous to his ruin. Conscious of my innocence, quite desperate, but confiding in my character, I accused the guilty trio, publicly accused them; they recriminated, and answered; and without clearing themselves, convinced the public that I was their dissatisfied and disappointed tool. I can speak no more." Here the head of the unhappy man sunk down upon his breast. His sad tale was told; the excitement was over; he now only felt his despair.

It is awful to witness sudden death; but, O! how much more awful is it to witness in a moment the moral fall of a fellow-creature! How tremendous is the quick succession of mastering passions! The firm, the terrifically firm, the madly resolute denial of guilt; that eagerness of protestation, which is a sure sign of crime; then the agonizing suspense before the threatened proof is produced—the hell of detection!—the audible anguish of sorrow—the curses of remorse—the silence of despair! Few of us, unfortunately, have passed through life without having beheld some instance of this instantaneous degradation of human nature. But O! how terrible is it when the confessed criminal has been but a moment before our friend. What a contrast to the laugh of joyous companionship is the quivering tear of an agonized frame! how terrible to be prayed to by those whose wishes a moment before we lived only to anticipate!

And bitter as might have been the feelings, and racked as might have been the heart of Von Konigstein, he could not have felt more at this moment—more exquisite anguish—deeper remorse—than did Vivian Grey. Openly to have disgraced

this man! How he had been deceived! His first crime—the first crime of such a being; of one who had suffered so much—so unjustly! Could he but have guessed the truth, he would have accused the baron in private—have awakened him to the enormity of his contemplated crime—have saved him from its perpetration—have saved him from the perpetration of any other. But he had imagined him to be a systematic, a heartless villain—and he looked forward to this night to avenge the memory of—of the brother of her that he loved.

"Von Konigstein," said Vivian, after a long silence; "I feel for you. Had I known this, believe me, that I would have spared both you and myself this night of misery. I would have prevented you from looking back to this day with remorse. I am not one who delights in witnessing the misery or degradation of my species. Do not despair; you have suffered for that of which you were not guilty; you must not suffer now for what has passed. Much, much would I give to see you freed from that wretched knave, whose vile career I was very nearly tempted this evening to have terminated forever. To Lady Madeleine I shall make the communication you desire, and I will answer for her ladyship that your communication will be credited. Let this give you hope. As to the transactions of this evening, the knowledge of them can never transpire to the world. It is the interest of De Bœffleurs to be silent: if he speak, no one will credit the tale of such a creature, who, if he speak the truth, must proclaim his own infamy. For the perfect silence of the Trevor party, I pledge myself. They have done you too much injustice not to hail with pleasure the opportunity of making you some atonement. And now for the immediate calls upon your honour:—in what sum are you indebted to Prince Salvinski and his friend?"

"Thousands!—two—three thousand!"

"I shall then have an opportunity of ridding myself of that, the acquisition of which to me has been matter of the greatest sorrow. Baron von Konigstein, your honour is saved;—I pledge myself to discharge the claims of Salvinski and his friend."

"Impossible! I cannot allow—"

"Stop, sir!—in this business I must command. I wish not to recur to what has passed—you make me. Surely, there can be no feelings of delicacy between us two now. If I gave you the treasures of the Indies you would not be under so great an obligation to me as you are already:—I say this with pain. I recommend you to leave Ems to-morrow. Public business will easily account for your sudden departure. Let us not meet again. And now, Von Konigstein, your character is yet safe;—you are yet in the prime of life;—you have vindicated yourself from that which has preyed upon your mind for years. Cease to accuse your fate; find the causes of your past misery in your unbridled passions. Restrain them, and be happy!" Vivian was about to leave the room, when the baron started from his seat, and seized his hand; he would have spoken, but the words died upon his lips; and before he could recover himself, Vivian had retired.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE sudden departure of Baron von Konigstein from the Baths excited great surprise and sorrow

All wondered at the cause, and all regretted the effect. The archduke missed his good stories; the rouge-et-noir table, his constant presence; and Monsieur le Restaurateur gave up, in consequence, an embryo idea of a fête and fire-works for his own benefit; which agreeable plan he had trusted, with his excellency's generous co-operation as steward or patron, he should have had no difficulty in carrying into execution. But no one was more surprised, and more regretted the absence of his excellency, than his friend, Mr. Fitzloom. What could be the reason?—Public business, of course. Indeed he had learned as much, confidentially, from Cracowsky. He tried Mr. Grey, but could elicit nothing satisfactory; he pumped Mr. St. George, but produced only the waters of oblivion: Mr. St. George was gifted, when it suited his purpose, with a most convenient want of memory. There must be something in the wind—perhaps a war. Was the independence of Greece about to be acknowledged, or the dependence of Spain about to be terminated? What first-rate power had marched a million of soldiers into the land of a weak neighbour, on the mere pretence of exercising the military? What patriots had had the proud satisfaction of establishing a constitutional government without bloodshed—to be set aside in the course of the next month in the same manner? Had a conspiracy for establishing a republic in Russia been frustrated by the timely information of the intended first consul? Were the janissaries learning mathematics?—or had Lord Cochrane taken Constantinople in the James Watt steam-packet? One of these many events must have happened—but which? At length Fitzloom decided on a general war. England must interfere either to defeat the ambition of France—or to curb the rapacity of Russia—or to check the arrogance of Austria—or to regenerate Spain—or to redeem Greece—or to protect Portugal—or to shield the Brazils—or to uphold the Bible Societies—or to consolidate the Greek Church—or to monopolize the commerce of Mexico—or to disseminate the principles of free trade—or to keep up her high character—or to keep up the price of corn. England must interfere. In spite of his conviction, however, Fitzloom did not alter the arrangements of his tour—he still intended to travel for two years. All he did, was to send immediate orders to his broker in England to sell two millions of consols. The sale was of course effected—the example followed—stocks fell ten per cent. The exchange turned—money became scarce. The public funds of all Europe experienced a great decline—smash went the country banks—consequent runs on the London—a dozen baronets failed in one morning—Portland-place deserted—the cause of infant liberty at a terrific discount—the Greek loan disappeared like a vapour in a storm—all the new American states refused to pay their dividends—manufactories deserted—the revenue in a decline—the country in despair—orders in council—meetings of parliament—change of ministry—and a new loan! Such were the terrific consequences of a diplomatist turning black-leg! This secret history of the late distress is a lesson to all modern statesmen. Rest assured, that in politics, however tremendous the effects, the causes are often as trifling, and sometimes still more despicable.

Vivian found his reception by the Trevor party, the morning after the memorable night, a sufficient

reward for all his anxiety and exertion. St. George, a generous, open-hearted young man, full of gratitude to Vivian, and regretting his previous want of cordiality towards him, now delighted in doing full justice to his coolness, courage, and ability. Lady Madeleine said a great deal in the most graceful and impressive manner; but Violet Fane scarcely spoke. Vivian, however, read in her eyes her approbation and her gratitude. Mr. Sherborne received our hero with a set speech, in the middle of which he broke down; for the old gentleman's stout heart was full; and shaking Vivian warmly by the hand, he gave him, in a manner which affected all present, his blessing—"I knew I was right in my opinion of you; I saw directly you were not a mere young man of the present day—you all see I was right in my opinion; if I hadn't been, I should have owned it—I should have had the candour to acknowledge I was wrong—never ashamed to confess I'm mistaken."

"And now, how came you to discover the whole plot, Mr. Grey?" asked Lady Madeleine, "for we have not yet heard. Was it at the table?"

"They would hardly have had recourse to such clumsy instruments as would have given us the chance of detecting the conspiracy by casual observation. No, no, we owe our preservation and our gratitude to one, whom we must hereafter count among our friends. I was prepared, as I told you, for every thing; and though I had seen similar cards to those with which they played only a few hours before, it was with difficulty that I satisfied myself at the table, that the cards we lost by were prepared; so wonderful is the contrivance!"

"But who is the unknown friend?" said Violet Fane, with eagerness.

"I must have the pleasure of keeping you all in suspense," said Vivian: "cannot any of you guess?"

"None—none—none!"

"What say you then to—Essper George?"

"Impossible!"

"It is the fact, that he, and he alone, is our preserver. Soon after my arrival at this place, this singular being was seized with the unaccountable fancy of becoming my servant. You all remember his unexpected appearance one day in the saloon. In the evening of the same day, I found him sleeping at the door of my room; and thinking it high time that he should be taught more discretion, I spoke to him very seriously the next morning respecting his troublesome and eccentric conduct. It was then that I learned his wish. I objected, of course, to engaging a servant of whose previous character I was ignorant, and of which I could not be informed; and one whose peculiar habits would render both himself and his master notorious. While I declined his services, I also advised him most warmly to give up all idea of deserting his present mode of life, for which I thought him extremely well suited. The consequence of my lecture was, what you all perceived with surprise, a great change in Essper's character. He became serious, reserved, and retiring; and commenced his career as a respectable character, by throwing off his quaint costume. In a short time, by dint of making a few bad bargains, he ingratiated himself with Ernstorf, Von Konigstein's pompous chasseur. His object in forming this connexion, was to gain

an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the duties of a gentleman's servant, and in this he has succeeded. About a week since, he purchased from Ernstorff a large quantity of cast-off apparel of the baron's, and other perquisites of the great man's valet; among these were some playing cards which had been borrowed one evening in great haste from the servant of that rascal, De Bœffleurs, and never returned. On accidentally examining these cards, Essper, to his horror and surprise, detected they were marked. The system on which the marks are formed and understood, is so simple and novel, that it was long before I could bring myself to believe that his suspicions were founded even on a probability. At length, however, he convinced me. It is at Vienna, he tells me, that he has met with these cards before; or with some marked, if not on the same, certainly on a similar principle. The marks are all on the rim of the cards; and an experienced dealer, that is to say, a black-leg, can with these marks produce any results and combinations which may suit his purpose. Essper tells me that De Bœffleurs is even more skilled in slight of hand than himself. From Ernstorff Essper learned on the day of the fête, that Mr. St. George was to dine with the chevalier at the baron's apartments on the morrow, and that there was a chance that I should join them. He suspected that villany was in the wind, and when I retired to my room, at a late hour on the night of the fête, I there met him, and it was then that he revealed to me every thing which I have told you. Am I not right, then, in calling him our preserver?"

"What can be done for him?" said Lady Madeleine.

"His only wish is already granted; he is my servant. That he will serve me diligently, and faithfully, I have no doubt. I only wish that he would accept, or could appreciate a more worthy reward."

"Can man be more amply rewarded," said Miss Fane, "than by choosing his own remuneration? I think he has shown in his request, his accustomed talent. I must go and see him this moment."

"Say nothing of what has passed, he is prepared for silence from all parties."

A week, a happy week passed over, and few minutes of the day found Vivian absent from the side of Violet Fane; and now he thought again of England, of his return to that country under very different circumstances to what he had ever contemplated. Soon, very soon, he trusted to write to his father, to announce to him the revolution in his wishes, the consummation of his hopes. Soon, very soon, he trusted that he should hail his native cliffs, a reclaimed wanderer, with a matured mind, and a contented spirit; his sorrows forgotten, his misanthropy laid aside.

CHAPTER XV.

It was about a week after the departure of the baron, that two young Englishmen, who had been college friends of Mr. St. George, arrived at the baths. These were Mr. Anthony St. Leger, and Mr. Adolphus St. John. In the academic shades

of Christ Church, these three gentlemen had, when youths, succeeded, to the admiring envy of all under graduates, and to the heavy cost both of their purses and their constitutions, in a faint imitation of the second-rate debauchery of a metropolis. At Oxford, that venerable nurse of wit and humour, —where fun, like their sermons, though orthodox, is rather dull,—a really facetious fellow of New College had dubbed these infant libertines "All Saints." Among their youthful companions they bore the more martial style of "The Three Companions," St. George, St. John, and St. Anthony.

St. John and St. Anthony had just completed the grand tour; and after passing the Easter at Rome, had returned through the Tyrol from Italy. Since then they had travelled over most parts of Germany; and now, in the beginning of July, found themselves at the Baths of Ems. Two years' travel had not produced any very beneficial effect on either of these sainted personages. They left the university with empty heads and vitiated minds. A season in London introduced them to the life of which they had previously only read and heard in the accounts of lying novels and the boastings of worn-out roués; and they felt a disgust at their college career, only because they could now compare their former crude dissipation with the resources of the most miraculous of modern cities. Travelling, as they had done, with minds utterly incapable either of observation or reflection, they had gained by visiting the capitals of all Europe, only a due acquaintance with the vices of each; and the only difference that could be observed in their conduct on their return, was, that their affectation was rather more disgusting, because it was more obtrusive. What capital companions for old Sherborne!

"Corpo di Bacco! my champion, who ever thought of meeting thee, thou holy saint! By the eyebrow of Venus, my spirit rejoiceth!" exclaimed St. Anthony, whose peculiar affectation was an adoption in English of the Italian oaths.

"This is the sweetest spot, St. Anthony, that we have found since we left Paradise; that is, St. George, in the vulgar tongue, since we quitted Italia. 'Italia! O, Italia!'—I forget the rest, probably you remember it. Certainly a most sweet spot this, quite a Gaspar."

Art was the peculiar affectation of St. John; he was, indeed, quite a patron of the *belle Arti*—had scattered his orders through the studios of the most celebrated sculptors of Italy, and spoke on all subjects and all things, only with a view to their capability of forming *matériel* for the painter. According to the school of which Mr. St. John was an humble disciple, the only use of the human passions is, that they produce *situations* for the historical painter; and nature, according to these votaries of the *το κκαρ*, is only to be valued as affording hints for the more perfect conceptions of a Claude or a Salvator.

"By the girdle of Venus, a devilish fine woman!" exclaimed St. Anthony.

"A splendid bit!" ejaculated St. John: "touched in with freedom—a grand *tourneur*—great *goût* in the swell of the neck. What a study for Retsch!"

"In the name of the graces, who is it, mio Santo?"

"Ay! name, name *la bellissima signora*."

"The 'fine bit,' St. John, is my sister."

"The devil!"

"*Diavolo!*"

"Will you introduce us, most holy man?"

This request from both, simultaneously arranging their mustachios.

The two saints were accordingly, in due time, introduced; but finding the attention of Violet Fane always engrossed, and receiving some not very encouraging responses from Lady Madeleine, they voted her ladyship cursedly satirical; and passing a general censure on the annoying coldness of English women, they were in four-and-twenty hours attached to the suite of the Miss Fitzlooms, to whom they were introduced by St. George as his most particular friends, and were received with the most flattering consideration.

"By the aspect of Diana! fine girls, and some blood in them!" swore St. Anthony.

"Truly, most gorgeous colouring! quite Venetian! Aurelia is a perfect Giorgione!" said St. John.

"Madeleine," said St. George, one morning to his sister; "have you any objection to make up a party with the Fitzlooms to pass a day at Nassau?—You know we have often talked of it; and as Violet is so well now, and the weather so delightful, there surely can be no objection. The Fitzlooms are very agreeable people; and though you don't admire the Santi, still, upon my word, when you know them a little more, you'll find them very pleasant fellows; and they're extremely good-natured; and just the fellows for such a party; and I'll take care that they don't slang Mr. Sherborne, whom, by-the-by, Mr. St. John very much admires. He says he'd make a grand head for Ludovico Caracci—something very Bolognese in the gray tints of his forehead. Do not give me a refusal! I've set my mind upon your joining the party. Pray nod assent—thank you—thank you. Now I must go and arrange every thing. Let's see—there are seven Fitzlooms; for we can't count on less than two horrid boys; yourself, Mr. Sherborne, Grey, Violet, and myself, five—the Santi—quite enough—quite enough—a most delightful party. Half a dozen servants, and as many donkeys, will manage the provisions. Then three light carriages will take us all. By the wand of Mercury, as St. Anthony would vow, most admirably planned."

"By the breath of Zephyr! a most lovely day, Miss Fane," said St. Anthony, on the morning of the intended excursion.

"Quite a Claude!" said St. John.

"Almost as beautiful as an Italian winter's day, Mr. St. Leger?" asked Miss Fane.

"Hardly! hardly!" said St. Anthony, with a serious air; for he imagined the question to be quite genuine.

"Lady Madeleine, I cannot take my eyes off that venerable countenance!" said St. John, speaking of Mr. Sherborne. "There are some flesh-tints on the higher cheek, which almost make me fancy myself in the gallery at Bologna. He doesn't rouge now, does he? You may speak perfectly in confidence. I assure your ladyship that nothing shall transpire; only I'm very curious to know; such tints I never saw before!"

"Really, Mr. St. John," said her ladyship, smiling; "I regret very much that I am not initiated in the mysteries of Mr. Sherborne's toilet; but my uncle is a very candid man, and I have no doubt he will confess in a minute if he's guilty of making up; suppose you ask him."

"Why, no; at his age, people of his country have odd prejudices. He may not make up; and he might feel a little offended. To say the truth, I think it is *au naturel*. There is a gray tint under the eye, which I don't think that any modern colours could have produced—perfectly Ludovico, perfectly. If he do make up, I should like very much to know where he gets his colour: that's a secret, Lady Madeleine, which seems to be lost forever. I was talking the other day to Benvenuti, the great Florentine painter, about that very point:—'Benvenuti,' said I—a very gentlemanly man is Benvenuti. It has often struck me, I don't know whether it has your ladyship—probably it may have; that all men of genius are very gentlemanly. For instance, take all the artists of ancient and modern times. We know very little of Apelles; yet we do know that he was the intimate friend of Alexander the Great: and all painters who are intimate friends of crowned heads, and who are in the habit of going to court, are, I have remarked, very gentlemanly. Now, for instance, can you possibly meet with a more gentlemanly man than Sir Thomas Lawrence? and Benvenuti, too, as I said before, Benvenuti is a very gentlemanly man. I was saying to him one day, as I mentioned—'*Cavaliero!*'—for I need not tell your ladyship that the great artist has the honour of being a Knight of—"

"Thrice holy man!" hallooed out St. Anthony to St. John;—"thrice holy man! the champion wishes to know whether you have arranged about the malvoisie. Miss Fane has decided for the malvoisie. By the body of Bacchus, a right good liquor!"

"Lady Madeleine, will you excuse the anecdote of Benvenuti at present?—the truth is, I am butler, and your charming conversation is making me, I fear, neglect my duties." So saying, ran off the saint.

The carriages are at the door; into the first ascended Mrs. Fitzloom, two daughters, and the travelling saints. The second bore Lady Madeleine, Mr. Fitzloom, and his two sons; the third division was commanded by Mr. Sherborne, and was formed of St. George and Aurelia Fitzloom, Miss Fane, and Vivian.

Away, away rolled the carriages, the day was beautiful, the sky was without a cloud, and a mild breeze prevented the heat of the sun from being overpowering. All were in high spirits; for St. George had made a capital master of the ceremonies, and had arranged the company in the carriages to their mutual satisfaction. St. Anthony swore, by the soul of Psyche! that Augustus Fitzloom was an angel; and St. John was in equal raptures with Araminta, who had an expression about the eyes which reminded him of Titian's Flora. Mrs. Fitzloom's natural silence did not disturb the uninterrupted jargon of the Santi, whose affectation, slang, and foppery, elicited loud and continued approbation from the fair sisters. The mother sat admiring these sprigs of noble trees. The young Fitzlooms, in crimson cravats, conversed with Lady Madeleine with a delightful military air; and their happy parent, as he gazed upon them with satisfied affection, internally promised them both a commission in a crack regiment. Each of the boys already imagined that Lady Madeleine was in love with him; and her ladyship being convinced that all were happy, did not regret

the absence of those she really did love, but was amused; even Mr. Sherborne was contented, and did not complain. Had he been put in the same carriage with those fools, he really did not think that he should have been able to get on. It showed St. George's sense, making a different arrangement; and he must say, that though they did sometimes disagree, he had no right to complain of the general behaviour of St. George towards him. This was said with a bow to Miss Aurelia Fitzloom;—need I say that Violet and Vivian were satisfied with the arrangement!

The road from Ems to Nassau winds along the banks of the Lahn, through two leagues of most delightful scenery; at the end of which, springing up from the peak of a bold and richly wooded mountain, the lofty tower of the ancient castle of Nassau meets your view. Winding walks round the sides of the mountain, lead through all the varieties of sylvan scenery, and command in all points the most magnificent views of the surrounding country. These finally bring you to the old castle, whose spacious chambers, though now choked up with masses of gray ruin, or covered with underwood, still bear witness to the might of their former lord; the powerful baron whose sword gained for his posterity a throne. Here it was, by the massy keep, "all tenantless, save to the cran-nying wind," that Mr. Sherborne delivered to a youthful auditor, who, seated on the fragments of the ancient walls, rested after the toils of the ascent, the following lecture on Gothic architecture.

On second thoughts, I shall keep it for Mr. Colbourn's magazine. The Misses Fitzloom, with that vivid genius for which young unmarried ladies are celebrated, entered with the most delightful enthusiasm into all the interest of Mr. Sherborne's discourse. In a few minutes they perfectly understood all the agitated questions which had puzzled the architects of all ages, and each had her separate solution of mysteries which never can be solved. How delightful is this elegant and enraptured ignorance! How decisive is the opinion of a young lady who has studied architecture in the elevations of the Regent's Park, on the controversy of the round arch, and the pointed style! How exquisite their animated tattle about mullions, span-drills, and trefoils!

But Mr. Sherborne was delighted with his pupils, and all seemed happy; none happier than Violet Fane. Never did she look so beautiful as to-day—never were her spirits so animated—never had she boasted that her pulse beat more melodious music, nor her lively blood danced a more healthful measure. After examining all the antique chambers of the castle, and discovering, as they flattered themselves, secret passages, and dark dungeons, and hidden doors, they left this interesting relic of the middle ages; and soon, by a gradual descent through the most delightful shrubberies, they again found themselves at the bottom of the valley. Here they visited the modern chateau of Baron von Stein, one of the most enlightened and able politicians that Germany has ever produced. As Minister of Prussia, he commenced those reforms which the illustrious Hardenberg perfected. For upwards of five centuries the family of Stein have retained their territorial possessions in the valley of the Lahn. Their family castle, at present a ruin, and formerly a fief of the house of Nassau, is now

only a picturesque object in the pleasure-grounds of the present lord.

The noon had passed some hours, before the delighted wanderers complained of fatigue, and by that time they found themselves in a pleasant green glade on the skirts of the forest of Nassau. It was nearly environed by mountains, covered with hanging woods, which shaded the beautiful valley, and gave it the appearance of a sylvan amphitheatre. From a rocky cleft in these green mountains, a torrent, dashing down with impetuous force, and whose fall was almost concealed by the cloud of spray which it excited, gave birth to a small and gentle river; whose banks were fringed with the most beautiful trees, which prevented the sun's darts from piercing its coldness, by bowing their fair heads over its waters. From their extending branches, Nature's choristers sent forth many a lovely lay,

"Of God's high praise, and of their loves' sweet teen."

Near the banks of this river, the servants, under the direction of Essper George, had prepared some refreshments for the party. The cloth had been laid with great neatness on a raised work of wood and turf; and rustic seats of the same material surrounded the rude table. All kinds of cold meats, and all kinds of pasties, venison, pheasants, plovers, rabbits, pickled fish, prawns, and craw fish, greeted the ravished eyes of the wearied band of foresters. July is not a month for eating; but, nevertheless, in Germany, we are somewhat consoled for the want of the curious varieties of cookery, by the exhilarating presence of white young partridges, delicious ducklings, and most tender leverets. Then there were all sorts of forced meats, and stuffed birds. You commenced with a pompous display of unnecessary science, to extract for a famished fair one the wing and merry-thought of a feirer chicken—when lo, and behold! the facile knife sunk without an effort into the plump breast, and the unresisting bird discharged a cargo of rich stuffed balls, of the most fascinating flavour. Then July, above all, is the season for fruits; and though few of the Rhenish grapes were yet ripe, still money had procured some plates of the red and rich Asmanhausens; and the refreshing strawberry, the Luscian peach, the grateful apricot, the thrilling nectarine, and above all, the peerless pine-apple were not wanting. Shall I forget the piquant currant, and the mellow gooseberry? Pomona forbid! Humble fruits, I love you, and once loved you more!

"Well!" said Violet Fane, "I never will be a member of an adventurous party like the present, of which St. George is not manager: this is admirable!"

"I must not take the whole credit upon myself, Violet; St. John is butler, and St. Leger my vice-chamberlain."

"Well, I can't praise Mr. St. John, till I've tasted the malvoisie which he has promised; but as for the other part of the entertainment, Mr. St. Leger, I'm sure this is a temptation which it would be a sin even in St. Anthony to withstand."

"By the body of Bacchus, very good!" swore Mr. St. Leger.

"These mountains," said Mr. St. John, "remind me of one of Nicolò Poussin's cool valleys. The party, indeed, give it a different character—quite a Watteau!"

"Now, Mrs. Fitzloom," said St. George, who was quite in his element, "let me recommend a little of this pike? Lady Madeleine, I've sent you some lamb. Miss Fitzloom, I hope St. Anthony is taking care of you. Wrightson! plates to Mr. St. Leger. Holy man, and much beloved! send that beef to Mr. Sherborne. Araminta, some poulet! Grey has helped you, Violet? Aurelia, my dear, some partridge? William Pitt Fitzloom, I leave you to yourself. George Canning Fitzloom, take care of the ladies near you. Essper George!—where's Essper George? St. John, who is your deputy in the wine department?—Wrightson! bring those long green bottles out of the river, and put the champagne underneath the willow. Will your ladyship take some light claret? Mrs. Fitzloom, you must use your tumbler; nothing but tumblers allowed, by Miss Fane's particular request!"

"St. George! thou holy man!" said Miss Fane, "methinks you are very impertinent. You shall not be my patron saint, if you go on so."

For the next hour there was nothing heard save the calling of servants; the rattling of knives and forks; the drawing of corks; and continued bursts of laughter, which were not occasioned by any brilliant observations, either of the saints, or any other persons; but merely the result of an exuberance of spirits on the part of every one present. At last the voice of St. Anthony was heard.

"Mr. Sherborne, will you wine?"

"Sir! I don't understand you," answered the old gentleman. A cloud was on his brow.

"O! save my uncle from exploding, Mr. Grey! for heaven's sake, put out his passion. If he do not take some liquid immediately, I'm sure he must go off in a rage. Holy St. Anthony has been talking 'slang.' Uncle! Mr. Sherborne! Mr. St. Leger wishes to know whether he may have the honour of taking wine with you. You don't seem to understand him."

"No; nor anybody else."

"Old Chrononhotonthologos seems as crusty as a bottle of his own undrinkable port," whispered St. Anthony to Miss Fitzloom, who was delighted with this brilliant sally. "I wonder what's the use of these boring old uncles!" Miss Fitzloom laughed still more at a remark which was still more brilliant.

"A magnificent study, that old uncle of St. George's!" whispered St. John to Araminta. "I wish I could get him to sit. I dare say there's some poor devil of an artist at the baths, who'd touch him in very prettily with black chalk. I must ask the old man. Let me give you a little more pheasant."

"Well, Aurelia!" said Lady Madeleine, "do you prefer our present mode of life to feasting in an old hall, covered with banners and battered shields, and surrounded by mysterious corridors and dark dungeons?" Aurelia was so flattered by the notice of Lady Madeleine, that she made her no answer: probably because she was intent on a plover's egg.

"I think we might all retire to this valley," said Miss Fane, "and revive the old feudal times with great success. St. George might take us to Nassau Castle, and you, Mr. Fitzloom, might refortify the old tower of Stein. With two sons, however, who are about to enter the Guards, I'm afraid we must be your vassals. Then what should we do? We

couldn't have wood parties every day; I suppose we should get tired of each other. No! that does seem impossible; don't you all think so?"

Omnès—"Impossible, impossible!"

"We must, however, have some regular pursuit, some cause of constant excitement, some perpetual source of new emotions. New ideas, of course, we must give up; there would be no going to London for the season for new opinions to astound country cousins on our return. Some pursuit must be invented; we all must have something to do. I have it, I have it! St. George shall be a tyrant!"

"I'm very much obliged to you, Violet."

"Yes! a bloody, unprincipled, vindictive, remorseless tyrant, with a long black beard; I can't tell how long! about twenty thousand times longer than Mr. St. Leger's mustachios."

"By the beard of Jove!" swore St. Anthony, as he started from his seat, and arranged with his thumb and forefinger the delicate Albanian tuft of his upper lip; "By the beard of Jove, Miss Fane, I'm obliged to you!"

"Well then," continued Violet, "St. George being a tyrant, Lady Madeleine must be an unhappy, ill-used, persecuted woman!"

"Now, Violet, my dear! do be calm, do restrain yourself!"

"An unhappy, ill-used, persecuted woman, living on black bread and green water, in an unknown dungeon. My part shall be to discover her imprisonment. Sounds of strange music attract my attention to a part of the castle which I have not before frequented. There I shall distinctly hear a female voice chanting the 'Bridesmaid's Chorus,' with Erard's double pedal accompaniment. By the aid of the confessors of the two families—two drinking, rattling, impertinent, most corrupt, and most amusing friars: to wit—our sainted friends—"

Here both Mr. St. Leger and Mr. St. John bowed low to Miss Fane.

"A most lively personage is Miss Fane," whispered St. Anthony to his neighbour Miss Fitzloom,—"great style!"

"Most amusing, delightful girl—great style—rather a display to-day, I think."

"O, decidedly! and devilish personal too—devilish; some people wouldn't like it. I've no doubt she'll say something about you next."

"O! I shall be very surprised, indeed, if she does, very surprised indeed! It may be very well to you, but Miss Fane must be aware—"

Before this pompous sentence could be finished, an incident occurred which prevented Miss Fane from proceeding with her allotment of characters, and rendered unnecessary the threatened indignation of Miss Fitzloom.

Miss Fane, as we mentioned, suddenly ceased speaking; the eyes of all were turned in the direction in which she was gazing—gazing as if she had seen a ghost.

"What are you looking up at, Violet?" asked St. George.

"Didn't you see any thing? didn't any of you see any thing!"

"None—none—none!"

"Mr. Grey, surely you must have seen it!"

"No; I saw nothing."

"It could not be fancy—impossible! I saw it distinctly. I cannot be in a dream. See there!"

there again, on that topmost branch. See! see! it moves!"

Some odd shrill sounds, uttered in the voice of a Pulcinello, attracted the notice of them all, and lo! high in the air, behind a lofty chestnut tree, the figure of a Pulcinello did appear, hopping and vaulting in the unsubstantial air. Now it sent forth another shrill piercing sound, and now, with both its hands, it patted and complacently stroked its ample paunch; dancing all the time, with unremitting activity, and wagging its queer head at the astounded guests.

"Who, what can it be?" cried all. The Misses Fitzloom shrieked, and the Santi seemed quite puzzled.

"Who, what can it be?"

Ere time could be given for any one to hazard a conjecture, the figure had advanced from behind the trees, and had spanned in an instant the festal board, with two enormous stilts, on which they now perceived it was mounted. The Misses Fitzloom shrieked again. The figure imitated their cries in his queer voice, and gradually raising one enormous stilt up into the air, stood only on one support, which was planted behind the lovely Araminta.

"O! inimitable Essper George!" exclaimed Violet Fane.

Here Signor Punch commenced a *chanson*, which he executed in the tone peculiar to his character, and in a style which drew applauses from all; and then, with a hop, step, and a jump, he was again behind the chestnut tree. In a moment he advanced without his stilts, towards the table. Here, on the turf, he again commenced his antics; kicking his nose with his right foot, and his hump with his left one; executing the most splendid somersets, and cutting all species of capers: and never ceasing for a moment from performing all his movements to the inspiring music of his own melodious voice. At last, jumping up immensely high in the air, he fell as if all his joints were loosened, and the Misses Fitzloom, imagining that his bones were really broken, shrieked again. But now Essper began the wonderful performance of a dead body possessed by a devil; and in a minute his shattered corpse, apparently without the assistance of any of its members, began to jump, and move about the ground with the most miraculous rapidity. At length it disappeared behind the chestnut tree.

"Grey!" said St. George; "we owe all this timely entertainment to you. I really think it is the most agreeable day I ever passed in all my life."

"O, decidedly!" said St. Anthony. "St. John, you remember our party to Paestum with Lady Calabria McCrater, and the Marquis of Agrigentum. It was nothing to this! Nothing! nothing! Do you know I thought that rather dull."

"Yes, dull, dull; too elaborate; too highly finished; nothing of the *pittore improvisatore*. A party of this kind should be more sketchy in its style; the outline more free, and less detail."

"This is all very well for you, young folks," said Mr. Sherborne, "and Essper is certainly a clever knave; but my dear young friends, if you had had the good fortune of living fifty years ago, when the first Scaramouch that I remember appeared in London, then you might have laughed. As it is, this is all very well of Essper; but—"

Here Mr. Sherborne jumped on his chair, and suddenly stopped. A great green monkey was seated opposite to him, imitating with ludicrous fidelity his energetic action. The laugh was universal. The monkey, with one bound, jumped over Mr. Sherborne's head, and disappeared.

"Essper is coming out to-day," said Vivian to Miss Fane, "after a long, and I venture to say, painful forbearance. However, I hope you'll excuse him. It seems to amuse us."

"Amuse us! I think it's delightful. See! here he comes again."

He now appeared in his original costume; the one in which Vivian first met him at the fair. Bowing very respectfully to the company, he threw his hand carelessly over his mandolin, and having tried the melody of its strings, sang with great taste, and a sweet voice—sweeter, from its contrast with its previous shrill tones—a very pretty romance. All applauded him very warmly, and no one more so than Violet Fane.

"Ah! inimitable Essper George, how can we sufficiently thank you! How admirably he plays! and his voice is quite beautiful. O! couldn't we dance? wouldn't it be delightful; and he could play on his guitar. Think of the delicious turf!"

Omnes—"Delightful! delightful! delightful!" they rose from table.

"Violet, my dear," asked Lady Madeleine. "what are you going to do?"

"By the toe of Terpsichore! as Mr. (St. Lege) would say, I am going to dance."

"But remember, dearest, to-day you have done so much!—let us be wise—let us be moderate; though you feel so much better, still think what a change to-day has been from your usual habits!"

"But, dearest Lady Madeleine, think of dancing on the turf, and I feel so well—so—"

"O! let the dear creature dance if she likes," said Mr. Sherborne: "my opinion is, that dancing never does a young woman any harm. Who you'll get to dance with you, though," turning to the Misses Fitzloom, "I can't tell; as to what the young men of the present day call dancing—"

"By the Graces! I am for the waltz," said St. Anthony.

"It certainly has a very free touch to recommend it," said St. John.

"No, no," said Violet; "let us all join in a country dance. Mr. Sherborne, shall I introduce you to a partner?"

"Ah! you little angel," said the delighted old man; "you look just like your dear mother, that you do!"

"We staid old personages do not dance," said Lady Madeleine; "and therefore, I recommend you a quadrille."

The quadrille was soon formed: Violet made up for not dancing with Vivian at the archduke's. She was in the most animated spirits, and kept up a successful rivalry with Mr. St. Leger, who evidently prided himself, as Mr. Fitzloom observed, "on his light fantastic toe." Now he pirouetted like Paul, and now he attitudinized like Albert; and now Violet Fane eclipsed all his exertions by her inimitable imitations of Ronzi Vestris's rushing and arrowy manner. St. Anthony, in despair, but quite delighted, revealed a secret which had been taught him by a Spanish dancer at Milan; but then Violet Fane vanquished him forever, with the *pas de Zephyr* of the exquisite Fanny Bias.

The day was fast declining when the carriages arrived; the young people were in no humour to return; and as, when they had once entered the carriage, the day seemed finished forever, they proposed walking part of the way home. Lady Madeleine made little objection to Violet joining the party, as she feared after the exertion that Miss Fane had been making, a drive in an open carriage would be dangerous; and yet the walk was too long, but all agreed that it would be impossible to shorten it; and, as Violet declared that she was not the least fatigued, the lesser evil was therefore chosen. The carriages rolled off; at about half-way from Ems, the two empty ones were to wait for the walking party. Lady Madeleine smiled with fond affection, as she waved her hand to Violet the moment before she was out of sight.

"And now," said St. George; "good people all, instead of returning by the same road, it strikes me, that there must be a way through this little wood—you see there is an excellent path. Before the sun has set, we shall have got through it, and it will bring us out, I have no doubt, by the old cottage which you observed, Grey, when we came along; I saw a gate and path there—just where we first got sight of Nassau castle—there can be no doubt about it. You see it's a regular right-angle, and besides varying the walk, we shall at least gain a quarter of an hour, which, after all, as we have to walk near three miles, is an object. It's quite clear—quite clear: If I've a head for any thing, it's for finding my way."

"I think you've a head for every thing," said Aurelia Fitzloom, in a soft sentimental whisper; "I'm sure we owe all our happiness to-day to you."

"If I have a head for every thing, I have a heart only for one person!"

As every one wished to be convinced, no one offered any argument in opposition to St. George's view of the case; and some were already in the wood.

"St. George, St. George," said Violet Fane, "I don't like walking in the wood so late; pray come back."

"O, nonsense, Violet!—come, come. If you don't like to come you can walk by the road—you'll meet us round by the gate—it's only five minutes walk." Ere he had finished speaking, the rest were in the wood, and some had advanced. Vivian strongly recommended Violet not to join them; he was sure that Lady Madeleine would not approve it—he was sure that it was very dangerous; and, by-the-by, while he was talking, which way had they gone? he didn't see them. He hallooed—all answered—and fifty thousand echoes besides. "We certainly had better go by the road—we shall lose our way if we try to follow them; nothing is so puzzling as walking in woods—we had much better keep to the road." So by the road they went.

The sun had already sunk behind the mountains, whose undulating forms were thrown into dark shadow against the crimson sky. The thin crescent of the new moon floated over the eastern hills, whose deep woods glowed with the rosy glories of twilight. Over the peak of a purple mountain, glittered the solitary star of evening. As the sun dropped, universal silence seemed to pervade the whole face of nature. The voice of the birds was stilled; the breeze, which had refreshed them during the day, died away, as if its office were now completed; and none of the dark sounds and

sights of hideous night yet dared to triumph over the death of day. Unseen were the circling wings of the fell bat; unheard the screech of the waking owl; silent the drowsy hum of the shade-born beetle! What heart has not acknowledged the influence of this hour—the sweet and soothing hour of twilight;—the hour of love, the hour of adoration, the hour of rest!—when we think of those we love, only to regret that we have no loved more dearly; when we remember our enemies only to forgive them!

And Vivian and his beautiful companion owned the magic of this hour, as all must do—by silence. No word was spoken, yet is silence sometimes a language. They gazed, and gazed again, and their full spirits held due communion with the star-lit sky, and the mountains, and the woods, and the soft shadows of the increasing moon. O! who can describe what the overcharged spirit feels at this sacred hour, when we almost lose the consciousness of existence, and our souls seem to struggle to pierce futurity! In the forest of the mysterious Odenwald, in the solitudes of the Bergstrasse, had Vivian at this hour often found consolation for a bruised spirit—often in adoring nature had forgotten man. But now, when he had never felt nature's influence more powerful; when he had never forgotten man, and man's world more thoroughly when he was experiencing emotions, which, though undefinable, he felt to be new; he started when he remembered that all this was in the presence of a human being! Was it Hesperus he gazed upon, or something else that glanced brighter than an evening star? Even as he thought that his gaze was fixed on the countenance of nature, he found that his eyes rested on the face of nature's loveliest daughter!

"Violet! dearest Violet!"

As in some delicious dream, the sleeper is awakened from his bliss by the sound of his own rapturous voice; so was Vivian roused by these words from his reverie, and called back to the world which he had forgotten. But ere a moment had passed, he was pouring forth in a rapid voice, and incoherent manner, such words as men speak only once. He spoke of his early follies—his misfortunes—his misery—of his matured views—his settled principles—his plans—his prospects—his hopes—his happiness—his bliss: and when he had ceased, he listened in his turn, to some small still words, which made him the happiest of human beings. He bent down—he kissed the soft silken cheek which now he could call his own. Her hand was in his; her head sank upon his breast. Suddenly she clung to him with a strong grasp. "Violet! my own, my dearest; you are overcome. I have been rash, I have been imprudent. Speak, speak, my beloved! say you are not ill!"

She spoke not, but clung to him with a fearful strength—her head still upon his breast—her full eyes closed. In the greatest alarm he raised her off the ground, and bore her to the river-side. Water might revive her. But when he tried to lay her a moment on the bank, she clung to him, gasping, as a sinking person clings to a stout swimmer. He leaned over her; he did not attempt to disengage his arms; and, by degrees, by very slow degrees, her grasp loosened. At last her arms gave way and fell by her side, and her eyes partly opened.

"Thank God! thank God! Violet, my own, my beloved, say you are better!"

She answered not—evidently she did not know him—evidently she did not see him. A film was on her sight and her eye was glassy. He rushed to the water-side, and in a moment he had sprinkled her temples, now covered with a cold dew. Her pulse beat not—her circulation seemed suspended. He rubbed the palms of her hands—he covered her delicate feet with his coat; and then rushing up the bank into the road, he shouted with frantic cries on all sides. No one came, no one was near. Again, with a cry of fearful anguish, he shouted as if a hyena were feeding on his vitals. No sound—no answer. The nearest cottage he remembered was above a mile off. He dared not leave her. Again he rushed down to the water-side. Her eyes were still open, still fixed. Her mouth also was no longer closed. Her hand was stiff—her heart had ceased to beat. He tried with the warmth of his own body to revive her. He shouted—he wept—he prayed. All, all in vain. Again he was in the road—again shouting like an insane being. There was a sound. Hark!—It was but the screech of an owl!

Once more at the river-side—once more bending over her with starting eyes—once more the attentive ear listening for the soundless breath. No sound! not even a sigh! O! what would he have given for her shriek of anguish!—No change had occurred in her position, but the lower part of her face had fallen; and there was a general appearance which struck him with awe. Her body was quite cold;—her limbs stiffened. He gazed, and gazed, and gazed. He bent over her with stupor, rather than grief, stamped on his features. It was very slowly that the dark thought came over his mind—very slowly that the horrible truth seized upon his soul. He gave a loud shriek, and fell on the lifeless body of VIOLET FAKE!

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE green and bowery summer had passed away. It was midnight, when two horsemen pulled up their steeds beneath a wide oak; which, with other lofty trees, skirted the side of a winding road in an extensive forest in the south of Germany.

“By heavens!” said one, who apparently was the master—“we must even lay our cloaks, I think, under this oak; for the road winds again, and assuredly cannot lead now to our village.”

“A star-lit sky in autumn, can scarcely be the fittest curtain for one so weak as your highness. I should recommend travelling on, if we keep on our horses’ backs till dawn.”

“But if we are travelling in a directly contrary way to our voiturier—honest as we may suppose him to be, if he find in the morning no paymaster for his job, he may with justice make free with our baggage. And I shall be unusually mistaken if the road we are now pursuing does not lead back to the city.”

“City, town, or village, your highness must sleep under no forest tree. Let us ride on. It will be hard if we do not find some huntsman’s or ranger’s cottage; and for aught we know a neat snug village—or some comfortable old manor-

house, which has been in the family for two centuries; and where, with God’s blessing, they may chance to have wine as old as the bricks. I know not how your highness may feel, but a ten hours’ ride when I was only prepared for half the time, and that too in an autumn night, makes me somewhat desirous of renewing my acquaintance with the kitchen-fire.”

“I could join you in a glass of hock and a slice of venison, I confess, my good fellow; but in a nocturnal ride I am no longer your match. However, if you think it best, we’ll prick on our steeds for another hour. If it be only for them, I’m sure we must soon stop.”

“Ay! do, sir; and put your cloak well round you—all is for the best. Your highness, I guess, is no Sabbath-born child?”

“That am I not—but how would that make our plight worse than it is? Should we be further off supper?”

“Nearer—nearer perhaps than you imagine; for we should then have a chance of sharing the spoils of the Spirit Hunter.”

“Ah! Essper, is it so?”

“Truly, yes, sir; and were either of us a Sabbath-born child, by holy cross! I would not give much for our chance of a down bed this night.”

Here a great horned owl flew across the road.

“Were I in the North,” said Essper, “I would sing an Ave Mary against the STUT OZEL.”

“What call you that?” asked Vivian.

“’Tis the great bird, sir; the great horned owl, that always flies before the Wild Hunter. And truly, sir, I have passed through many forests in my time, but never yet saw I one where I should sooner expect to hear a midnight bugle. If you’ll allow me, sir, I’ll ride by your side. Thank God, at least, it’s not the Walpurgis night!”

“I wish to heaven it were!” said Vivian, “and that we were at the Broeken. It must be highly amusing!”

“Hush! hush! hush! it’s lucky we’re not in the Hartz—but we know not where we are, nor what at this moment may be behind us.”

And here Essper began pouring forth a liturgy of his own—half Catholic, and half Calvinistic, quite in character with the creed of the country which they were travelling.

“My horse has stumbled,” continued Essper “and yours, sir, is he not shying? There’s a confounded cloud over the moon—but I’ve no sight in the dark if that mass before you be not a devil’s-stone. The Lord have mercy upon our sinful souls!”

“Peace! peace! Essper,” said Vivian, who was surprised to find him really alarmed; “peace! peace! I see nothing but a block of granite, no uncommon sight in a German forest.”

“It is a devil-stone, I tell you, sir—there has been some church here, which he has knocked down in the night. Look! look! is it the moss-people that I see! As sure as I am a hungry sinner, the Wild One is out a hunting to-night.”

“More luck for us if we meet him. His dogs, as you say, may gain us a supper. I think our wisest course will be to join the cry.”

“Hush! hush! hush! your highness would not talk so if you knew what your share of the spoils might be. Ay! if your highness did, your cheek would be paler, and your very teeth would chatter. I knew one man who was travelling in

a forest, just as we are now, it was about this time, and he believed in the Wild Huntsman about as much as your highness does—that is, he liked to talk of the spirit, merely to have the opportunity of denying that he believed in him; which showed, as I used to say, that his mind was often thinking of it. He was a merry knave, and as firm a hand for a boar-spear as ever I met with, and I've met with many. We used to call him, before the accident, *Left-handed Hans*, but they call him now, your highness, *the Child-hunter*. O! it's a very awful tale, your highness, and I'd sooner tell it in blazing hall than in free forest. Your highness didn't hear any sound to the left, did you?"

"Nothing but the wind, Essper; on with your tale, my man."

"It's a very awful tale, sir, but I'll make short work of it. You see, your highness, it was a night just like this; the moon was generally hid, but the stars prevented it from ever being pitch dark. And so, sir, he was travelling alone; he'd been up to the castle of the baron, his master—you see, sir, he was head-ranger to his lordship—and he always returned home through the forest. What he was thinking of, I cannot say, but most likely of no good; when all on a sudden he heard the baying of hounds in the distance. Now, your highness, directly he heard it—I've heard him tell the story a thousand times—directly he heard it, it struck him that it must be the Spirit Huntsman; and though there were many ways to account for the hounds, still he never for a moment doubted that they were the hell-dogs. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Now, your highness, I tell you this, because if ever,—which the Holy Virgin forbid!—if ever you meet the Wild Huntsman, you'll know how to act:—conduct yourself always with propriety, make no noise, but behave like a gentleman, and don't put the dogs off the scent; stand aside and let him pass. Don't talk, he has no time to lose, for if he hunt after daybreak, a night's sport is forfeited for every star left in the morning sky. So, sir, you see nothing puts him in a greater passion than to lose his time in answering impertinent questions. Well, your highness, Left-handed Hans stood by the road-side. The baying of the dogs was so distinct, that he felt that in a moment the Wild One would be up: his horse shivered like a swallow in a storm. He heard the tramp of the spirit-steed: they came in sight. As the tall figure of the Huntsman passed—I cannot tell your highness what it was—it might have been, Lord forgive me in thinking what it might have been! but a voice from behind Hans, a voice so like his own, that for a moment he fancied that he had himself spoken, although he was conscious that his lips had been firmly closed the whole time, a voice from the road side,—just behind poor Hans, mind,—said, 'Good sport, Sir Huntsman, 'tis an odd light to track a stag!' The poor man, sir, was all of an ague; but how much greater, your highness, was his horror, when the tall Huntsman stopped! He thought that he was going to be eaten up on the spot, at least: not at all, your highness—'My friend!' said the Wild One, in the kindest voice imaginable; 'my friend, would you like to give your horse a breathing with us?' Poor Hans, your highness, was so alarmed, that it never entered into his head for a single moment to refuse the invitation, and instantly he was

galloping by the side of the Wild Huntsman. Away they flew! away! away! over bog, and over mere; over ditch, and over hedge; away! away! away!—and the ranger's horse never failed, but kept by the side of the wild spirit without the least distress; and yet, your highness, it's very singular that Hans was about to sell this very beast only a day before, for a matter of five crowns:—you see, your highness, he only kept it just to pick his way at night from the castle to his own cottage. Well! your highness, it's very odd, but Hans soon lost all fear, for the sport was so fine, and he had such a keen relish for the work, that far from being alarmed, he thought himself one of the luckiest knaves alive. But the oddest thing all this time was, that Hans never caught sight for one moment of either buck or boar; although he saw by the dogs' noses, that there was something keen in the wind; and although he felt that if the hunted beast were like any that he had himself ever followed before, it must have been run down with such dogs, quicker than a priest could say a paternoster. At last, sir, for he had grown quite bold, says Hans to the Wild Huntsman, 'The beasts run quick o' nights, sir, I think; it's been a long time, I ween, e'er I scamped so far, and saw so little!' Do you know, your highness, that the old gentleman was not the least affronted, but said, in the pleasantest voice imaginable, 'A true huntsman should be patient, Hans, you'll see the game quick enough; look forward, man! what see you?' and sure enough, your highness, he did look forward. It was near the skirts of the forest, there was a green glade before them, and very few trees, and therefore he could see far ahead. The moon was shining very bright, and sure enough, what did he see? Running as fleet over the turf as a rabbit, was a child. The little figure was quite black in the moonlight, and Hans could not catch its face;—in a moment the hell-dogs were on it. Hans quivered like a windy reed, your highness, and the Wild One laughed till the very woods echoed. 'How like you hunting mossmen?' asked the spirit. Now when Hans, your highness, found it was only a mossman, he took heart again, and said in a shaking voice, that 'It is rare good sport in good company;' and then the spirit jumped off his horse, and said, 'Now, Hans, you must watch me well, for I'm little used to 'bag game.' He said this with a proudish air, your highness, as much as to hint, that hadn't he expected Hans, he wouldn't have rode out this evening without his groom. So the Wild One jumped on his horse again, and put the bag before him. It was nearly morning, your highness, when Hans found himself at the door of his own cottage; and bowing very respectfully to the Spirit Hunter, he thanked him for the sport, and begged his share of the night's spoil. This was all in a joke, your highness, but Hans had heard that, 'talk to the devil, and fear the last word;' and so he was determined, now that they were about to part, not to appear to tremble, but to carry it off with a jest. 'Truly, Hans,' said the Huntsman, 'thou art a bold lad, and to encourage thee to speak to wild huntsmen again, I have a mind to give thee for thy pains, the whole spoil. Take the bag, knave, a mossman is good eating had I time I would give thee a receipt for sauce;' and so saying, the spirit rode off, laughing very heartily. Well, your highness, Hans was so anxious to examine the contents of the bag, and

see what kind of thing a mossman really was,—for he had only caught a glimpse of him in the chase,—that instead of going to bed immediately and saying his prayers, as he should have done, he lighted a lamp and untied the string; and what think you he took out of the bag, your highness? As sure as I'm a born sinner—his own child!"

"'Tis a wonderful tale," said Vivian; "and did the unfortunate man tell you this himself?"

"Often and often, sir.—I knew Left-handed Hans well. He was ranger, as I said, to a great lord; and was quite a favourite, you see. For some reason or other he got out of favour. Some said that the baron had found him out a poaching; and that he used to ride his master's horses a night. Whether this be true or not, who can say? But, howsoever, Hans went to ruin; and instead of being a flourishing, active lad, he was turned out, and went a begging all through Saxony; and he always told this story as the real history of his misfortunes. Some say, he's not as strong in his head as he used to be. However, why should we say it's not a true tale!—What's that?" almost shrieked Essper.

Vivian listened, and heard distinctly the distant baying of hounds.

"'Tis he! 'tis he!" said Essper; "now don't speak, sir, don't speak; and if the devil make me join him, as may be the case, for I'm but a cock-brained thing, particularly at midnight; don't be running after me from any foolish feeling, but take care of yourself, and don't be chattering. To think you should come to this, my precious young master!"

"Cease your blubbing, for heaven's sake! Do you think that I'm to be frightened by the idiot tales of a parcel of old women, and the lies of a gang of detected poachers? Come, sir, ride on. We are, most probably, near some huntsman's cottage. That distant baying is the sweetest music I've heard a great while."

"Don't be rash, sir—don't be rash—don't be rash. If you were to give me fifty crowns now, I couldn't remember a single line of a single prayer. Ave Maria!—it always is so when I most want it. Paternoster!—and whenever I've need to remember a song, sure enough I'm always thinking of a prayer.—Unser Vater, der du bist im himmel—sanctificado se el tu nombra; il tuo regno venga." Here Essper George was proceeding with a scrap of modern Greek, when the horsemen suddenly came upon one of those broad, green vistas which we often see in forests, and which are generally cut, either for the convenience of hunting, or carling wood. It opened on the left side of the road; and at the bottom of it, though apparently at a great distance, a light was visible.

"So much for your Wild Huntsman, my friend Essper! I shall be much disappointed if here are not quarters for the night. And see! the moon comes out—a good omen!"

After about ten minutes' sharp trot over the noiseless turf, the travellers found themselves before a large and many-windowed mansion. The building formed the farthest side of a quadrangle, which you entered through an ancient and massy gate; on each side of which was a small building—of course the lodges. Essper soon found that the gate was closely fastened; and though he knocked often and loudly, it was with no effect. That the inhabitants of the mansion had not yet retired was certain, for lights were moving in the

great house; and one of the lodges was not only very brilliantly illuminated, but full, as Vivian was soon convinced, of clamorous, if not jovial guests.

"Now, by the soul of my unknown father!" said the enraged Essper, "I'll make these saucy porters learn their duty. What ho! there—what ho! within! within!" But the only answer he received, was the loud reiteration of a rude and roaring chorus; which, as it was now more distinctly and audibly enunciated, evidently for the purpose of engaging the travellers—they detected to be something to the following effect:—

"Then a prayer to St. Peter, a prayer to St. Paul,
A prayer to St. Jerome—a prayer to them all—
A prayer to each one of the saintly stock,
But devotion alone, devotion to Hock!"

"A right good burden!" said Essper. The very words had made him recover his temper, and ten thousand times more desirous of gaining admittance. He was off his horse in a moment, and scrambling up the wall, with the aid of the iron stanchions, he clambered up to the window. The sudden appearance of his figure startled the inmates of the lodge;—and one of them soon staggered to the gate.

"What want you, ye noisy and disturbing vazzlets? what want you, ye most unhallowed rogues, at such a place, and at such an hour? If you be thieves—look at our bars—(here a hiccough.) If you be poachers—our master is engaged, and ye may slay all the game in the forest—(another hiccough)—but if ye be good men and true—"

"We are, we are!" halloed Essper, eagerly.

"You are, you are!" said the porter, in a tone of great surprise; "then you ought to be ashamed of yourselves for disturbing holy men at their devotions!"

"Is this the way," said Essper, "to behave, ye shameless rascals, to a noble and mighty prince, who happens to have lost his way in one of your cursed forests; but who, though he has parted with his suite, has still in his pocket a purse full of ducats? Would ye have him robbed by any others but yourselves? Is this the way you behave to a prince of the Holy Roman Empire—a knight of every order under the sun, and a most particular friend of your own master? Is this the way to behave to his secretary, who is one of the merriest fellows living; can sing a jolly song with any of you, and so bedevil a bottle of Geisenheim with lemons and brandy, that for the soul of ye, you wouldn't know it from the greenest Tokay. Out, out on ye! you know not what you have lost!"

Ere Essper had finished, more than one stout bolt had been drawn, and the great key had already entered the stouter lock.

"Most honourable sirs!" hiccoughed the porter; "in Our Lady's name enter. I had forgot myself; for in these autumn nights it is necessary to anticipate the cold with a glass of cheering liquor; and, God forgive me! if I didn't mistake your most mighty highnesses for a couple of forest rovers, or small poachers at least. Thin entertainment here, kind sir—(here the last bolt was withdrawn)—a glass of indifferent liquor, and a prayer-book. I pass the time chiefly these cold nights with a few holy-minded friends, at our devotions. You heard us at our prayers, honourable lords!"

A prayer to St. Peter, a prayer to St. Paul!
A prayer to St. Jerome, a prayer to them all!"

Here the devout porter most reverently crossed himself.

"A prayer to each one of the saintly stock,
But devotion alone, devotion to Hock!"

bellowed Essper George—"you forget the best part of the burden, my honest friend."

"O!" said the porter, with an arch smile, as he opened the lodge door; "I'm glad to find that your honourable excellencies have a taste for hymns!"

The porter led them into a room, at a round table in which, about half a dozen individuals were busily engaged in discussing the merits of various agreeable liquors. There was an attempt to get up a show of polite hospitality to Vivian as he entered; but the man who offered him his chair fell to the ground in an unsuccessful struggle to be courteous; and another one, who had filled a large glass for the guest on his entrance, offered him, after a preliminary speech of incoherent compliments, the empty bottle by mistake. The porter and his friends, although they were all drunk, had sense enough to feel that the presence of a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire, a chevalier of every order under the sun, and the particular friend of their master, was not exactly a fit companion for themselves, and was rather a check on the gay freedom of equal comoruousness; and so, although the exertion was not a little troublesome, the guardian of the gate reeled out of the room to inform his honoured lord of the sudden arrival of a stranger of distinction. Essper George immediately took his place, and ere the master of the lodge had returned, the noble secretary had not only given a choice toast, sung a choice song, and been hailed by the grateful plaudits of all present; but had proceeded in his attempt to fulfil the pledge which he had given at the gate to the very letter, by calling out lustily for a bottle of Geisenheim, lemons, brandy, and a bowl.

"Fairly and softly, my little son of Bacchus," said the porter as he re-entered—"fairly and softly, and then thou shalt want nothing; but remember I have to perform my duties unto the noble lord my master, and also to the noble prince your master. If thou wilt follow me," continued the porter, reeling as he bowed with the greatest consideration to Vivian; "if thou wilt follow me, most high and mighty sir, my master will be right glad to have the honour of drinking your health. And as for you, my friends, fairly and softly, fairly and softly, say I again. We'll talk of the Geisenheim anon. Am I to be absent from the first brewing? No, no! fairly and softly, fairly and softly; you can drink my health when I'm absent in cold liquor, and say those things which you could not well say before my face. But mind, most righteous and well-beloved, I'll have no flattery—no flattery. Flattery is the destruction of all good-fellowship; it's like a qualmish liqueur in the midst of a bottle of wine. No flattery, no flattery; speak your minds, say any little thing that comes first, as thus—Well, for Hunsdrich the porter, I must declare that I never heard evil word against him; or thus, 'A very good leg has Hunsdrich the porter, and a tight made lad altogether; no enemy with the girls, I warrant me;' or thus, 'Well, for a good-hearted, good-looking, stout-drinking, virtuous, honourable, handsome, generous, sharp-witted knave, commend me to Hunsdrich the porter;' but not a word more, my friends, not a word more, no flattery, no flattery. Now, sir, I beg your pardon."

The porter led the way through a cloistered walk, until they arrived at the door of the great mansion, to which they ascended by a lofty flight of steps; it opened into a very large octagonal hall, the sides of which were covered with fowling pieces, stags' heads, couteaux de chasse, boar-spears, and huge fishing-nets. Passing through this hall they ascended a very noble staircase, on the first landing-place of which was a door, which Vivian's conductor opened, and ushering him into a large and well-lighted chamber, immediately withdrew. From the centre of this room descended a magnificently cut chandelier, which threw a graceful light upon a sumptuous banquet table, at which were seated eight very singular-looking personages. All of them wore hunting-dresses of various shades of straw-coloured cloth, with the exception of one, who sat on the left hand of the master of the feast, and the colour of whose costume was a rich crimson purple. From the top to the bottom of the table extended a double file of wine-glasses and goblets, of all sizes and all colours. There you might see brilliant relics of that ancient ruby-glass, the vivid tints of which seem lost to us for ever. Next to these were marshalled goblets of Venetian manufacture, of a clouded, creamy white; then came the huge hock-glass of some ancient primate of Mentz, nearly a yard high; towering above its companions, as the church, its former master, predominated over the simple laymen of the middle ages. Why should I forget a set of most curious and antique drinking cups of painted glass, on whose rare surfaces were emblazoned the Kaiser and ten electors of the old Empire?

Vivian bowed to the party, and stood in silence, while they stared a most scrutinizing examination. At length the master of the feast spoke. He was a very stout man, with a prodigious paunch, which his tightened dress set off to a great advantage. His face, and particularly his forehead, were of great breadth. His eyes were set far apart. His long ears hung down almost to his shoulders; yet singular as he was, not only in these, but in many other respects, every thing was forgotten when your eyes lighted on his nose. It was the most prodigious nose that Vivian ever remembered—not only seeing, but hearing, or even reading of. In fact, it was too monstrous for the crude conception of a dream. This mighty nose hung down almost to its owner's chest.

"Be seated," said this personage, in no unpleasing voice, and he pointed to the chair opposite to him. Vivian took the vacated seat of the vice-president, who moved himself to the right. "Be seated, and whoever you may be—welcome! If our words be few, think not that our welcome is scant. We are not much given to speech, holding it for a principle that if a man's mouth be open, it should be for the purpose of receiving that which cheers a man's spirit; not of giving vent to idle words, which, as far as we have observed, produce no other effect save filling the world with crude and unprofitable fantasies, and distracting our attention when we are on the point of catching those flavours which alone make the world endurable. Therefore, briefly but heartily welcome! Welcome, Sir Stranger, from us and from all; and first from us, the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger." Here his highness rose, and pulled out a large ruby tumbler from the file. Each of those present did the same, without, however, rising, and

the late vice-president, who sat next to Vivian, invited him to follow their example.

The Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger brought forward, from beneath the table, an ancient and exquisite bottle of that choice liquor from which he took his exhilarating tittle. The cork was drawn, and the bottle circulated with rapidity; and in three minutes the ruby glasses were filled and emptied, and the grand-duke's health quaffed by all present.

"Again, Sir Stranger," continued the grand-duke, "briefly but heartily welcome!--welcome from us, and welcome from all--and first from us, and now from the Archduke of Hockheimer!"

The Archduke of Hockheimer was a thin sinewy man, with long, carrot hair--eyelashes of the same colour, but of a remarkable length--and mustachios, which, though very thin, were so long that they met under his chin. Vivian could not refrain from noticing the extreme length, whiteness, and apparent sharpness of his teeth. The archduke did not speak, but leaning under the table, soon produced a bottle of hockheimer. He then took from the file one of the Venetian glasses of clouded white. All followed his example--the bottle was sent round, his health was pledged--and the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger again spoke:--

"Again, Sir Stranger, briefly but heartily welcome! welcome from us, and welcome from all--and first from us, and now from the Elector of Steinberg!"

The Elector of Steinberg was a short, but very broad-backed, strong-built man. Though his head was large, his features were small, and appeared smaller from the miraculous quantity of coarse, shaggy, brown hair, which grew over almost every part of his face, and fell down upon his shoulders. The elector was as silent as his predecessor, and quick produced a bottle of Steinberg. The curious drinking cups of painted glass were immediately withdrawn from the file, the bottle was sent round, the elector's health was pledged, and the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger again spoke:--

"Again, Sir Stranger, briefly but heartily welcome!--welcome from us, and welcome from all--and first from us, and now from the Margrave of Rudesheimer!"

The Margrave of Rudesheimer was a slender man, of elegant appearance. As Vivian watched the glance of his speaking eye, and the half-satirical and half-joyful smile which played upon his features, he hardly expected that his highness would be as silent as his predecessors. But the margrave spoke no word. He gave a kind of shout of savage exultation as he smacked his lips after dashing off his glass of Rudesheimer; and scarcely noticing the salutations of those who drank his health, he threw himself back in his chair, and listened seemingly with a smile of derision, while the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger again spoke:--

"Again, Sir Stranger, briefly but heartily welcome!--welcome from us, and welcome from all--and first from us, and now from the Landgrave of Graffenberg!"

The Landgrave of Graffenberg was a rude, awkward-looking person, who, when he rose from his seat, stared like an idiot, and seemed utterly ignorant of what he ought to do. But his quick companion, the Margrave of Rudesheimer, soon

thrust a bottle of Graffenberg into the landgrave's hand, and with some trouble and bustle the landgrave extracted the cork; and then helping himself, sat down, forgetting either to salute, or to return the salutations of those present.

"Again, Sir Stranger, briefly but heartily welcome!--welcome from us, and welcome from all--and first from us, and now from the Palsgrave of Geisenheim!"

The Palsgrave of Geisenheim was a dwarf in spectacles. He drew the cork from his bottle like lightning, and mouthed at his companions, even while he bowed to them.

"Again, Sir Stranger, briefly but heartily welcome!--welcome from us, and welcome from all--and first from us, and now from the Count Markbrunnen!"

The Count of Markbrunnen was a sullen-looking personage, with lips protruding nearly three inches beyond his nose. From each side of his upper jaw projected a large tooth.

"Thanks to heaven!" said Vivian, as the grand-duke spoke--"thanks to heaven, here is our last man!"

"Again, Sir Stranger, briefly but heartily welcome!--welcome from us, and welcome from all--and first from us, and now from the Baron of Asmanshausen!"

The Baron of Asmanshausen sat on the left of the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger, and was dressed, as we have before said, in a unique costume of crimson purple. The baron stood without his boots, about six feet eight. He was a sleek man, with a head no bigger than a child's, and a pair of small, black, steady eyes, of singular brilliancy. The baron introduced a bottle of the only red wine that the Rhine boasts; but which, for its fragrant and fruity flavour, and its brilliant tint, is perhaps even superior to the sunset glow of Burgundy.

"And now," continued the grand-duke, "having introduced you to all present, sir, we will begin drinking."

Vivian had submitted to the introductory ceremonies with the good grace which becomes a man of the world; but the coolness of his highness's last observation recalled our hero's wandering senses; and, at the same time, alarmed at discovering that eight bottles of wine had been discussed by the party, merely as a preliminary, and emboldened by the contents of one bottle which had fallen to his own share, he had the courage to confront the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger in his own castle.

"Your wine, most noble lord, stands in no need of my commendation; but, as I must mention it, let it not be said that I ever mentioned it without praise. After a ten hour's ride, its flavour is as grateful to the palate as its strength is refreshing to the heart; but though old hock, in homely phrase, is styled meat and drink, I confess to you that, at this moment, I stand in need of even more solid sustenance than the juice of the sunny hill."

"A traitor!" shrieked all present, each with his right arm stretched out, glass in hand; "a traitor!"

"No traitor," answered Vivian; "no traitor, my noble and right thirsty lords; but one of the most hungry mortals that ever yet famished."

The only answer that he received for some time, was a loud and ill-boding murmur. The

long whisker of the Archduke of Hockheimer curled with renewed rage; audible, though suppressed, was the growl of the hairy Elector of Steinberg; fearful the corporeal involutions of the tall Baron of Asmanshausen; and savagely sounded the wild laugh of the bright-eyed Margrave of Rudesheimer.

"Silence, my lords," said the grand-duke. "Forget we that ignorance is the stranger's portion, and that no treason can exist among those who are not our sworn subjects? Pity we rather the degeneracy of this bold-spoken youth; and in the plenitude of our mercy, let us pardon his demand! Know ye, unknown knight, that you are in the presence of an august society, who are here met at one of their accustomed convocations; whereof the purport is the frequent quaffing of those most glorious liquors, of which the sacred Rhine is the great father. We profess to find a perfect commentary on the Pindaric land of the strongest element, in the circumstance of the banks of a river being the locality where the juice of the grape is most delicious—and holding, therefore, that water is strongest, because, in a manner, it giveth birth to wine; we also hold it as a sacred element, and, consequently, most religiously refrain from refreshing our bodies with that sanctified and most undrinkable fluid. Know ye, that we are the children of the Rhine—the conservators of his flavours—profound in the learning of his exquisite aroma, and deep students in the mysteries of his inexplicable nature. Professing not to be immortal, we find in the exercise of the chase a noble means to preserve that health which is necessary for the performance of the ceremonies to which we are pledged. At to-morrow's dawn our bugle sounds, and thou, stranger, may engage the wild boar at our side; at to-morrow's noon the castle bell will toll, and thou, stranger, may eat of the beast which thou hast conquered—but to feed after midnight, to destroy the power of catching the delicate flavour, to annihilate the faculty of detecting the undefinable nature, is heresy—most rank and damnable heresy!—Therefore at this hour soundeth no plate nor platter—jingleth no knife nor culinary instrument in the PALACE OF THE WINES. Yet, in consideration of thy youth, and that on the whole thou hast tasted thy liquor like a proper man, from which we augur the best expectations of the manner in which thou wilt drink it,—we feel confident that our brothers of the goblet will permit us to grant thee the substantial solace of a shoeing horn."

"Let it be a Dutch herring, then," said Vivian; "and as you have souls to be saved, grant me one slice of bread."

"It cannot be," said the grand-duke; "but as we are willing to be indulgent to bold hearts, verily, we will wink at the profanation of a single toast; but you must order an anchovy one, and give secret instructions to the waitingman to forget the fish. It must be counted as a second shoeing horn; and you will forfeit for the last a bottle of Markbrunnen."

"And now, illustrious brothers," continued the grand-duke, "let us drink 1726!"

All present gave a single cheer, in which Vivian was obliged to join; and they honoured with a glass of the very year, the memory of a celebrated vintage.

"1748!" said the grand-duke.

Two cheers, and the same ceremony.

1766, and 1779, were honoured in the same manner; but when the next toast was drunk, Vivian almost observed in the countenances of the grand-duke and his friends, the signs of incipient insanity.

"1783!" hallooed the grand-duke, in a tone of the most triumphant exultation; and his mighty proboscis, as it snuffed the air, almost caused a whirlwind round the room—Hockheimer gave a roar—Steinberg a growl—Rudesheimer a wild laugh—Markbrunnen a loud grunt—Grafenberg a bray—Asmanshausen's long body moved to and fro with wonderful agitation;—and little Geisenheim's bright eyes glistened through their glasses, as if they were on fire. How ludicrous is the incipient inebriety of a man who wears spectacles!

Thanks to an excellent constitution, which recent misery, however, had somewhat shattered, Vivian bore up against all these attacks; and when they had got down to 1802, from the excellency of his digestion, and the inimitable skill with which he emptied many of the latter glasses under the table, he was, perhaps, in better condition than any one in the room.

And now arose the idiot Grafenberg; Rudesheimer all the time, with a malicious smile, faintly pulling him down by the skirt of his coat; as if he were desirous of preventing an exposure which his own advice had brought about. He had been persuading Grafenberg the whole evening to make a speech.

"My lord duke," brayed the jackass; and then he stopped dead, and looked round the room with an unmeaning stare.

"Hear, hear, hear!" was the general cry; but Grafenberg seemed astounded at any one being desirous of hearing his voice, or for a moment seriously entertaining the idea that he could have any thing to say; and so he stared again, and again, and again; till at last, Rudesheimer, by dint of kicking his shins under the table,—the margrave the whole time seeming perfectly motionless—at length extracted a sentence from the asinine landgrave.

"My lord duke!" again commenced Grafenberg; and again he stopped.

"Go on," shouted all.

"My lord duke! Rudesheimer is treading on my toes!"

Here little Geisenheim gave a loud laugh of derision; in which all joined, except surly Markbrunnen, whose lips protruded an extra inch beyond their usual length, when he found that all were laughing at his friend. The grand-duke at last procured silence.

"Shame! shame! most mighty princes! Shame! shame! most noble lords. Is it with this irreverent glee, these scurvy flouts, and indecorous mockery, that you would have this stranger believe that we celebrate the ceremonies of our father Rhine? Shame, I say—and silence! It is time that we should prove to him, that we are not merely a boisterous and unruly party of swilling varlets, who leave their brains in their cups. It is time that we should do something to prove that we are capable of better and worthier things. What ho, my Lord of Geisenheim! shall I speak twice to the guardian of the horn of the Fairy King?"

The little dwarf instantly jumped from his seat, and proceeded to the end of the room; where,

after having bowed three times with great reverence before a small black cabinet made of vine wood, he opened it with a golden key, and then with great pomp and ceremony bore its contents to the grand-duke. His royal highness took from the little dwarf the horn of a gigantic and antediluvian elk. The cunning hand of an ancient German artificer had formed this curious relic into a drinking cup. It was exquisitely polished, and cased in the interior with silver. On the outside the only ornaments were three richly chased silver rings, which were placed nearly at equal distances. When the grand-duke had carefully examined this most precious horn, he held it up with reverence to all present, and a party of devout Catholics could not have paid greater homage to the elevated Host, than did the various guests to the horn of the Fairy King. Even the satanic smile on Rudesheimer's countenance was for a moment subdued; and all bowed. The grand-duke then delivered the mighty cup to his neighbour, the Archduke of Hockheimer, who held it with both hands until his royal highness had emptied into it, with great care, three bottles of Johannisberger. All rose: the grand-duke took the goblet in one hand, and with the other he dexterously put aside his most inconvenient and enormous nose. Dead silence prevailed, save the roar of the liquor as it rushed down the grand-duke's throat, and resounded through the chamber like the distant dash of a waterfall. In three minutes his royal highness had completed his task, the horn had quitted his mouth, his nose had again resumed its usual situation, and as he handed the cup to the archduke, Vivian thought that a material change had taken place in his countenance since he had quaffed his last draught. His eyes seemed more apart; his ears seemed broader and longer; and his nose was most visibly lengthened. The archduke, before he commenced his draught, ascertained with great scrupulosity that his predecessor had taken his fair share by draining the horn as far as the first ring; and then he poured off with great rapidity his own portion. But though in performing the same task, he was quicker than the master of the party, the draught, not only apparently but audibly, produced upon him a much more decided effect than had it on the grand-duke; for when the second ring was drained, the archduke gave a loud roar of exultation, and stood up for some time from his seat, with his hands resting on the table over which he leaned, as if he were about to spring upon his opposite neighbour. The cup was now handed across the table to the Baron of Asmanshausen. His lordship performed his task with ease; but as he withdrew the horn from his mouth, all present, except Vivian, gave a loud cry of "Supernaculum!" The baron smiled with great contempt as he tossed, with a careless hand, the great horn upside downwards, and was unable to shed upon his nail even the one excusable pearl. He handed the refilled horn to the Elector of Steinberg, who drank his portion with a growl; but afterwards seemed so pleased with the facility of his execution, that instead of delivering it to the next bibber, the Palsgrave of Markbrunnen, he commenced some clumsy attempts at a dance of triumph, in which he certainly would have proceeded, had not the loud grunts of the surly and thick-lipped Markbrunnen occasioned the interference of the grand-duke. Supernaculum now fell to the Margrave of

Rudesheimer, who gave a loud and long-continued laugh as the dwarf of Geisenheim filled the horn for the third time.

While this ceremony was going on, a thousand plans had occurred to Vivian for his escape; but all, on second thoughts, proved impracticable. With agony he had observed that supernaculum was his miserable lot. Could he but have foisted it on the idiot Grafenberg, he might, by his own impudence and the other's stupidity, have escaped. But he could not flatter himself that he should be successful in bringing about this end, for he observed with sorrow, that the malicious Rudesheimer had not for a moment ceased watching him with a keen and exulting glance. Geisenheim performed his task; and ere Vivian could ask for the goblet, Rudesheimer, with a fell laugh, had handed it to Grafenberg. The greedy ass drank his portion with ease, and indeed drank far beyond his limit. The cup was in Vivian's hand, Rudesheimer was roaring (supernaculum) louder than all—Vivian saw that the covetous Grafenberg had providentially rendered his task comparatively light; but even as it was, he trembled at the idea of drinking at a single draught, more than a pint of most vigorous and powerful wine.

"My lord duke," said Vivian, "you and your companions forget that I am little used to these ceremonies; that I am yet uninitiated in the mysteries of the nère. I have endeavoured to prove myself no chicken-hearted water-drinking craven, and I have more wine within me at this moment than any man yet bore without dinner. I think, therefore, that I have some grounds for requesting indulgence; and I have no doubt that the good sense of yourself and your friends——"

Ere Vivian could finish, he almost fancied that a well-stocked menagery had been suddenly emptied in the room. Such roaring, and such growling, and such hissing, could only have been exceeded on some grand feast-day in the recesses of a Brazilian forest. Asmanshausen looked as fierce as a boar constrictor before dinner. The proboscis of the grand-duke heaved to and fro like the trunk of an enraged elephant. Hockheimer glared like a Bengal tiger, about to spring upon its prey. Steinberg growled like a Baltic bear. In Markbrunnen Vivian recognised the wild boar he had himself often hunted. Grafenberg brayed like a jackass; and Geisenheim chattered like an ape. But all was forgotten and unnoticed when Vivian heard the fell and frantic shouts of the laughing hyæna, the Margrave of Rudesheimer! Vivian, in despair, dashed the horn of Oberon to his mouth. One pull—a gasp—another desperate draught—it was done! and followed by a supernaculum almost superior to the exulting Asmanshausen's.

A loud shout hailed the exploit, and when the shout had subsided into silence, the voice of the Grand-duke of Schloss Johannisberger was again heard:—

"Noble lords and princes! I congratulate you on the acquisition of a congenial comate, and the accession to our society of one, who I now venture to say, will never disgrace the glorious foundation; but who, on the contrary, with heaven's blessing and the aid of his own good palate, will, it is hoped, add to our present knowledge of flavours by the detection of new ones, and by illustrations drawn from frequent study and constant observation

of the mysterious näre. In consideration of his long journey and his noble achievement, I do propose that we drink but very lightly to-night, and meet by two hours after to-morrow's dawn, under the mossman's oak. Nevertheless, before we part, for the refreshment of our own good bodies, and by way of reward, an act of courtesy unto this noble and accomplished stranger, let us pledge him in some foreign grape of fame, to which he may perhaps be more accustomed than unto the ever preferable juices of our father Rhine."—Here the grand-duke nodded to little Geisenheim, who in a moment was at his elbow.

It was in vain that Vivian remonstrated, excused himself from joining, or assured his royal highness that his conduct had already been so peculiarly courteous, that any further attention was at present unnecessary. A curiously cut glass, which, on a moderate calculation Vivian reckoned would hold at least three pints, was placed before each guest; and a basket, containing nine bottles of sparkling Champagne, première qualité, was set before his highness.

"We are no bigots, noble stranger," said the grand-duke, as he took one of the bottles, and scrutinized the cork with a very keen eye;—"We are no bigots, and there are moments when we drink Champagne, nor is Burgundy forgotten, nor the soft Bourdeaux, nor the glowing grape of the sunny Rhône!" His highness held the bottle at an oblique angle with the chandelier. The wire is loosened,—whirr!—The exploded cork whizzed through the air, extinguished one of the burners of the chandelier, and brought the cut drop which was suspended under it rattling down among the glasses on the table. The grand-duke poured the foaming fluid into his great goblet, and bowing to all around, fastened on its contents with as much eagerness as a half-insane dog rushes to a puddle in July.

The same operation was performed as regularly and as skilfully by all, except Vivian. Eight burners were extinguished; eight diamond drops had fallen clattering on the table; eight human beings had finished a miraculous carouse, by each drinking off a bottle of sparkling Champagne. It was Vivian's turn. All eyes were fixed on him with the most perfect attention. He was now, indeed, quite desperate; for had he been able to execute a trick which long practice alone could have enabled any man to perform, he felt conscious that it was quite out of his power to taste a single drop of the contents of his bottle. However, he loosened his wire and held the bottle at an angle with the chandelier; but the cork flew quite wild, and struck with great force the mighty nose of the grand-duke.

"A forfeit!" cried all.

"Treason, and a forfeit!" cried the Margrave of Rudesheimer.

"A forfeit is sufficient punishment," said the grand-duke; who, however, still felt the smarting effect of the assault on his proboscis. "You must drink Oberon's horn full of Champagne," continued his highness.

"Never!" said Vivian, "enough of this; I have already conformed in a degree which may injuriously affect my health, with your barbarous humours,—but there is moderation even in excess,—and so, if you please, my lord, your servant may show me to my apartment, or I shall again mount my horse."

"You shall not leave this room," said the grand-duke, with great firmness.

"Who shall prevent me?" asked Vivian.

"I will—all will!" said the grand-duke.

"Now, by heavens! a more insolent and inhospitable old ruffian did I never meet. By the wine you worship, if one dare touch me, you shall rue it all your born days; and as for you, sir, if you advance one step towards me, I'll take that sausage of a nose of yours and hurl you half round your own castle!"

"Treason!" shouted all, and looked to the grand-duke.

"Treason!" said the enraged majesty. The allusion to the nose had done away with all the constitutional doubts which his highness had sported so moderately at the commencement of the evening.

"Treason!" howled the grand-duke: "instant punishment!"

"What punishment?" asked Asmanshausen.

"Drown him in the new butt of Moselle," recommended Rudesheimer. The suggestion was immediately adopted. Every one rose: the little Geisenheim already had hold of Vivian's shoulder; and Grafenberg, instigated by the cowardly but malicious Rudesheimer, was about to seize him by the neck. Vivian took the dwarf and hurled him at the chandelier, in whose brazen chains the little being got entangled, and there remained. An unexpected cross-buttocker floored the incautious and unscientific Grafenberg; and following up these advantages, Vivian laid open the skull of his prime enemy, the retreating Margrave of Rudesheimer, with the assistance of the horn of Oberon; which flew from his hand to the other end of the room, from the force with which it rebounded from the cranium of the enemy. All the rest were now on the advance; but giving a vigorous and unexpected push to the table, the grand-duke and Asmanshausen were thrown over, and the nose of the former got entangled with the awkward windings of the fairy king's horn. Taking advantage of this move, Vivian rushed to the door. He escaped, but had not time to secure the lock against the enemy, for the stout Elector of Steinberg was too quick for him. He dashed down the stairs with extraordinary agility; but just as he had gained the large octagonal hall, the whole of his late boon companions, with the exception of the dwarf Geisenheim, who was left in the chandelier, were visible in full chase. Escape was impossible, and so Vivian, followed by the seven nobles, who were headed by the grand-duke, described with all possible rapidity a circle round the hall. He, of course, gave himself up for lost; but luckily for him, it never occurred to one of his pursuers to do any thing but follow their leader; and as, therefore, they never dodged Vivian, and as also he was a much fleetest runner than the fat grand-duke, whose pace, of course, regulated the progress of his followers, the party might have gone on at this rate until all of them had dropped from fatigue, had not the occurrence of a still more ludicrous incident prevented this consummation.

The hall-door was suddenly dashed open, and Essper George rushed in, followed in full chase by Hunsdrich and the guests of the lodge, who were the servants of Vivian's pursuers. Essper darted in between Rudesheimer and Markbrunnen, and Hunsdrich and his friends following the same tac-

tics as their lords and masters, without making any attempt to surround and hem in the object of their pursuit, merely followed him in order; describing, but in a contrary direction, a lesser circle within the eternal round of the first party. It was only proper for the servants to give their masters the wall. In spite of their very disagreeable and dangerous situation, it was with difficulty that Vivian refrained from laughter as he met Essper regularly every half minute at the foot of the great staircase. Suddenly, as Essper passed, he took Vivian by the waist, and with a single jerk placed him on the stairs; and then, with a dexterous dodge, he brought Hunsdrich the porter and the grand-duke in full contact.

"I have got you at last," said Hunsdrich, seizing hold of his grace of Schoss Johannisberger by the ears, and mistaking him for Essper.

"I have got you at last," said his royal highness, grappling with his porter, whom he supposed to be Vivian. Both struggled: their followers pushed on with impetuous force: the battle was general; the overthrow universal. In a moment all were on the ground; and if any less inebriated, or more active individual attempted to rise, Essper immediately brought him down with a boar-spear.

"Give me that large fishing-net," said Essper to Vivian; "quick, quick, your highness."

Vivian pulled down an immense coarse net, which covered nearly five sides of the room. It was immediately unfolded, and spread over the fallen crew. To fasten it down with half a dozen boar-spears, which they drove into the floor, was the work of a moment. Essper had one pull at the proboscis of the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger before he hurried Vivian away; and in ten minutes they were again on their horses' backs, and galloping through the star-lit wood.

CHAPTER XVII.

IT is the hour before the labouring bee has left his golden hive; not yet the blooming day buds in the blushing east; not yet has the victorious Lucifer chased from the early sky the fainting splendour of the stars of night. All is silent, save the light breath of morn waking the slumbering leaves. Even now a golden streak breaks over the gray mountains. Hark! to shrill chanticleer! As the cock crows, the owl ceases. Hark! to shrill chanticleer's feathered rival! the mounting lark springs from the sullen earth, and welcomes with his hymn the coming day. The golden streak has expanded into a crimson crescent, and rays of living fire flame over the rose-enamelled east. Man rises sooner than the sun; and already sound the whistle of the ploughman, the song of the mower, and the forge of the smith,—and hark! to the bugle of the hunter, and the baying of his deep-mouthed hound. The sun is up—the generating sun! and temple, and tower, and tree; the massy wood, and the broad field, and the distant hill, burst into sudden light—quickly up-curled is the dusky mist from the shining river—quickly is the cold dew drunk from the raised heads of the drooping flowers!

These observations are not by our hero; for although, like all other British youth, he had been accustom'd from an early age to scribble, and gene-

rally devoted his powers to the celebration of sunrise, sunset, the moon, the evening star, and the other principal planets; nevertheless, at the present moment, he was far from being in a disposition to woo the muse. A quick canter, by a somewhat clearer light than the one which had so unfortunately guided himself and his companion to the castle of the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger, soon carried them again to the skirts of the forest, and at this minute they are emerging on the plain from yonder dark wood.

"By heavens! Essper, I cannot reach the town this morning. Was ever any thing more terribly unfortunate! A curse on those drunken fools! What with no rest, and no solid refreshment, and the whole rivers of hock that are flowing within me, and the infernal exertion of running round that vile hall, I feel fairly exhausted, and could at this moment fall from my saddle. See you no habitation, my good fellow, where there might be a chance of a breakfast and a few hours' rest? We are now well out of the forest—O! surely there is smoke from behind those pines! Some good wife, I trust, is by her chimney-corner."

"If my sense be not destroyed by the fumes of that mulled Geisenheim, which still haunts me, I could swear that the smoke is the soul of a burning weed."

"A truce to your jokes, good Essper; I really am very ill. A year ago I could have laughed at our misfortunes, but now it is very different; and, by heavens, I must have breakfast! So stir—exert yourself, and although I die for it, let us canter up to the smoke."

"No, my dear master, I will ride on before. Do you follow gently, and if there be a pigeon in the pot in all Germany, I swear by the patron saint of every village for fifty miles round, provided they be not heretics, that you shall taste of its breast-bone this morning."

The smoke did issue from a chimney, but the door of the cottage was shut.

"Hilloa! hilloa! within, within!" shouted Essper; "who shuts the sun out on a September morning?"

The door was at length slowly opened, and a most ill-favoured and inhospitable-looking dame demanded, in a sullen voice, "What's your will?"

"O! you pretty creature!" said Essper, who was still a little tipsy.

The door would have been shut in his face, had not he darted into the house before the woman was aware.

"Truly, a very neat and pleasant dwelling! and you would have no objection, I guess, to give a handsome young gentleman some little sop of something, just to remind him, you know, that it isn't dinner-time."

"We give no sops here; what do you take us for? and so, my handsome young gentleman, be off, or I shall call the Goodman."

"O! you beauty: why, I'm not the handsome young gentleman, that's my master! who, if he were not half starved to death, would fall in love with you at first sight."

"O! your master—is he in the carriage?"

"Carriage! no—on horseback."

"Travellers?"

"To be sure, my dearest dame; travellers true."

"Travellers true, without luggage, and at this time of morn! Methinks, by your looks, queer

fellow, that you're travellers whom it may be wise for an honest woman not to meet."

"What! some people have an objection, then, to a forty kreuser piece on a sunny morning."

So saying, Essper, in a careless manner, tossed a broad piece in the air, and made it ring on a fellow zoin, as he caught it in the palm of his hand when it descended.

"Is that your master?" asked the woman.

"Ay! is it; and the prettiest piece of flesh I've seen this month, except yourself."

"Well! if the gentleman likes bread, he can sit down here," said the woman, pointing to a dirty bench, and throwing a sour black loaf upon the table.

"Now, sir!" said Essper, wiping the bench with great care, "lie you here and rest yourself. I've known a marshal sleep upon a harder sofa. Breakfast will be ready immediately, won't it, ma'am?"

"Haven't I given you the bread? If you cannot eat that, you may ride where you can find better cheer."

"Yes! you beauty—yes! you angel—yes! you sweet creature—but what's bread for a traveller's breakfast? But I dare say his highness will be contented—young men are so easily pleased when there's a pretty girl in the case—you know that, you wench! you do, you little hussy, you're taking advantage of it."

Something like a smile lit up the face of the sullen woman when she said—"There may be an egg in the house, but I don't know."

"But you will soon, you dear creature! you see his highness is in no hurry for his breakfast. He hasn't touched the bread yet, he's thinking of you, I've no doubt of it; now go and get the eggs, that's a beauty! O! what a pretty foot!" bawled Essper after her, as she left the room. "Now confound this old hag, if there's not meat about this house, may I keep my mouth shut at our next dinner. I wonder what's in that closet!—fastened!" Here the knave began sniffing and smelling in all the crevices. "O! here's our breakfast! my good lady, is it so? What's that in the corner? a boar's tusk! Ay! ay! a huntsman's cottage—and when lived a huntsman on black bread before! Good cheer! good cheer, sir! we shall have such a breakfast to-day, that, by the gods of all nations, we shall never forget it!—O! bless your bright eyes for these eggs, and that basin of new milk."

So saying, Essper took them out of her hand, and placed them before Vivian.

"I was saying to myself, my pretty girl, when you were out of the room—Essper George, Essper George—good cheer, Essper George—say thy prayers, and never despair—come, what come may, you'll fall among friends at last; and how do you know that your dream mayn't come true after all." "Dream!" said I to myself. "What dream?"—"Dream!" said myself to I, "didn't you dream that you breakfasted in the month of September with a genteel young woman, with gold ear-rings; and isn't she standing before you now? and didn't she do every thing in the world to make you comfortable? Didn't she give you milk and eggs, and when you complained that you and meat had been but slack friends of late, didn't she open her own closet, and give you as fine a piece of hunting beef as was ever set before a jagd junker!"—"O! you beauty!"

"I think you'll turn me into an inn-keeper's

wife at last," said the dame, her stern features relaxing into a smile; and while she spoke she advanced to the great closet, Essper George following her, walking on his toes, lolling out his enormous tongue, and stroking his mock punch. As she opened it he jumped upon a chair, and had examined every shelf in less time than a pistol could flash. "White bread! O! you beauty, fit for a countess. Salt! O! you angel, worthy of Poland. Boar's head!! O! you sweet creature, no better at Troyes! and hunting beef!!! my dream is true!" and he bore in triumph to Vivian, who was nearly asleep, the ample round of salt and pickled beef, well stuffed with all kinds of savoury herbs.

"Now, sir!" said he, putting before his master a plate and necessary implements; "let your heart gladden—No, sir! no, sir! cut the other side—cut the other side—there's the silver edge. Now, sir, some fat—drink your milk—drink your milk—such beef as this will soon settle all your Rhenish. Why, your eyes are brighter already. Have you breakfasted, ma'am? You have, eh!—O! breakfast again—never too much of a good thing. I always breakfast myself till dinner-time; and when dinner's finished, I begin my supper. Pray, where the devil are we!—Is this Reisenberg?"

"So we call it."

"And a very good name, too!—Let me give you a little stuffing, sir. And are the grand-duke's gentlemen out a hunting?"

"No, it's the prince."

"The prince—ah! I dare say you've a little more milk. What a nice cottage this is! How I should like to live here—with you though—with you—thank you for the milk—quite fresh—beautiful! I'm my own man again! How do you feel, sir?"

"Thanks to this good woman, much better; and with her kind permission, I will now rest myself on this bench for a couple of hours. This, good lady," said Vivian, giving her some florins, "I do not offer as a remuneration for your kindness, but as a slight token of—"

Here Vivian began to snore. Essper George, who always slept with his eyes open, and who never sat still for a second, save when eating, immediately left the table; and in five minutes was as completely domesticated in the huntsman's cottage, as if he had lived there all his life. The woman was quite delighted with a guest who, in the course of half an hour, had cleaned her house from top to bottom, dug up half her garden, mended her furniture, and milked her cow.

It was nearly an hour before noon, ere the travellers had remounted. Their road again entered the enormous forest which they had been skirting for the last two days. The huntsmen were abroad; and the fine weather, his good meal, and seasonable rest, and the inspiring sounds of the bugle, made Vivian feel quite recovered from his late fatigues.

"That must be a true-hearted huntsman, Essper, by the sound of his bugle. I never heard one played with more spirit. Hark! how fine it dies away in the wood—fainter and fainter, yet how clear! It must be now half a mile distant."

"I hear nothing so wonderful," said Essper, putting the two middle fingers of his right hand before his mouth, and sounding a note so clear and beautiful, so exactly imitative of the fall which Vivian had noticed and admired, that for a moment

he imagined that the huntsman was at his elbow.

"Thou art a cunning knave!—do it again." This time Essper made the very wood echo. In a few minutes a horseman galloped up. He was as spruce a cavalier as ever pricked gay steed on the pliant grass. He was dressed in a green military uniform, and a small gilt bugle hung down his side. His spear told them that he was hunting the wild boar. When he saw Vivian and Essper he suddenly pulled up his horse, and seemed very much astonished.

"I thought that his highness had been here," said the huntsman.

"No one has passed us, sir," said Vivian.

"I could have sworn that his bugle sounded from this very spot," said the huntsman. "My ear seldom deceives me."

"We heard a bugle to the right, sir," said Essper.

"Thanks, thanks, thanks, my friend,"—and the huntsman was about to gallop off.

"May I ask the name of his highness," said Vivian.

"We are strangers in this country."

"That may certainly account for your ignorance," said the huntsman; "but no one who lives in this land can be unacquainted with his Serene Highness the Prince of Little Lilliput, my illustrious master. I have the honour," continued the huntsman, "of being jagd junker, or gentilhomme de la chasse to his serene highness."

"'Tis an office of great dignity," said Vivian, "and one that I have no doubt you most admirably perform—I will not stop you, sir, to admire your horse."

The huntsman bowed very courteously, and galloped off.

"You see, sir," said Essper George, "that my rugle has deceived even the jagd junker, or gentilhomme de la chasse of his Serene Highness the Prince of Little Lilliput himself," so saying, Essper again sounded his instrument.

"A joke may be carried too far, my good fellow," said Vivian. "A true huntsman, like myself, must not spoil a brother's sport. So silence your bugle."

Now again galloped up the jagd junker, or gentilhomme de la chasse of his Serene Highness the Prince of Little Lilliput. He pulled up his horse again, apparently as much astounded as ever.

"I thought that his highness had been here," said the huntsman.

"No one has passed us," said Vivian.

"We heard a bugle to the right," said Essper George.

"I am afraid his serene highness must be in distress. The whole suite are off the scent. It must have been his bugle, for the regulations of this forest are so strict, that no one dare sound a blast but his serene highness." Away galloped the huntsman.

"Next time I must give you up, Essper," said Vivian.

"One more blast, my good master!" begged Essper, in a very supplicating voice. "This time to the left—the confusion will be then complete."

"On your life not—I command you not," and so they rode on in silence. But it was one of those days when Essper could neither be silent nor

subdued. Greatly annoyed at not being permitted to play his bugle, he amused himself for some time by making the most hideous grimaces; but as there were none either to admire or to be alarmed by the contortions of his countenance, this diversion soon palled. He then endeavoured to find some entertainment in riding his horse in every mode except the right one; but again, who was to be astounded by his standing on one foot on the saddle, or by his imitations of the ludicrous shifts of a female equestrian, perfectly ignorant of the *manège*. At length he rode with his back to his horse's head, and imitated the peculiar sound of every animal that he met. A young fawn, and various kinds of birds already followed him; and even a squirrel had perched on his horse's neck. And now they came to a small farm-house which was situated in the forest. The yard here offered great amusement to Essper. He neighed, and half a dozen horses' heads immediately appeared over the hedge; another neigh, and they were following him in the road. The dog rushed out to seize the dangerous stranger, and recover his charge: but Essper gave an amicable bark, and in a second the dog was jumping by his side, and engaged in the most earnest and friendly conversation. A loud and continued grunt soon brought out the pigs; and meeting three or four cows returning home, a few lowing sounds soon seduced them from keeping their appointment with the dairymaid. A stupid jackass, who stared with astonishment at the procession, was saluted with a lusty bray, which immediately induced him to swell the ranks: and as Essper passed the poultry-yard, he so deceitfully informed the inhabitants that they were about to be fed, that twenty broods of ducks and chickens were immediately after him. The careful hens were terribly alarmed at the danger which their offspring incurred from the heels and hoofs of the quadrupeds; but while they were in doubt and despair, a whole flock of stately geese issued in solemn pomp from another gate of the farm-yard, and commenced a cackling conversation with the delighted Essper. So contagious is the force of example, and so great was the confidence which the hens place in these pompous geese, who were not the first fools whose solemn air has deceived a few old females; that as soon as they perceived them in the train of the horsemen, they also trotted up to pay their respects at his levée. And here Vivian Grey stopped his horse, and burst into a fit of laughter.

But it was not a moment for mirth; for rushing down the road with awful strides appeared two sturdy and enraged husbandmen, one armed with a pike, and the other with a pitch-fork, and accompanied by a frantic female, who never for a moment ceased hallooing, "Murder, rape, and fire!" every thing but "theft."

"Now, Essper, here's a pretty scrape!"

"Stop, you rascals!" hallooed Adolph the herdsman.

"Stop, you gang of thieves!" hallooed Wil helm the ploughman.

"Stop, you bloody murderers!" shrieked Philippa, the indignant mistress of the dairy and the poultry-yard.

"Stop, you villains!" hallooed all three. The villains certainly made no attempt to escape, and in half a second the enraged household of the forest farmer would have seized on Essper George;

but just at this crisis he uttered loud sounds in the respective language of every bird and beast about him; and suddenly they all turned round, and counter-marched. Away rushed the terrified Adolph the herdsman, while one of his own cows was on his back. Still quicker scampered off the scared Wilhelm the ploughman, while one of his own steeds kicked him in his rear. Quicker than all these, shouting, screaming, shrieking, dashed back the unhappy mistress of the hen-roost, with all her subjects crowding about her; some on her elbow, some on her head, her lace cap destroyed, her whole dress disorganized. Another loud cry from Essper George, and the retreating birds cackled with redoubled vigour. Still louder were the neighs of the horses, the bray of the jackass, and the barking of the dog, the squeaking of the swine, and the lowing of the cows! Essper enjoyed the scene at his ease, leaning his back in a careless manner against his horse's neck. The movements of the crowd were so quick that they were soon out of sight.

"A trophy!" called out Essper, as he jumped off his horse, and picked up the pike of Adolph the herdsman.

"A boar-spear, or I am no huntsman," said Vivian—"give it me a moment!" He threw it up into the air, and caught it with ease, poised it on his finger with the practised skill of one well used to handle the weapon, and with the same delight inprinted on his countenance as greets the sight of an old friend.

"This forest, Essper, and this spear, make me remember days when I was vain enough to think that I had been sufficiently visited with sorrow. Ah! little did I then know of human misery, although I imagined I had suffered so much!—But not my will be done!" muttered Vivian to himself.

As he spoke, the sounds of a man in distress were heard from the right side of the road.

"Who calls, who calls?" cried Essper; a shout was the only answer. There was no path, but the underwood was low, and Vivian took his horse, an old forester, across it with ease. Essper's jibbed. Vivian found himself in a small green glade of about thirty feet square. It was thickly surrounded with lofty trees, save at the point where he had entered; and at the farthest corner of it, near some gray rocks, a huntsman was engaged in a desperate contest with a wild boar.

The huntsman was on his right knee, and held his spear with both hands at the furious beast. It was an animal of extraordinary size and power. Its eyes glittered like fire. On the turf to its right a small gray mastiff, of powerful make, lay on its back, bleeding profusely, with its body ripped open. Another dog, a fawn-coloured bitch, had seized on the left ear of the beast; but the under-tusk of the boar, which was nearly a foot long, had penetrated the courageous dog, and the poor creature writhed in agony, even while it attempted to wreak its revenge upon its enemy. The huntsman was nearly exhausted. Had it not been for the courage of the fawn-coloured dog, which, clinging to the boar, prevented it making a full dash at the man, he must have been instantly gored. Vivian was off his horse in a minute, which, frightened at the sight of the wild boar, dashed again over the hedge.

"Keep firm, keep firm, sir!" said he, "do not

move. I'll amuse him behind, and make him turn."

A graze of Vivian's spear on its back, though it did not materially injure the beast, for there the boar is nearly invulnerable, annoyed it; and dashing off the fawn-coloured dog, with great force, it turned on its new assailant. Now there are only two places in which the wild boar can be assailed with any effect; and these are just between the eyes, and between the shoulders. Great caution, however, is necessary in aiming these blows, for the boar is very adroit in transfixing the weapon on his snout, or his tusks; and if once you miss, particularly if you are not assisted by your dogs, which Vivian was not, 'tis all over with you; for the enraged animal rushes in like lightning, and gored you must be.

But Vivian was quite fresh, and quite cool. The animal suddenly stood still, and eyed its new enemy. Vivian was quiet, for he had no objection to give the beast an opportunity of retreating to its den. But retreat was not its object—it suddenly darted at the huntsman, who, however, was not off his guard, though unable from a slight wound in his knee to rise. Vivian again annoyed the boar at the rear, and the animal soon returned to him. He made a feint, as if he were about to strike his spike between its eyes. The boar not feeling a wound, which had not been inflicted, and very irritated, rushed at him, and he buried his spear a foot deep between its shoulders. The beast made one fearful struggle, and then fell down quite dead. The fawn-coloured bitch, though terribly wounded, gave a loud bark; and even the other dog, which Vivian thought had been long dead, testified its triumphant joy by an almost inarticulate groan. As soon as he was convinced that the boar was really dead, Vivian hastened to the huntsman, and expressed his hope that he was not seriously hurt.

"A trifle, a trifle, which our surgeon, who is used to these affairs, will quickly cure—Sir! we owe you our life!" said the huntsman, with great dignity, as Vivian assisted him in rising from the ground. He was a tall man, of imposing appearance; but his dress, which was the usual hunting costume of a German nobleman, did not indicate his quality.

"Sir, we owe you our life!" repeated the stranger; "five minutes more, and our son must have reigned in Little Lilliput."

"I have the honour then of addressing your serene highness. Far from being indebted to me, I feel that I ought to apologize for having so unceremoniously joined in your sport."

"Nonsense, man, nonsense! We have killed in our time too many of these gentlemen, to be ashamed of owning that, had it not been for you, one of them would at last have revenged the species. But many as are the boars that we have killed or eaten, we never saw a more furious or more powerful animal than the present. Why, sir, you must be one of the best hands at the spear in all Christendom!"

"Indifferently good, your highness: your highness forgets that the animal was already exhausted by your assault."

"Why, there's something in that; but it was neatly done, man—it was neatly done.—You're fond of the sport, we think?"

"I have had some practice, but illness has

so weakened me that I have given up the forest."

"Indeed! pity, pity, pity! and on a second examination, we observe that you are no hunter. This coat is not for the free forest; but how came you by the pike?"

"I am travelling to the next post town, to which I have sent on my luggage. I am getting fast to the south; and as for this pike, my servant got it this morning from some peasant in a brawl, and was showing it to me when I heard your highness call. I really think now that Providence must have sent it. I certainly could not have done you much service with my riding whip—Hilloa! Essper, Essper, where are you?"

"Here, noble sir! here, here—why what have you got there? The horses have jibbed, and will not stir—I can stay no longer—they may go to the devil!" So saying, Vivian's valet dashed over the underwood, and leaped at the foot of the prince.

"In God's name, is this thy servant?" asked his highness.

"In good faith am I," said Essper; "his valet, his cook, and his secretary, all in one; and also his jagd junker, or gentilhomme de la chasse—as a puppy with a bugle horn told me this morning."

"A very merry knave!" said the prince; "and talking of a puppy with a bugle horn, reminds us how unaccountably we have been deserted to-day by a suite that never yet were wanting. We are indeed astonished. Our bugle, we fear, has turned traitor." So saying, the prince executed a blast with great skill, which Vivian immediately recognised as the one which Essper George had so admirably imitated.

"And now, my good friend," said the prince, "we cannot hear of your passing through our land, without visiting our good castle. We would that we could better testify the obligation which we feel under to you, in any other way than by the offer of a hospitality which all gentlemen, by right, can command. But your presence would, indeed, give us sincere pleasure. You must not refuse us. Your looks, as well as your prowess, prove your blood; and we are quite sure no cloth-merchant's order will suffer by your not hurrying to your proposed point of destination. We are not wrong, we think,—though your accent is good.—in supposing that we are conversing with an English gentleman. But here they come."

As he spoke, three or four horsemen, at the head of whom was the young huntsman whom the travellers had met in the morning, sprang into the glade.

"Why, Arnelm!" said the prince, "when before was the jagd junker's car so bad that he could not discover his master's bugle, even though the wind were against him?"

"In truth, your highness, we have heard bugles enough this morning. Who is violating the forest laws, we know not; but that another bugle is sounding, and played,—St. Hubert forgive me for saying so,—with as great skill as your highness', is certain. Myself, Von Neuwied, and Lintz, have been galloping over the whole forest. The rest, I doubt not, will be up directly." The jagd junker blew his own bugle.

In the course of five minutes about twenty other barons, all dressed in the same uniform, had arrived; all complaining of their wild

chases after the prince in every other part of the forest.

"It must be the Wild Huntsman himself!" swore an old hand. This solution of the mystery satisfied all.

"Well, well!" said the prince; "whoever it may be, had it not been for the timely presence of this gentleman, you must have changed your green jackets for mourning coats, and our bugle would have sounded no more in the forests of our fathers. Here, Arnelm!—cut up the beast,—and remember that the left shoulder is the quarter of honour, and belongs to this stranger;—not less honoured because unknown."

All present took off their caps and bowed to Vivian; who took this opportunity of informing the prince who he was.

"And now," continued his highness, "Mr. Grey will accompany us to our castle;—nay, sir, we can take no refusal. We will send on to the town for your luggage. Arnelm, do you look to this!—And, honest friend!" said the prince, turning to Essper George,—“we commend you to the special care of our friend Von Neuwied,—and so, gentlemen, with stout hearts and spurs to your steeds—to the castle!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE cavalcade proceeded for some time at a very brisk but irregular pace, until they arrived at a less wild and wooded part of the forest. The Prince of Little Lilliput reined in his steed as he entered a very broad avenue of purple beeches, at the end of which, though at a considerable distance, Vivian perceived the towers and turrets of a Gothic edifice glittering in the sunshine.

"Welcome to Turriparva!" said his highness.

"I assure your highness," said Vivian, "that I view with no unpleasant feeling, the prospect of a reception in any civilized mansion; for to say the truth, for the last eight-and-forty hours, Fortune has not favoured me either in my researches after a bed, or that which some think still more important than nightly repose."

"Is it so!" said the prince; "why, we should have thought by your home-thrust this morning, that you were as fresh as the early lark. In good faith, it was a pretty stroke! And whence come you then, good sir?"

"Know you a most insane and drunken idiot, who styles himself the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger!"

"No, no!" said the prince, staring in Vivian's face very earnestly, and then bursting into a loud fit of laughter; "No, no, it cannot be! hah! hah! hah! but it is, though; and you have actually fallen among that mad crew. Hah! hah! hah! a most excellent adventure! Arnelm! why, man, where art thou? ride up, ride up! Behold in the person of this gentleman a new victim to the overwhelming hospitality of our uncle of the Wines. And did they confer a title on you on the spot? Say, art thou elector, or palgrave, or baron; or, failing in thy devoirs, as once did our good cousin Arnelm, confess that thou wert ordained with becoming reverence, the Archprimate of Puddle-drink. Eh! Arnelm, is not that the style thou bearest at the Palace of the Wines?"

"So it would seem, your highness. I think the title was conferred on me the same night that your highness mistook the grand duke's proboscis for Oberon's horn, and committed treason not yet pardoned."

"Hah! hah! hah! good! good! good! thou hast us there. Truly a good memory is often as ready a friend as a sharp wit. Wit is not thy strong point, friend Arnelm; and yet it is strange, that in the sharp encounter of ready tongues and idle logomachies, thou hast sometimes the advantage. But, nevertheless, rest assured, good cousin Arnelm, that wit is not thy strong point."

"It is well for me that all are not of the same opinion as your serene highness;" said the young jagd junker, somewhat nettled; for he prided himself peculiarly on his repartees.

The prince was exceedingly diverted with Vivian's account of his last night's adventure; and our hero learned from his highness, that his late host was no less a personage than the cousin of the Prince of Little Lilliput, an old German baron, who passed his time with some neighbours of congenial temperament, in hunting the wild boar in the morning, and speculating on the flavours of the fine Rhenish wines during the rest of the day. "He and his companions," continued the prince, "will enable you to form a tolerably accurate idea of the character of the German nobility half a century ago. The debauch of last night was the usual carouse which crowned the exploits of each day when we were a boy. The revolution has rendered all these customs obsolete. Would that it had not sent some other things equally out of fashion!"

At this moment the prince sounded his bugle, and the gates of the castle, which were not more than twenty yards distant, were immediately thrown open. The whole cavalcade set spurs to their steeds, and dashed at full gallop over the hollow-sounding drawbridge, into the court-yard of the castle. A crowd of serving-men in green liveries, instantly appeared; and Arnelm and Von Neuwid, jumping from their saddles, respectively held the stirrup and the bridle of the prince as he dismounted.

"Where is Master Rodolph?" asked his highness, with a loud voice.

"So please your serene highness, I am here!" answered a very thin treble; and bustling through the surrounding crowd, came forward the owner of the voice. Master Rodolph was not above five feet high, but he was nearly as broad as he was long. Though more than middle-aged, an almost infantile smile played upon his broad fair face; to which his small turn-up nose, large green, goggle eyes, and unmeaning mouth, gave no expression. His long hair hung over his shoulders, the flaxen locks in some places maturing into gray. In compliance with the taste of his master, this most unportsman-like-looking steward was clad in a green jerkin, on the right arm of which was embroidered a giant's head—the crest of the Little Lilliputs.

"Truly, Rodolph, we have received some scratch in the chase to-day, and need your assistance. The best of surgeons, we assure you, Mr. Grey, if you require one;—and look you that the blue chamber be prepared for this gentleman; and we shall have need of our cabinet this evening. See that all this be done, and inform Prince Maximilian that we would speak with him. And look you, Master Rodolph, there is one in this company,—what call

you your servant's name, sir?—Esser George! 'tis well: look you, Rodolph, see that our friend Esser George be well provided for. We know that we can trust him to your good care. And now, gentlemen, at sunset we meet in the Giant's Hall." So saying, his highness bowed to the party; and taking Vivian by the arm, and followed by Arnelm and Von Neuwid, he ascended a staircase which opened into the court, and then mounted into a covered gallery which ran round the whole building. The interior wall of the gallery was alternately ornamented with stags' heads, or other trophies of the chase, and coats of arms blazoned in stucco. The prince did the honours of the castle to Vivian with great courtesy. The armoury, and the hall, the knight's chamber, and even the donjon-keep were all examined; and when Vivian had sufficiently admired the antiquity of the structure, and the beauty of the situation, the prince, having proceeded down a long corridor, opened the door into a small chamber which he introduced to Vivian as his cabinet. The furniture of this room was rather quaint, and not unpleasing. The wainscot and ceiling were painted alike, of a very light green colour, and were richly carved and gilt. The walls were hung with dark green velvet, of which costly material were also the chairs and a sofa, which was placed under a large and curiously cut looking-glass. The lower panes of the windows of this room were of stained glass, of the most vivid tints; but the upper panes were untinged, in order that the light should not be disturbed which fell through them upon two magnificent pictures; one a hunting piece by Schneiders, and the other a portrait of an armed chieftain on horseback, by Lucas Cranch.

And now the door opened, and Master Rodolph entered, carrying in his hand a white wand, and bowing very reverently as he ushered in two servants bearing a cold collation. As he entered, it was with difficulty that he could settle his countenance into the due and requisite degree of gravity; and so often was the fat steward on the point of bursting into laughter, as he arranged the setting out of the refreshments on the table, that the prince, with whom he was, at the same time, both a favourite and a butt, at last noticed his unusual and unmanageable risibility.

"Why, Rodolph, what ails thee? hast thou just discovered the point of some good saying of yesterday?"

The steward could now contain his laughter no longer, and he gave vent to his emotion in a most treble "He! he! he!"

"Speak, man, in the name of St. Hubert, and on the word of as stout a huntsman as ever yet crossed horse. Speak, we say, what ails thee?"

"He! he! he! in truth, a most comical knave! I beg your serene highness ten thousand pardons, but in truth a more comical knave did I never see. How call you him? Esser George, I think, he! he! he! In truth, your highness was right when you styled him a merry knave—in truth a most comical knave—he! he! he! a very funny knave! he! he! he! He says, your highness, that I'm like a snake in a consumption!—he! he! he! in truth a most comical knave!"

"Well, Rodolph, as long as you do not quarrel with his jokes they shall pass as true wit. But why comes not our son? Have you bidden the Prince Maximilian to our presence?"

"In truth have I, your highness; but he was engaged at the moment with Mr. Sievers, and therefore he could not immediately attend my bidding; nevertheless, he bade me deliver to your serene highness his dutiful affection; saying, that he would soon have the honour of bending his knee unto your serene highness."

"He never said any such nonsense. At least, if he did, he must be much changed since last we parted."

"In truth, your highness, I cannot aver upon my conscience as a faithful steward, that such were the precise words and exact phraseology of his highness, the Prince Maximilian. But in the time of the good prince, your father, whose memory be ever blessed, such were the words and style of message, which I was schooled and instructed by Mr. Von Lexicon, your serene highness's most honoured tutor, to bear unto the good prince your father, whose memory be ever blessed; when I had the great fortune of being your serene highness's most particular page, and it fell to my lot to have the pleasant duty of informing the good prince, your father, whose memory be ever blessed—"

"Enough! enough! but Sievers is not Von Lexicon, and Maximilian, we trust, is—"

"Papa! papa!—dearest papa!" shouted a young lad, as he dashed open the door; and rushing into the room, threw his arms around the prince's neck.

"My darling!" said the father, forgetting at this moment of genuine feeling, the pompous plural in which he had hitherto spoken of himself. The prince fondly kissed his child. The boy was about ten years of age, exquisitely handsome. Courage, not audacity, was imprinted on his noble features.

"Papa! may I hunt with you to-morrow?"

"What says Mr. Sievers?"

"O! Mr. Sievers says I am an excellent fellow; I assure you upon my honour he does. I heard you come home; but though I was dying to see you, I would not run out till I had finished my Roman History. I say! papa! what a grand fellow Brutus was—what a grand thing it is to be a patriot! I intend to be a patriot myself, and to kill the Grand-duke of Reisenberg Papa, who's that?"

"My friend, Max, Mr. Grey. Speak to him."

"I am very happy to see you at Turriparva, sir," said the boy, bowing to Vivian with great dignity. "Have you been hunting with his highness this morning?"

"I can hardly say I have."

"Max, I have received a slight wound to-day.—Don't look alarmed—it is very slight. I only mention it, because had it not been for this gentleman, it is very probable you would never have seen your father again. He has saved my life!"

"Saved your life! saved my papa's life!" said the young prince, seizing Vivian's hand—"O! sir, what can I do for you? Mr. Sievers!" said the boy, with great eagerness, to a gentleman who entered the room—"Mr. Sievers! here is a young lad who has saved papa's life!"

Mr. Sievers was a very tall, thin man, perhaps about forty, with a clear sallow complexion, a high forehead, on which a few wrinkles were visible, very bright keen eyes, narrow arched brows, and a quantity of gray curling hair, which was combed back off his forehead, and fell down over his shoulders. He was instantly introduced to Vivian as the prince's most particular friend; and then he

listened, apparently with great interest, to his highness's narrative of the morning's adventure; his danger, and his rescue. Young Maximilian never took his large, dark-blue eyes off his father while he was speaking; and when he had finished, the boy rushed to Vivian, and threw his arms round his neck. Vivian was delighted with the affection of the child, who whispered to him, in a low voice—"I know what you are!"

"What, my young friend?"

"Ah! I know."

"But tell me!"

"You thought I shouldn't find out:—you're a—patriot!"

"I hope I am," said Vivian; "but travelling in a foreign country is hardly a proof of it. Perhaps you do not know that I am an Englishman."

"An Englishman!" said the child, with an air of great disappointment—"I thought you were a patriot! I am one. Do you know, I'll tell you a secret. You must promise not to tell, though.—Promise—upon your word! Well, then," said the arch, whispering with great energy in Vivian's ear, through his hollow fist:—"I hate the Grand-duke of Reisenberg, and I mean to stab him to the heart;" so saying, the little prince, grated his teeth with an expression of the most bitter detestation.

"What the devil is the matter with the child!" thought Vivian; but at this moment his conversation with him was interrupted.

"Am I to believe this young gentleman, my dear Sievers," asked the prince, "when he tells me that his conduct has met your approbation?"

"Your son, prince," answered Mr. Sievers, "can only speak truth. His excellence is proved by my praising him to his face."

The young Maximilian, when Mr. Sievers had ceased speaking, stood flushing, with his eyes fixed on the ground; and the delighted parent catching his child up in his arms, embraced him with unaffected fondness.

"And now, all this time Master Rodolph is waiting for his patient. By St. Hubert, you can none of you think me very ill! Your pardon, Mr. Grey, for leaving you. My friend Sievers will, I am sure, be delighted to make you feel at ease at Turriparva. Max, come with me!"

Vivian found in Mr. Sievers a very interesting companion; nothing of the pedant, and much of the philosopher. Their conversation was of course chiefly on topics of local interest, anecdotes of the castle and the country, of Vivian's friends, the drunken Johannsberger and his crew, and such matters; but there was a keenness of satire in some of Mr. Sievers' observations which was highly amusing, and enough passed to make Vivian desire opportunities of conversing with him at greater length, and on subjects of greater interest. They were at present disturbed by Esser George entering the room to inform Vivian that his luggage had arrived from the village; and that the blue chamber was now prepared for his presence.

"We shall meet, I suppose, in the hall, Mr. Sievers!"

"No, I shall not dine there. If you remain at Turriparva, which I trust you will, I shall be happy to see you in my room. If it have no other inducement to gain it the honour of your visit, it has here, at least, the recommendation of singularity, there is, at any rate, no other chamber like it in this good castle."

The business of the toilet is sooner performed for a hunting party in a German forest, than for a state dinner at Château Desir; and Vivian was ready long before he was summoned.

"His serene highness has commenced his progress towards the hall," announced Essper George to Vivian, in a very treble voice, and bowing with great ceremony as he offered to lead the way, with a long white wand waving in his right hand.

"I shall attend his highness," said his master; "but before I do, if that white wand be not immediately laid aside, it will be broken at your back."

"Broken about my back! what, the wand of office of your highness' steward! Master Rodolph says that, in truth, a steward is but half himself who hath not his wand. Methinks when his rod of office is wanting, his Highness of Lilliput's steward is but unequally divided. In truth he is stout enough to be Aaron's wand, that swallowed up all the rest. But has your nobleness really any serious objection to my carrying a wand? It gives such an air! I really thought your highness could have no serious objection. It cost me a good hour's talking with Master Rodolph to gain his permission. I was obliged to swear that he was a foot taller than myself, ere he would consent; and then only on the condition that my wand should be full twelve inches shorter than his own. The more's the pity," continued Essper: "it spoils the sport, and makes me seem but half a steward after all. By the honour of my mother! it shall go hard with me if I do not pick the pith of his rush this night! Twelve inches shorter! you must have a conscience, Master Rodolph!"

"Come, come, silence! and no more of this frippery."

"No, your highness, not a word, not a word;—but twelve inches, your highness—twelve inches shorter, what do you think of that? Twelve inches shorter than Master Rodolph's—Master Rodolph, forsooth!—Master Treble-Paunch! If he had as much brains in his head, as he has something else in his body, why then, your highness—"

"No more, no more!"

"Not a word, not a word, your highness! Not a word should your highness ever have heard, but for the confounded folly of this goggle-eyed gander of a steward:—twelve inches, in good truth!—Why, twelve inches, your highness—twelve inches is no trifle—twelve inches is a size—twelve inches is only six shorter than the Grand-duke of Schoss Johannisberger's nose."

"It matters little, Essper, for I shall tolerate no such absurdities."

"Your highness is the best judge—it isn't for me to differ with your highness. I am not arguing for the wand; I am only saying, your highness, that if that overgrown anchovy, whom they call Master Rodolph had shown a little more sense upon the occasion, why then I should have had a better opinion of his judgment; as it is, the day he can tell me the morrow of Easter eve, I'll make a house steward of a Michaelmas goose."

The Giants' Hall was a Gothic chamber of imposing appearance. The oaken rafters of the curiously carved roof rested on the grim heads of gigantic figures of the same material. These statues extended the length of the hall on each side; they were elaborately sculptured and highly polished, and each one held in its outstretched arm a blazing and aromatic torch. Above them, small windows

of painted glass admitted a light which was no longer necessary at the banquet to which I am now about to introduce the reader. Over the great entrance doors was a gallery, from which a band of trumpeters, arrayed in ample robes of flowing scarlet, sent forth many a festive and martial strain. More than fifty individuals, all wearing hunting-dresses of green cloth on which the giant's head was carefully emblazoned, were already seated in the hall when Vivian entered. He was conducted to the upper part of the chamber, and a seat was allotted him on the left hand of the prince. His highness had not arrived, but a chair of state, placed under a crimson canopy, denoted the style of its absent owner; and a stool, covered with velvet of the same regal colour and glistening with gold lace, announced that the presence of Prince Maximilian was expected. While Vivian was musing in astonishment at the evident affectation of royal pomp which pervaded the whole establishment of the Prince of Little Lilliput, the trumpeters in the gallery suddenly commenced a triumphant flourish. All rose as the princely procession entered the hall. First came Master Rodolph, twirling his white wand with the practised pride of a drum-major, and looking as pompous as a turkey-cock in a storm. Six footmen in splendid liveries, two by two, immediately followed him. A page heralded the Prince Maximilian, and then came the serene father; the jagd junker, and four or five other gentlemen of the court formed the suite.

His highness ascended the throne, Prince Maximilian was on his right, and Vivian had the high honour of the left hand; the jagd junker seated himself next to our hero. The table was profusely covered, chiefly with the sports of the forest, and the celebrated wild boar was not forgotten. Few minutes had elapsed ere Vivian perceived that his highness was always served on bended knee. Surprised at this custom, which even the highest and most despotic monarchs seldom exact, and still more surprised at the contrast which all this state afforded to the natural ease and affable amiability of the prince, Vivian ventured to ask his neighbour Arnelm whether the banquet of to-day was in celebration of any particular event of general or individual interest.

"By no means," said the jagd junker; "this is the usual style of the prince's daily meal, except that to-day there is perhaps rather less state and fewer guests than usual; in consequence of many of our fellow-subjects having left us with the purpose of attending a great hunting party, which is now being held in the dominions of his highness' cousin, the Duke of Micromegas."

When the more necessary, but, as most hold, the less delightful part of banquetting was over, and the numerous serving-men had removed the more numerous dishes of wild boar, red deer, kid, and winged game; a stiff Calvinistic-looking personage rose, and delivered a long, and most grateful grace, to which the sturdy huntsmen listened with a due mixture of piety and impatience. When his starch reverence, who, in his black coat, looked among the huntsmen very like, as Essper George observed, a blackbird among a set of moulting canaries, had finished,—an old man, with long snow-white hair, and a beard of the same colour, rose from his seat; and with a glass in his hand, bowing first to his highness with great respect, and then to his companions with an air of condescension, gave in a

stout voice, "The prince!" A loud shout was immediately raised, and all quaffed with rapture the health of a ruler whom evidently they adored. Master Rodolph now brought forward an immense silver goblet, full of some crafty compound, from its odour doubtless delicious. The prince held the goblet by its two mussy handles, and then said in a loud voice:—

"My Friends! the Giant's Head! and he who sneers at its frowns, may he rue its bristles!"

The toast was welcomed with a loud cry of triumph. When the noise had subsided, the jagd junker rose; and prefaceing the intended pledge by a few observations, as remarkable for the delicacy of their sentiments as the elegance of their expression, he gave, pointing to Vivian, "The guest! and may the prince never want a stout arm at a strong push!" The sentiment was again echoed by the lusty voice of all present, and particularly by his highness. As Vivian shortly returned thanks and modestly apologized for the German of a foreigner, he could not refrain from remembering the last time when he was placed in the same situation. It was when the treacherous Earl of Courtown had drunk success to Mr. Vivian Grey's maiden speech in a bumper of claret, at the political orgies of Château Desir. Could he really, in very fact, be the same individual as the bold, dashing, fearless youth, who then organized the crazy councils of those ambitious, imbecile graybeards? What was he then? What had happened since? What was he now? He turned from the comparison with feelings of sickening disgust, and it was with difficulty that his countenance could assume the due degree of hilarity which befitted the present occasion.

"Truly, Mr. Grey," said the prince; "your German would pass current at Weimar. Arnelm, good cousin Arnelm, we must trouble thy affectionate duty to marshal and regulate the drinking devoirs of our kind subjects to-night; for by the advice of our trusty surgeon, Master Rodolph, of much fame, we shall refrain this night from our accustomed potations, and betake ourselves to the solitude of our cabinet—a solitude, in good sooth, unless we can persuade you to accompany us, kind sir," said the prince, turning to Mr. Grey. "Methinks eight-and-forty hours without rest, and a good part spent in the mad walls of our cousin of Johannsberger, are hardly the best preparatives for a drinking bout. Unless, after Oberon's horn, ye may fairly be considered to be in practice. Nevertheless, I advise the cabinet and a cup of Rodolph's coffee. What sayest thou?" Vivian acceded to the prince's proposition with eager pleasure; and accompanied by Prince Maximilian, and preceded by the little steward, who, surrounded by his serving-men, very much resembled a planet eclipsed by his satellites, they left the hall.

"'Tis almost a pity to shut out the moon on such a night," said the prince, as he drew a large green velvet curtain from the windows of the cabinet.

"'Tis certainly a magnificent night!" said Vivian; "How fine the effect of the light is upon the picture of the warrior. I declare the horse seems quite living, and its fierce rider actually frowns upon us."

"He may well frown," said the Prince of Little Lilliput, in a voice of deep melancholy; and he hastily redrew the curtain. In a moment he started from the chair on which he had just seated himself,

and again admitted the moonlight. "Am I really afraid of an old picture? No, no, it has not yet come to that."

This was uttered in a very distinct voice, and of course excited the astonishment of Vivian, who, however, had too much discretion to evince his surprise, or to take any measure by which his curiosity might be satisfied.

His companion seemed instantly conscious of the seeming singularity of his expression.

"You are surprised at my words, good sir," said his highness, as he paced very rapidly up and down the small chamber; "You are surprised at my words; but, sir, my ancestor's brow was guarded by a diadem!"

"Which was then well won, prince, and is now worthily worn."

"By whom? where? how?" asked the prince, in a very rapid voice. "Maximilian," continued his highness, in a more subdued tone; "Maximilian, my own love, leave us—go to Mr. Sievers—God bless you, my only boy—good night!"

"Good night, dearest papa, and down with the Grand-duke of Reisenberg!"

"He echoes the foolish zeal of my fond followers," said the prince, as his son left the room. "The idle parade to which their illegal loyalty still clings—my own manners, the relics of former days—habits will not change like stations—all these have deceived you, sir. You have mistaken me for a monarch; I should be one. A curse light on me the hour I can mention it without a burning blush. Oh, shame!—shame on the blood of my father's son! Can my mouth own that I once was one? Yes, sir! you see before you the most injured, the least enviable of human beings—I am a **MEDIA-TISED PRINCE!**"

Vivian had resided too long in Germany to be ignorant of the meaning of this title: with which, as most probably few of my readers are acquainted, I may be allowed for a moment to disturb the tête-à-tête in the cabinet—merely, as a wordy and windy orator preliminarily protests, when he is about to bore the house with a harangue of five hours—merely to say, "just one single word." A mediatised prince is an unhappy victim of those congresses, which, among other good and evil, purged with great effect the ancient German political system. By the regulations then determined on, that country was freed at one fell swoop from the vexatious and harassing dominion of the various petty princes who exercised absolute sovereignties over little nations of fifty thousand souls. These independent sovereigns became subjects; and either swelled, by their mediatisation, the territories of some already powerful potentate, or transmuted into a state of importance some more fortunate pretty ruler than themselves; whose independence, through the exertions of political intrigue or family influence, had been preserved inviolate. In most instances, the concurrence of these little rulers in their worldly degradation was obtained by a lavish grant of official emoluments or increase of territorial possession,—and the mediatised prince, instead of being an impoverished and uninfluential sovereign, became a wealthy and powerful subject. But so dominant in the heart of man is the love of independent dominion, that even with these temptations, few of the petty princes could have been induced to have parted with their cherished sceptres, had they not been conscious, that in case of contumacy,

the resolutions of a diet would have been enforced by the armies of an emperor. As it is, few of them have yet given up the outward and visible signs of regal sway. The throne is still preserved, and the tiara still revered. They seldom frequent the courts of their sovereigns, and scarcely condescend to notice the attentions of their fellow-nobility. Most of them expend their increased revenue in maintaining the splendour of their little courts at their ancient capitals; or in swelling the ranks of their retainers at their solitary forest-castles.

The Prince of Little Lilliput was the first meditated sovereign that Vivian had ever met. At another time, and under other circumstances, he might have smiled at the idle parade and useless pomp which he had this day witnessed; or moralized on that weakness of human nature which seemed to consider the inconvenient appendages of a throne, as the great end for which power was to be coveted; but at the present moment he only saw a kind, and, as he believed, estimable individual disquieted and distressed. It was painful to witness the agitation of the prince; and Vivian felt it necessary to make some observations, which from his manner expressed much, though in fact they meant nothing.

"Sir," said his highness; "your sympathy consoles me. Do not imagine that I can misunderstand it—it does you honour. You add, by this, to the many favours you have already conferred on me, by saving my life and accepting my hospitality. I trust, I sincerely hope, that your departure hence will be postponed to the last possible moment. Your conversation and your company have made me pass a more cheerful day than I am accustomed to. All here love me; but with the exception of Sievers, I have no companion; and although I esteem his principles and his talents, there is no congeniality in our tastes, or in our tempers. As for the rest, a more devoted band cannot be conceived; but they think only of one thing—the lost dignity of their ruler; and although this concentration of their thoughts on one subject may gratify my pride, it does not elevate my spirits. But this is a subject on which in future we will not converse. One of the curses of my unhappy lot is, that a thousand circumstances daily occur which prevent me forgetting it."

The prince rose from the table, and pressing with his right hand on part of the wall, the door of a small closet sprang open. The interior was lined with crimson velvet. He took out of it a crimson velvet cushion of the same regal material, on which reposed, in solitary magnificence, a golden coronet, of antique workmanship.

"The crown of my fathers!" said his highness, as he placed the treasure, with great reverence, on the table; "won by fifty battles and lost without a blow! Yet, in my youth I was deemed no dastard: and I have shed more blood for my country in one day, than he who claims to be my suzerain, in the whole of his long career of undeserved prosperity. Ay! this, this is the curse—the ancestor of my present sovereign was that warrior's serf!" The prince pointed to the grim chieftain, whose stout helmet Vivian now perceived was encircled by a crown, exactly similar to the one which was lying before him. "Had I been the subject—had I been obliged to acknowledge the sway of a Cæsar, I might have endured it with resignation:—had I been forced to yield to the legions of an emperor,

a noble resistance might have consoled me for the clanking of my chains; but to sink without a struggle, the victim of political intrigue—to become the bondsman of one who was my father's slave, for such was Reisenberg—even in my own remembrance our unsuccessful rival. This, this was too bad; it rankles in my heart; and unless revenged, I shall sink under it. To have lost my dominions would have been nothing. But revenge I will have! It is yet in my power to gain for an enslaved people the liberty I have myself lost. Yes! the enlightened spirit of the age shall yet shake the quivering councils of the Reisenberg cabal. I will, in truth I *have* already seconded the just, the unanswerable demands of an oppressed and insulted people; and ere six months are over, I trust to see the convocation of a free and representative council, in the capital of the petty monarch to whom I have been betrayed. The chief of Reisenberg has, in his eagerness to gain his grand-ducal crown, somewhat overstepped the mark.

"Besides myself, there are no less than three other powerful princes, whose dominions have been devoted to the formation of his servile dutchy. We are all animated by the same spirit,—all intent upon the same end. We have all used, and are using, our influence as powerful nobles, to gain for our fellow-subjects their withheld rights,—rights which belong to them as men, not merely as Germans. Within this week I have forwarded to the Residence a memorial subscribed by myself, my relatives, the other princes, and a powerful body of discontented nobles; requesting the immediate grant of a constitution similar to those of Wirtemberg and Bavaria. My companions in misfortune are inspired by my joining them. Had I been wise, I should have joined them sooner; but until this moment, I have been the dupe of the artful conduct of an unprincipled minister. My eyes, however, are now open. The grand-duke and his crafty counsellor, whose name shall not profane my lips, already tremble. Part of the people, emboldened by our representations, have already refused to answer an unconstitutional taxation. I have no doubt that he must yield. Whatever may be the inclination of the courts of Vienna or St. Petersburg, rest assured that the liberty of Germany will meet with no opponent except political intrigue; and that Metternich is too well acquainted with the spirit which is now only slumbering in the bosom of the German nation, to run the slightest risk of exciting it by the presence of foreign legions. No, no! that mode of treatment may do very well for Naples, or Poland, or Spain; but the moment that a Croat or a Cossack shall encamp upon the Rhine or the Elbe, for the purpose of supporting the unadulterated tyranny of their new-fangled grand-dukes, that moment Germany becomes a great and united nation. The greatest enemy of the prosperity of Germany is the natural disposition of her sons; but that disposition, while it does now, and may forever, hinder us from being a great people, will at the same time infallibly prevent us from ever becoming a degraded one."

At this moment, this moment of pleasing anticipation of public virtue and private revenge, Master Rodolph entered, and prevented Vivian from gaining any details of the history of his host. The little round steward informed his master that a horseman had just arrived, bearing for his highness a

despatch of importance, which he insisted upon delivering into the prince's own hands.

"Whence comes he?" asked his highness.

"In truth, your serene highness, that were hard to say,—namely as the messenger refuses to inform us."

"Admit him."

A man, whose jaded looks proved that he had travelled far that day, was soon ushered into the room; and, bowing to the prince, delivered to him, in silence, a letter.

"From whom comes this?" asked the prince.

"It will itself inform your highness," was the only answer.

"My friend, you are a trusty messenger, and have been well trained. Rodolph, look that this gentleman be well lodged and attended."

"I thank your highness," said the messenger, "but I do not tarry here. I wait no answer, and my only purpose in seeing you was to perform my commission to the letter, by delivering this paper into your own hands."

"As you please, sir; you must be the best judge of your own time; but we like not strangers to leave our gates while our drawbridge is yet echoing with their entrance steps."

The prince and Vivian were again alone. Astonishment and agitation were very visible on his highness' countenance as he dashed his eye over the letter. At length he folded it up, put it into his breast pocket, and tried to resume conversation; but the effort was both evident and unsuccessful. In another moment the letter was again taken out, and again read with not less emotion than accompanied its first perusal.

"I fear I have wearied you, Mr. Grey," said his highness; "it was inconsiderate in me not to remember that you require repose."

Vivian was not sorry to have an opportunity of retiring, so he quickly took the hint, and wished his highness agreeable dreams.

CHAPTER XIX.

No one but an adventurous traveller can know the luxury of sleep. There is not a greater fallacy in the world than the common creed that "sweet sleep is labour's guerdon." Mere regular, corporeal labour certainly procures us a good, sound, refreshing slumber, disturbed often by the consciousness of the monotonous duties of the morrow:—but how sleep the other great labourers of this laborious world! Where is the sweet sleep of the politician! After hours of fatigue in his office, and hours of exhaustion in the House, he gains his pillow; and a brief, feverish night, disturbed by the triumph of a cheer and the horrors of a reply. Where is the sweet sleep of the poet, or the novelist! We all know how harassing are the common dreams which are made up of incoherent images of our daily life, in which the actors are individuals that we know, and whose conduct generally appears to be regulated by principles which we can comprehend. How much more enervating and destroying must be the slumber of that man who dreams of an imaginary world! waking, with a heated and excited spirit, to mourn over some impressive incident of the night, which is nevertheless

forgotten; or to collect some inexplicable plot which has been revealed in sleep, and has fled from the memory as the eyelids have opened. Where is the sweet sleep of an artist!—of the lawyer! Where, indeed, of any human being to whom the morrow brings its necessary duties! Sleep is the enemy of care, and care is the constant companion of regular labour, mental or bodily.

But your traveller, your adventurous traveller—careless of the future, reckless of the past—with a mind interested by the world, from the immense and various character which that world presents to him, and not by his own stake in any petty or particular contingency; wearied by delightful fatigue, daily occasioned by varying means, and from varying causes; with the consciousness that no prudence can regulate the fortunes of the morrow, and with no curiosity to discover what those fortunes may be, from a conviction that it is utterly impossible to ascertain them; perfectly easy whether he lie in a mountain-hut or a royal palace; and reckless alike of the terrors and chances of storm and bandits; seeing that he has as fair a chance of meeting both with security and enjoyment—this is the fellow, who throwing his body upon a down couch or his mule's packsaddle, with equal eagerness and equal sang-froid sinks into a repose, in which he is never reminded by the remembrance of an appointment or an engagement for the next day, a duel, a marriage, or a dinner, the three perils of man, that he has the misfortune of being mortal; and wakes, not to combat care, but only to feel that he is fresher and more vigorous than he was the night before; and that come what come may, he is, at any rate, sure this day of seeing different faces, and of improvising his unpremeditated part upon a different scene.

I have now both philosophically accounted, and politely apologized, for the loud and unfashionable snore which sounded in the blue chamber about five minutes after Vivian Grey had entered that most comfortable apartment. In about twelve hours time, he was scolding Essper George for having presumed to wake him so early, quite unconscious that he had enjoyed any thing more than a twenty minutes' doze.

"I should not have come in, sir, only they are all out. They were off by six o'clock this morning, sir; most part at least. The prince has gone; I don't know whether he went with them, but Master Rodolph has given me—I breakfasted with Master Rodolph.—Holy Virgin! your highness, what quarters we have got into; the finest venison pasties, corned beef, hare soup, cherry sauce—"

"To the point, to the point, my good Essper; what of the prince?"

"His highness has left the castle, and desired Master Rodolph—if your grace had only seen Master Rodolph tippy last night: hah! hah! hah! he rolled about like a turbot in a tornado."

"What of the prince, Essper; what of the prince?"

"His highness, your grace, has left the castle; and Master Rodolph, who, by-the-by—"

"No more of Master Rodolph, sir; what of the prince?"

"Your highness won't hear me. The prince desired Master Rodolph—if your highness had only seen him last night—I beg pardon, I beg pardon—the prince, God bless him for his breakfast; the finest venison pasties, corned beef, hare soup, cherry

sauce—I beg pardon, I beg pardon—the prince desired this letter to be given to your highness.”

Vivian read the note, which supposed that, of course, he would not wish to join the chase this morning, and regretted that the writer was obliged to ride out for a few hours to visit a neighbouring nobleman, but requested the pleasure of his guest's company at a private dinner in the cabinet, on his return.

After breakfast Vivian called on Mr. Sievers.—He found that gentleman busied in his library.

“These are companions, Mr. Grey,” said he, pointing to his well-stored shelves, “that I ever find interesting. I hope, from the mysterious account of my retreat which I gave you yesterday, that you did not expect to be introduced to the sanctum of an old conjurer; but the truth is, the cell of a magician could not excite more wonder at Turripurva than does the library of a scholar.”

“I assure you, sir,” said Vivian, “that nothing in the world could give me greater pleasure than to pass a morning with you in this retreat. Though born and bred in a library, my life, for the last two years, has been of so very adventurous a nature, that I have seldom had the opportunity of recurring to those studies which once alone occupied my thoughts; and your collection, too, is quite after my heart—politics and philosophy.”

Vivian was sincere in his declaration, and he had not for a long time passed a couple of hours with more delight than he did this morning with Mr. Sievers; who, at the same time that he was a perfect master of principles, was also a due reverencer of facts: a philosophical antiquary, in the widest and worthiest acceptance of the title; one who extracted from the deep knowledge of the past beneficial instruction for the present.

“Come,” said Mr. Sievers, “enough of the superstitions of the middle ages; after all, *superstition* is a word that it hardly becomes a philosopher to use: nothing is more fatal in disquisition than terms which cannot be defined, and to which different meanings are attached, according to the different sentiments of different persons. A friend of mine once promised to give us a volume on ‘The modes of Belief of the Middle Ages.’ I always thought it a very delicate and happy title, a most philosophically-chosen phrase. I augured well of the volume; but it has never appeared. Some men are great geniuses at a title-page! And to give a good title to a book does, indeed, require genius. I remember when I was a student at Leipsic, there was an ingenious bookseller in that city who was a great hand at title-making. He published every year magnificent lists of works ‘in the press.’ At first these catalogues produced an immense sensation throughout Germany, since there was scarcely a subject that could possibly interest mankind, which was not to be discussed in a forthcoming volume.—The list always regularly began with an epic poem: it as regularly contained some learned history, in ten volumes, quarto—a grand tragedy—a first-rate historical novel—works on criticism, natural philosophy, general literature, politics, and on every other subject that you can possibly conceive, down to a new almanac for the coming year. Not one of these works ever appeared. Such treatment, after our appetites had been so keenly excited, was really worse than the Barmecide's conduct to the barber's brother. It was like asking a party of men to dine with you at some restaurateur's in the Palais Royal,

and then presenting to each of them for dinner—a copy of the carte.”

“You never hunt, I suppose, Mr. Sievers?”

“Never, never. His highness is, I imagine, out this morning; the beautiful weather continues; surely we never had such a season. As for myself, I almost have given up my in-door pursuits. The sun is not the light of study. Let us take our caps, and have a stroll.”

The gentlemen accordingly left the library, and proceeding through a different gate to that by which Vivian had entered the castle, they came upon a part of the forest in which the timber and brushwood had been in a great measure cleared away; large clumps of trees being left standing on an artificial lawn, and newly-made roads winding about in pleasing irregularity until they were all finally lost in the encircling woods.

“I think you told me,” said Mr. Sievers, “that you had been long in Germany. What course do you think of taking from here?”

“Straight to Vienna.”

“Ah! a delightful place. If, as I suppose to be the case, you are fond of dissipation and luxury, Vienna is to be preferred to any city with which I am acquainted. And intellectual companions are not wanting there, as some have said. There are one or two houses in which the literary soirées will yield to none in Europe; and I prefer them to any, because there is less pretension, and more ease. The Archduke John is really a man of considerable talents, and of more considerable acquirements. A most admirable geologist! Are you fond of geology?”

“I am not the least acquainted with the science.”

“Naturally so—at your age if, in fact, we study at all, we are fond of fancying ourselves moral philosophers, and our study is mankind. Trust me, my dear sir, it is a branch of research soon exhausted; and in a few years you will be very glad, for want of something else to do, to meditate upon stones. See now,” said Mr. Sievers, picking up a stone, “to what associations does this little piece of quartz give rise! I am already an antediluvian, and instead of a stag bounding by that wood, I witness the moving mass of a mammoth. I live in other worlds, which, at the same time, I have the advantage of comparing with the present. Geology is indeed a magnificent study! What excites more the imagination! What exercises more the mind! Can you conceive any thing sublimer than the gigantic shadows, and the grim wreck of an antediluvian world? Can you devise any plan which will more brace our powers, and develop our mental energies, than the formation of a perfect chain of inductive reasoning to account for these phenomena! What is the boasted communion which the vain poet holds with nature, compared with the conversation which the geologist perpetually carries on with the elemental world? Gazing on the strata of the earth, he reads the fate of his species. In the undulations of the mountains is revealed to him the history of the past; and in the strength of rivers, and the powers of the air, he discovers the fortunes of the future. To him, indeed, that future, as well as the past and the present, are alike matter for meditation: for the geologist is the most satisfactory of antiquaries, the most interesting of philosophers, and the most inspired of prophets; demonstrating that which has past by discovery, that which is

occurring by observation, and that which is to come by induction. When you go to Vienna I will give you a letter to Frederic Schlegel; we were fellow-students, and are friends, though for various reasons we do not at present meet; nevertheless, a letter from me will command proper respect. I should advise you, however, before you go on to Vienna, to visit Reisenberg."

"Indeed! from the prince's account I should have thought that there was little to interest me there."

"His highness is not an impartial judge. You are probably acquainted with the disagreeable manner in which he is connected with that court. Far from his opinion being correct, or his advice in this particular to be followed, I should say there are few places in Germany more worthy of a visit than the little court near us; and above all things in the world, my advice is that you should not pass it over."

"I am inclined to follow your advice. You are right in supposing that I am not ignorant that his highness has the misfortune of being the mediatised prince; but what is the exact story about him? I have heard some odd rumours, some vague expressions, some—"

"O! don't you know it all! It's a curious story, but I'm afraid you'll find it rather long. Nevertheless, if you really visit Reisenberg, it may be of use to you to know something of the singular characters you will meet there: and our present conversation, if it do not otherwise interest you, will at least, on this score, give you all requisite information. In the first place, you say you know that Little Lilliput is a mediatised prince; and, of course, are precisely aware what that title means. About fifty years ago, the rival of the illustrious family, in whose chief castle we are both of us now residing, was the Margrave of Reisenberg, another petty prince, with territories not so extensive as those of our friend, and with a population more limited: perhaps fifty thousand souls, half of whom were drunken cousins. The old Margrave of Reisenberg, who then reigned, was a perfect specimen of the old-fashioned, narrow-minded, brutal, bigoted, German prince; he did nothing but hunt, and drink, and think of the ten thousand quarterings of his immaculate shield, all duly acquired from some Vandal ancestor as barbarous as himself. His little margravate was misgoverned enough for a great empire. Half of his nation, who were his real people, were always starving, and were unable to find crown pieces to maintain the extravagant expenditure of the other moiety, the five-and-twenty thousand cousins; who, out of gratitude to their fellow-subjects for their generous support, or as a punishment for their unexcusable unwillingness to starve in order that the cousins might drink, harass them with every species of brutal excess. Complaints were of course immediately made to the margrave, and loud cries for justice resounded at the palace-gates. This prince was a most impartial chief magistrate, he paid himself respectably upon the 'invariable' principles of justice, and he allowed nothing to influence or corrupt his decisions. His notable path for arranging all differences had the merit of being brief; and it briefly he would do it, it certainly was most unexcusable in his subjects to consider his judgments no joke. He always counted the quarterings in the shields of the respective parties, and decided ac-

ordingly. Imagine the speedy redress gained by a muddy-veined peasant against one of the cousins, who, of course, had as many quarterings as the margrave himself. The defendant was always regularly acquitted. At length, a man's house having been burned down out of mere joke in the night, the owner had the tenacity in the morning to accuse one of the five-and-twenty thousand; and produced, at the same time, a shield with ten thousand and one quarterings, exactly one more than the reigning shield itself contained. The margrave was astounded, the nation in raptures, and the five-and-twenty thousand cousins in despair. The complainant's shield was examined and counted, and not a flaw discovered. What a dilemma! The chief magistrate consulted with the numerous branches of his family, and next morning the complainant's head was struck off for treason, for daring to have one more quartering than his monarch!

"In this way they passed their time about fifty years since in Reisenberg: occasionally, for the sake of variety, declaring war against the inhabitants of Little Lilliput; who, to say the truth, in their habits and pursuits did not materially differ from their neighbours. The margrave had one son, the present grand-duke. A due reverence of the great family shield, and a full acquaintance with the 'invariable principles' of justice were early instilled into him; and the royal striving made such rapid progress under the tuition of his amiable parent, that he soon became highly popular with his five-and-twenty thousand cousins. At length his popularity became troublesome to his father; and so the old margrave sent for his son one morning, and informed him that he had dreamed the preceding night that the air of Reisenberg was peculiarly unwholesome for young persons, and therefore he begged him to get out of his dominions as soon as possible. The young prince had no objection to see something of the world, and so with dutiful affection he immediately complied with the royal order, without putting his cousins' loyalty to the test. He flew to a relative whom he had never before visited. This nobleman was one of those individuals who anticipate their age, which, by-the-by, Mr. Grey, none but noblemen should do; for he who anticipates his century, is generally persecuted when living, and is always pillered when dead. Howbeit, this relation was a philosopher; all about him thought him mad; he, in return, thought all about him fools. He sent the prince to a university, and gave him for a tutor, a young man about ten years older than his pupil. This person's name was Beckendorff. You will hear more of him.

"About three years after the sudden departure of the young prince, the old margrave his father, and the then reigning Prince of Little Lilliput, sat each other through the head in a drunken bowl, after a dinner given in honour of a proclamation of peace between the two countries. The five-and-twenty thousand cousins were not much grieved, as they anticipated a fit successor in their former favourite. Splendid preparations were made for the reception of the inheritor of ten thousand quarterings, and all Reisenberg was pressed out to witness the triumphant entrance of their future monarch. At last, two horsemen in plain dresses, and on very indifferant steeds, rode up to the palace-gates, dismounted, and without

making any inquiry, ordered the attendance of some of the chief nobility in the presence-chamber. One of them, a young man, without any preparatory explanation, introduced the Reisenberg chieftains to his companion as his prime minister; and commanded them immediately to deliver up their porte-feuilles and golden keys to Mr. Beckendorff. The nobles were in dismay, and so astounded that they made no resistance; though the next morning they started in their beds, when they remembered that they had delivered their insignia of office to a man without a *nom* before his name. They were soon, however, roused from their sorrow and their stupor, by receiving a peremptory order to quit the palace; and as they retired from the walls which they had long considered as their own, they had the mortification of meeting crowds of the common people, their slaves and their victims, hurrying with joyful countenances and triumphant looks to the palace of their prince; in consequence of an energetic proclamation for the redress of grievances, and an earnest promise to decide cases in future without examining the quarterings of the parties. In a week's time, the five-and-twenty thousand cousins were all adrift. At length they conspired, but the conspiracy was tardy—they found their former servants armed, and they joined in a most unequal struggle; for their opponents were alike animated with hopes of the future, and with revenge for the past. The cousins got well beat, and this was not the worst; for Beckendorff took advantage of this unsuccessful treason, which he had himself fomented, and forfeited all their estates; destroying in one hour the foul system which had palsied, for so many years, the energies of his master's subjects. In time, many of the chief nobility were restored to their honours and estates; but the power with which they were again invested was greatly modified, and the privileges of the commons greatly increased. At this moment the French revolution broke out—the French crossed the Rhine, and carried all before them; and the Prince of Little Lilliput, among other true Germans, made a bold but fruitless resistance. The Margrave of Reisenberg, on the contrary, received the enemy with open arms—he raised a larger body of troops than his due contingent, and exerted himself in every manner to second the views of the great nation. In return for his services he was presented with the conquered principality of Little Lilliput, and some other adjoining lands; and the margraviate of Reisenberg, with an increased territory and population, and governed with consummate wisdom, began to be considered the most flourishing of the petty states in the quarter of the empire to which it belonged. On the contrary, our princely and patriotic friend, mortified by the degenerate condition of his country and the prosperity of his rival house, quitted Little Lilliput, and became one of those emigrant princes who abounded during the first years of the revolution in all the northern courts of Europe. Napoleon soon appeared upon the stage; and vanquished Austria, with the French dictating at the gates of her capital, was no longer in a condition to support the dignity of the empire. The policy of the Margrave of Reisenberg was as little patriotic, and quite as consistent, as before. Beckendorff became the constant and favoured counsellor of the French emperor. It was chiefly by his exertions that the celebrated confederation of the Rhine was carried into effect.

The institution of this body excited among many Germans, at the time, loud expressions of indignation; but I believe few impartial and judicious men now look upon that league as any other than one, in the formation of which the most consummate statesmanship was exhibited. In fact, it prevented the subjugation of Germany to France, and by flattering the pride of Napoleon, it saved the decomposition of our empire. But how this might be, it is not at present necessary for us to inquire. Certain, however, it was, that the pupil of Beckendorff was amply repaid for the advice and exertions of his master, and his minister; and when Napoleon fell, the brows of the former margrave were encircled with a grand-ducal crown; and his dutchy, while it contained upwards of a million and a half of inhabitants, numbered in its limits some of the most celebrated cities in Germany, and many of Germany's most flourishing provinces. But Napoleon fell. The Prince of Little Lilliput and his companions in patriotism and misfortune returned from their exile, panting with hope and vengeance. A congress was held to settle the affairs of agitated Germany. Where was the Grand-duke of Reisenberg? His hard-earned crown tottered on his head. Where was his crafty minister, the supporter of revolutionary France, the friend of its imperial enslaver, the constant enemy of the house of Austria? At the very congress which, according to the expectations of the exiled princes, was to restore them to their own dominions, and to reward their patriotic loyalty with the territories of their revolutionary brethren; yes! at this very congress was Beckendorff; not as a supplicant, not as a victim; but sitting at the right hand of Metternich, and watching, with paternal affection, the first interesting and infantine movements of that most prosperous of political bantlings—the Holy Alliance. You may well imagine that the military grand-duke had a much better chance in political negotiation than the emigrant prince. In addition to this, the Grand-duke of Reisenberg had married, during the war, a princess of a powerful house; and the allied sovereigns were eager to gain the future aid and constant co-operation of a mind like Beckendorff's. The Prince of Little Lilliput, the patriot, was rewarded for his conduct by being restored to his forfeited possessions; and the next day he became the subject of his former enemy, the Grand-duke of Reisenberg, the traitor. What think you of Monsieur Beckendorff? He must be a curious gentleman, I imagine!"

"One of the most interesting characters I have long heard of. But his pupil appears to be a man of mind."

"You shall hear, you shall hear. I should however first mention, that while Beckendorff has not scrupled to resort to any measures, or adopt any opinions in order to further the interests of his monarch and his country, he has in every manner shown that personal aggrandizement has never been his object. He lives in the most perfect retirement, scarcely with an attendant, and his moderate official stipend amply supports his more moderate expenditure. The subjects of the grand-duke may well be grateful that they have a minister without relations, and without favourites. The grand-duke is, unquestionably, a man of talents; but at the same time, perhaps, one of the most weak-minded men that ever breathed. He was fortunate in

meeting with Beckendorff early in life; and as the influence of the minister has not for a moment ceased over the mind of the monarch, to the world, the Grand-duke of Reisenberg has always appeared to be an individual of a strong mind and consistent conduct. But when you have lived as much and as intimately in his court as I have done, you will find how easily the world may be deceived. Since the close connexion which now exists between Reisenberg and Austria took place, Beckendorff has, in a great degree, revived the ancient privileges of blood and birth. A minister who has sprung from the people will always conciliate the aristocracy. Having no family influence of his own, he endeavours to gain the influence of others; and it often happens that merit is never less considered than when merit has made the minister. A curious instance of this occurs in a neighbouring state. There the premier, decidedly a man of great talents, is of as low an origin as Beckendorff. With no family to uphold him, he supports himself by a lavish division of all the places and patronage of the state among the nobles. If the younger son or brother of a peer dare to sully his oratorical virginity by a chance observation in the Lower Chamber, the minister, himself a real orator, immediately rises to congratulate, in pompous phrase, the House and the country on the splendid display which has made this night memorable; and on the decided advantages which must accrue both to their own resolutions and the national interests, from the future participation of his noble friend in their deliberations. All about him are young nobles, utterly unfit for the discharge of their respective duties. His private secretary is unable to coin a sentence, almost to direct a letter, but he is noble!—The secondary officials cannot be trusted even in the least critical conjunctures, but they are noble!—And the prime minister of a powerful empire is forced to rise early and be up late; not to meditate on the present fortunes or future destinies of his country, but by his personal exertions, to compensate for the inefficiency and expiate the blunders of his underlings, whom his unfortunate want of blood has forced him to overwhelm with praises which they do not deserve, and duties which they cannot discharge. I do not wish you to infer that the policy of Beckendorff has been actuated by the feelings which influence the minister whom I have noticed, from whose conduct in this very respect his own materially differs. On the contrary, his connexion with Austria is in all probability the primary great cause. However this may be, certain it is, that all offices about the court and connected with the army, (and I need not remind you, that at a small German court these situations are often the most important in the state) can only be filled by the nobility; nor can any person who has the misfortune of not inheriting the magical monosyllable *von* before his name, which, as you know, like the French *de*, is the sublimity of nobility, and the symbol of territorial pride, violate by their unhallowed presence the sanctity of court dinners, or the as sacred ceremonies of a noble fête. But while a monopoly of those offices, which for their due performance require only a showy exterior or a schooled address, is granted to the nobles, all those state charges which require the exercise of intellect, are now chiefly filled by the bourgeoisie. At the same

time, however, that both our secretaries of state, many of our privy councillors, war councillors, forest councillors, and finance councillors, are to be reckoned among the second class, still not one of these exalted individuals, who from their situations are necessarily in constant personal communication with the sovereign, ever see that sovereign except in his cabinet and his council-chamber. Beckendorff himself, the premier, is the son of a peasant; and of course not noble. Nobility, which has been proffered him, not only by his own monarch, but by most of the sovereigns of Europe, he has invariably refused; and consequently never appears at court. The truth is, that from disposition, he is little inclined to mix with men; and he has taken advantage of his want of an escutcheon, completely to exempt himself from all those duties of etiquette which his exalted situation would otherwise have imposed upon him. None can complain of the haughtiness of the nobles, when, ostensibly, the minister himself is not exempted from their exclusive regulations. If you go to Reisenberg, you will not therefore see Beckendorff, who lives, as I have mentioned, in perfect solitude, about thirty miles from the capital; communicating only with his royal master, the foreign ministers, and one or two official characters of his own country. I was myself an inmate of the court for upwards of two years. During that time I never saw the minister; and, with the exception of some members of the royal family, and the characters I have mentioned, I never knew one person who had even caught a glimpse of the individual, who may indeed be said to be regulating their destinies.

"It is at the court, then," continued Mr. Sievers, "when he is no longer under the control of Beckendorff, and in those minor points which are not subjected to the management or influenced by the mind of the minister, that the true character of the grand-duke is to be detected. Indeed, it may really be said, that the weakness of his mind has been the origin of his fortune. In his early youth, his pliant temper adapted itself without a struggle to the barbarous customs and the brutal conduct of his father's court; that same pliancy of temper prevented him opposing with bigoted obstinacy the exertions of his relation to educate and civilize him; that same pliancy of temper allowed him to become the ready and the enthusiastic disciple of Beckendorff. Had the pupil, when he ascended the throne, left his master behind him, it is very probable that his natural feelings would have led him to oppose the French; and at this moment, instead of being the first of the second-rate powers of Germany, the Grand-duke of Reisenberg might himself have been a mediatised prince. As it was, the same pliancy of temper which I have noticed, enabled him to receive Napoleon when an emperor, with outstretched arms; and at this moment does not prevent him from receiving, with equal rapture, the imperial archduchess, who will soon be on her road from Vienna to espouse his son—for, to crown his wonderful career, Beckendorff has successfully negotiated a marriage between a daughter of the house of Austria and the Crown Prince."

* *Here, Crown prince* is, I believe, in all cases, the correct style of the eldest son of a German grand-duke. I have not used a title which would not be understood by the English reader. *Crown prince* is also a German title; but in strictness, only assumed by the son of a king.

of Reisenberg. It is generally believed that the next step of the diet will be to transmute the father's grand-ducal coronet into a regal crown; and perhaps, my good sir, before you reach Vienna, you may have the supreme honour of being presented to his majesty, the King of Reisenberg."

"Beckendorff's career you may well style wonderful. But when you talk only of his pupil's pliancy of temper, am I to suppose, that in mentioning his talents you were speaking ironically?"

"By no means! The grand-duke is a brilliant scholar; a man of refined taste; a real patron of the fine arts; a lover of literature; a promoter of science; and what the world would call a philosopher. His judgment is sound and generally correct—his powers of discrimination singularly acute—and his knowledge of mankind greater than that of most sovereigns; but, with all these advantages, he is cursed with such a wavering and indecisive temper, that when, which is usually the case, he has come to a right conclusion, he can never prevail upon himself to carry his theory into practice; and with all his acuteness, his discernment, and his knowledge of the world, his mind is always ready to receive any impression from the person who last addresses him; though he himself be fully aware of the inferiority of his adviser's intellect to his own, or the imperfection of that adviser's knowledge. Never for a moment out of the sight of Beckendorff, the royal pupil has made a most admirable political puppet; since his own talents have always enabled him to understand the part which the minister had forced him to perform. Thus the world has given the grand-duke credit, not only for the possession of great talents, but almost for as much firmness of mind and decision of character as his minister. But since his long-agitated career has become calm and tranquil, and Beckendorff like a guardian spirit, has ceased to be ever at his elbow, the character of the Grand-duke of Reisenberg begins to be understood. His court has been, and still is, frequented by all the men of genius in Germany, who are admitted without scruple, even if they be not noble. But the astonishing thing is, that the grand-duke is always surrounded by every species of political and philosophical quack that you can imagine. Discussion on a free press, on the reformation of the criminal code, on the abolition of commercial duties, and such-like interminable topics, are perpetually resounding within the palace of this arbitrary prince; and the people, fired by the representations of the literary and political journals with which Reisenberg abounds, and whose bold speculations on all subjects elude the vigilance of the censor, by being skillfully amalgamated with a lavish praise of the royal character, are perpetually flattered with the speedy hope of becoming freemen. Suddenly, when all are expecting the grant of a charter, or the institution of Chambers, Mr. Beckendorff rides up from his retreat to the Residence, and the next day the whole crowd of philosophers are swept from the royal presence, and the censorship of the press becomes so severe, that for a moment you would fancy that Reisenberg, instead of being, as it boasts itself, the modern Athens, had more right to the title of the modern Bœotia. The people, who enjoy an impartial administration of equal laws, who have flourished and are flourishing, under the wise and moderate rule of their new monarch, have in fact

no inclination to exert themselves for the attainment of constitutional liberty, in any other way than by their 'voices. Their barbarous apathy astounds the *philosophes*; who, in despair, when the people tell them that they are happy and contented, artfully remind them that their happiness depends on the will of a single man; and that, though the present character of the monarch may guaranty present felicity, still they should think of their children, and not less exert themselves for the ensurance of future. These representations, as constantly reiterated as the present system will allow, have at length, I assure you, produced an effect; and political causes of a peculiar nature, of which I shall soon speak, combining their influence with these philosophical exertions, have of late, frequently frightened the grand-duke; who, in despair, would perhaps grant a Constitution, if Beckendorff would allow him. But the minister is conscious that the people would not be happier, and do not in fact require one: he looks with a jealous and an evil eye on the charlatanism of all kinds which is now so prevalent at court: he knows from the characters of many of these philosophers and patriots, that their private interest is generally the secret spring of their public virtue; that if the grand-duke, moved by their entreaties, or seduced by their flattery, were to yield a little, he would soon be obliged to grant all, to their demands and their threats; and finally, Beckendorff has of late years, so completely interwoven the policy of Reisenberg with that of Austria, that he feels that the rock on which he has determined to found the greatness of his country must be quitted forever, if he yield one jot to the caprice or the weakness of his monarch."

"But Beckendorff," said Vivian; "why can he not crush in the bud the noxious plant which he so much dreads? Why does the press speak in the least to the people? Why is the grand-duke surrounded by any others except pompons grand-marshals, and empty-headed lord-chamberlains? I am surprised at this indifference, this want of energy!"

"My dear sir, there are reasons for all things. Rest assured that Beckendorff is not a man to act incautiously or weakly. The grand-dutchess, the mother of the crown prince, has been long dead. Beckendorff, who, as a man, has the greatest contempt for women—as a statesman, looks to them as the most precious of political instruments—it was his wish to have married the grand-duke to the young princess who is now destined for his son; but for once in his life he failed in influencing his pupil. The truth was, and it is to this cause that we must trace the present disorganized state of the court, and indeed of the kingdom, that the grand-duke had secretly married a lady to whom he had long been attached. This lady was a countess, and his subject; and as it was impossible, by the laws of the kingdom, that any one but a member of a reigning family could be allowed to share the throne, his royal highness had recourse to a plan which is not uncommon in this country, and espoused the lady with his left hand. The ceremony, which we call here a *morganatic* marriage, you have probably heard of before. The favoured female is, to all intents and purposes, the wife of the monarch, and shares every thing except his throne. She presides at court, but neither she nor her children assume the style of majesty; although in some in-

stances the latter have been created princes, and acknowledged as heirs apparent, when there has been a default in the lineal royal issue. The lady of whom we are speaking, according to the usual custom, has assumed a name derivative from that of her royal husband; and as the grand-duke's name is Charles, she is styled Madame Carolina."

"And what kind of lady is Madame Carolina?" asked Vivian.

"Philosophical! piquant! Parisian!—a genius, according to her friends; who, as in fact she is a queen, are of course the whole world. Though a German by family, she is a Frenchwoman by birth. Educated in the *salons spirituels* of the French metropolis, she has early imbibed superb ideas of the perfectibility of man and of the 'science' of conversation; on both which subjects you will not be long at court, ere you hear her descant; demonstrating by the brilliancy of her ideas the possibility of the one, and by the fluency of her language her acquaintance with the other. She is much younger than her husband; and though not exactly a model for Phidias, a most fascinating woman. Variety is the talisman by which she commands all hearts, and gained her monarch's. She is only consistent in being delightful; but, though changeable, she is not capricious. Each day displays a new accomplishment as regularly as it does a new costume; but as the acquirement seems only valued by its possessor as it may delight others, so the dress seems worn, not so much to gratify her own vanity, as to please her friends' tastes. Genius is her idol; and with her, genius is found in every thing. She speaks in equal raptures of an opera dancer, and an epic poet. Her ambition is to converse on all subjects; and by a judicious management of a great mass of miscellaneous reading, and by indefatigable exertions to render herself mistress of the prominent points of the topics of the day, she appears to converse on all subjects with ability. She takes the liveliest interest in the progress of mind, in all quarters of the globe; and imagines that she should, at the same time, immortalize herself and benefit her species, could she only establish a quarterly review in Ashantee, and a scientific gazette at Timbuctoo. Notwithstanding her sudden elevation, no one has ever accused her of arrogance, or pride, or ostentation. Her liberal principles, and her enlightened views, are acknowledged by all. She advocates equality in her circle of privileged nobles; and is enthusiastic on the rights of man, in a country where justice is a favour. Her boast is to be surrounded by men of genius, and her delight to correspond with the most celebrated persons of all countries. She is herself a literary character of no mean celebrity. Few months have elapsed since enraptured Reisenberg hailed, from her glowing pen, two neat octavos, bearing the title of 'MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE,' which give an interesting and accurate picture of the age, and delight the modern public with vivid descriptions of the cookery, costume, and conversation of the eighth century. You smile, my friend, at Madame Carolina's production. Do not you agree with me, that it requires no mean talent to convey a picture of the bustle of a levee during the middle ages! Conceive Sir Oliver looking in at his club! and fancy the small talk of Roland during a morning visit! Yet even the fame of this work is to be eclipsed by madame's

forthcoming quarto of 'HAROUN AL RASCHID AND HIS TIMES.' This, it is whispered, is to be a *chef d'œuvre*, enriched by a chronological arrangement, by a celebrated oriental scholar, of all the anecdotes in the Arabian Nights relating to the caliph. It is, of course, the sun of madame's patronage that has hatched into noxious life the swarm of sciolists who now infest the court, and who are sapping the husband's political power, while they are establishing the wife's literary reputation. So much for Madame Carolina! I need hardly add, that during your short stay at court, you will be delighted with her. If ever you know her as well as I do, you will find her vain, superficial, heartless: her sentiment—a system; her enthusiasm—exaggeration; and her genius—merely a clever adoption of the profundity of others."

"And Beckendorff and the lady are not friendly!" asked Vivian, who was delighted with his communicative companion.

"Beckendorff's is a mind that such a woman cannot, of course, comprehend. He treats her with contempt, and, if possible, views her with hatred; for he considers that she has degraded the character of his pupil; while she, on the contrary, wonders by what magic spell he exercises such influence over the conduct of her husband. At first, Beckendorff treated her and her circle of illuminati with contemptuous silence; but, in politics, nothing is contemptible. The minister, knowing that the people were prosperous and happy, cared little for projected constitutions, and less for metaphysical abstractions; but some circumstances have lately occurred, which, I imagine, have convinced him that for once he had miscalculated. After the arrangement of the German states, when the princes were first mediatised, an attempt was made, by means of a threatening league, to obtain for these political victims a very ample share of the power and patronage of the new state of Reisenberg. This plan failed, from the lukewarmness and indecision of our good friend of Little Lilliput; who, between ourselves, was prevented from joining the alliance by the intrigues of Beckendorff. Beckendorff secretly took measures that the prince should be promised, that in case of his keeping backward, he should obtain more than would fall to his lot by leading the van. The Prince of Little Lilliput and his peculiar friends accordingly were quiet, and the attempt of the other chieftains failed. It was then that his highness found he had been duped. Beckendorff would not acknowledge the authority, and, of course, did not redeem the pledge of his agent. The effect that this affair produced upon the prince's mind you can conceive. Since then he has never frequented Reisenberg, but constantly resided either at his former capital, now a provincial town of the grand-duchy, or at this castle; viewed, you may suppose, with no very cordial feeling by his companions in misfortune. But the thirst of revenge will inscribe the bitterest enemies in the same muster-roll, and the princes, incited by the bold carriage of Madame Carolina's philosophical protégés, and induced to believe that Beckendorff's power is on the wane, have again made overtures to our friend, without whose powerful assistance they feel that they have but little chance of success. Observe how much more men's conduct is influenced by circumstances than principles! When these persons leagued together before, it was with the avowed intention

of obtaining a share of the power and patronage of the state: the great body of the people, of course, did not sympathize in that, which, after all, to them, was a party quarrel; and by the joint exertions of open force and secret intrigue, the court triumphed. But now, these same individuals come forward, not as indignant princes demanding a share of the envied tyranny, but as ardent patriots advocating a people's rights. The public, though I believe that in fact they will make no bodily exertion to acquire a constitutional freedom, the absence of which they can only abstractedly feel, have no objection to attain that, which they are assured will not injure their situation, provided it be by the risk and exertions of others. As far, therefore, as clamour can support the princes, they have the people on their side; and as upwards of three hundred thousand of the grand-ducal subjects are still living on their estates, and still consider themselves as their serfs, they trust that some excesses from this great body may incite the rest of the people to similar outrages. The natural disposition of mankind to imitation, particularly when the act to be imitated is popular, deserves attention. The court is divided; for the exertions of madame, and the bewitching influence of fashion, have turned the heads even of gray-beards: and to give you only one instance, his excellency the grand-marshal, a protégé of the house of Austria, and a favourite of Metternich, the very persons to whose interests, and as a reward for whose services, our princely friend was sacrificed by the minister, has now himself become a pupil in the school of modern philosophy, and drifts out, with equal ignorance and fervour, enlightened notions on the most obscure subjects. In the midst of all this confusion, the grand-duke is timorous, dubious, and uncertain. Beckendorff has a difficult game to play; he may fall at last. Such, my dear sir, are the tremendous consequences of a weak prince marrying a blue-stocking!"

"And the crown prince, Mr. Sievers, how does he conduct himself at this interesting moment! or is his mind so completely engrossed by the anticipations of his imperial alliance, that he has no thought for any thing but his approaching bride?"

"The crown prince, my dear sir, is neither thinking of his bride, nor of any thing else: he is a hunch-backed idiot. Of his deformities I have myself been a witness; and though it is difficult to give an opinion of the intellect of a being with whom you have never interchanged a syllable, nevertheless his countenance does not contradict the common creed. I say the common creed, Mr. Grey, for there are moments when the Crown Prince of Reisenberg is spoken of by his future subjects in a very different manner. Whenever any unpopular act is committed, or any unpopular plan suggested by the court or the grand-duke, then whispers are immediately afloat that a future Brutus must be looked for in their prince; then it is generally understood that his idiotism is only assumed; and what woman does not detect, in the glimmerings of his lack-lustre eye, the vivid sparks of suppressed genius? In a short time the cloud blows over the court; dissatisfaction disappears; and the moment that the monarch is again popular, the unfortunate crown prince again becomes the unimportant object of pity or derision. All immediately forget that his idiotism is only assumed; and what woman ever ceases from deploring the

unhappy lot of the future wife of their impuissant prince?—Such, my dear sir, is the way of mankind! at the first glance it would appear, that in this world, monarchs, on the whole, have it pretty well their own way; but reflection will soon enable us not to envy their situations; and speaking as a father, which unfortunately I am not, should I not view with disgust that lot in life, which necessarily makes my son—my enemy! The crown prince of all countries is only a puppet in the hands of the people, to be played against his own father."

CHAPTER XX

THE prince returned home at a late hour, and immediately inquired for Vivian. During dinner, which he hastily despatched, it did not escape our hero's attention, that his highness was unusually silent, and, indeed, agitated.

"When we have finished our meal, my good friend," at length said the prince, "I very much wish to consult with you on a most important business." Since the explanation of last night, the prince, in private conversation, had dropped his regal plural.

"I am ready this moment," said Vivian.

"You will think it very strange, Mr. Grey, when you become acquainted with the nature of my communication; you will justly consider it most strange—most singular—that I should choose for a confidant and a counsellor in an important business, a gentleman with whom I have been acquainted so short a time as yourself. But, sir, I have well weighed, at least I have endeavoured well to weigh, all the circumstances and contingencies which such a confidence would involve; and the result of my reflection is, that I will look to you as a friend and an adviser, feeling assured that both from your situation and your disposition, no temptation exists which can induce you to betray or to deceive me." Though the prince said this with an appearance of perfect sincerity, he stopped and looked very earnestly in his guest's face, as if he would read his secret thoughts, or were desirous of now giving him an opportunity of answering.

"As far as the certainty of your confidence being respected," answered Vivian, "I trust your highness may communicate to me with the most assured spirit. But while my ignorance of men and affairs in this country will insure you from any treachery on my part, I very much fear that it will also preclude me from affording you any advantageous advice or assistance."

"On that head," replied the prince, "I am of course the best judge. The friend whom I need is a man not ignorant of the world, with a cool head and an impartial mind. Though young, you have said and told me enough to prove that you are not unacquainted with mankind. Of your courage, I have already had a convincing proof. In the business in which I require your assistance, freedom from national prejudices will materially increase the value of your advice; and therefore I am far from being unwilling to consult a person ignorant, according to your own phrase, of men and affairs in this country. Moreover, your education as an Englishman has early led you to exercise your mind on political subjects; and it is in a political business that I require your aid."

"Am I fated always to be the dry-nurse of an embryo faction!" thought Vivian, in despair, and he watched earnestly the countenance of the prince. In a moment he expected to be invited to become a counsellor of the leagued princes. Either the lamp was burning dim, or the blazing wood fire had suddenly died away, or a mist was over Vivian's eyes; but for a moment he almost imagined that he was sitting opposite his old friend, the Marquess of Carabas. The prince's phrase had given rise to a thousand agonizing associations: in an instant Vivian had worked up his mind to a pitch of nervous excitement.

"Political business!" said Vivian, in an agitated voice. "You could not have addressed a more unfortunate person. I have seen, prince, too much of politics, ever to wish to meddle with them again."

"You are too quick—too quick, my good friend," continued his highness. "I may wish to consult you on political business, and yet have no intention of engaging you in politics—which, indeed, is quite a ridiculous idea. But I see that I was right in supposing that these subjects have engaged your attention."

"I have seen, in a short time, a great deal of the political world," answered Vivian, who was almost ashamed of his previous emotion; "and I thank Heaven daily, that I have no chance of again having any connexion with it."

"Well, well!—that as it may be. Nevertheless, your experience is only another inducement to me to request your assistance. Do not fear that I wish to embroil you in politics; but I hope you will not refuse, although almost a stranger, to add to the very great obligations which I am already under to you, and give me the benefit of your opinion."

"Your highness may speak with the most perfect unreserve, and reckon upon my delivering my most genuine sentiments."

"You have not forgotten, I venture to believe," said the prince, "our short conversation of last night!"

"It was of too interesting a nature easily to escape my memory."

"Before I can consult you on the subject which at present interests me, it is necessary that I should make you a little acquainted with the present state of public affairs here, and the characters of the principal individuals who control."

"As far as an account of the present state of political parties, the history of the grand-duke's career, and that of his minister, Mr. Beckendorff, and their reputed characters, will form part of your highness's narrative, by so much may its length be curtailed, and your trouble lessened; for I have at different times picked up, in casual conversation, a great deal of information on these topics. Indeed, you may address me, in this respect, as you would my German gentleman, who, not being himself personally interested in public life, is of course not acquainted with its most secret details."

"I did not reckon on this," said the prince, in a cheerful voice. "This is a great advantage, and another reason that I should no longer hesitate to develop to you a certain affair which now occupies my mind. To be short," continued the prince, "it is of the letter which I so mysteriously received last night, and which, as you must have remarked,

very much agitated me,—it is on this letter that I wish to consult you. Bearing in mind the exact position—the avowed and public position in which I stand, as connected with the court; and having a due acquaintance, which you state you have, with the character of Mr. Beckendorff, what think you of this letter?"

So saying the prince leaned over the table, and handed to Vivian the following epistle.

"TO HIS HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF LITTLE
LILLIPUT.

"I am commanded by his royal highness to inform your highness, that his royal highness has considered the request which was signed by your highness and other noblemen, and presented by you to his royal highness in a private interview. His royal highness commands me to state, that that request will receive his most attentive consideration. At the same time, his royal highness also commands me to observe, that, in bringing about the completion of a result desired by all parties, it is difficult to carry on the necessary communications merely by written documents; and his royal highness has therefore commanded me to submit to your highness, the advisability of taking some steps in order to further the possibility of the occurrence of an oral interchange of the sentiments of the respective parties. Being aware, that from the position which your highness has thought proper at present to maintain, and from other causes which are of too delicate a nature to be noticed in any other way except by allusion, that your highness may feel difficulty in personally communicating with his royal highness, without consulting the wishes and opinions of the other princes; a process to which it must be evident to your highness, His royal highness feels it impossible to submit; and at the same time, desirous of forwarding the progress of those views, which his royal highness and your highness may conjunctively consider calculated to advance the well-being of the state, I have to submit to your highness the propriety of considering the propositions contained in the enclosed paper; which, if your highness keep unconnected with this communication, the purport of this letter will be confined to your highness.

"PROPOSITIONS.

"1st. That an interview shall take place between your highness and myself; the object of which shall be the consideration of measures by which, when adopted, the various interests now in agitation shall respectively be regarded.

"2d. That this interview shall be secret; your highness being incognito.

"If your highness be disposed to accede to the first proposition, I beg to submit to you, that from the nature of my residence, its situation and other causes, there will be no fear that any suspicion of the fact of *Mr. von Philipson* acceding to the two propositions will gain notoriety. This letter will be delivered into your own hands. If *Mr. von Philipson* determine on acceding to these propositions, he is most probably aware of the general locality in which my residence is situated; and proper measures will be taken that, if *Mr. von Philipson* honour me with a visit, he shall not be under the necessity of attracting attention, by inquiring the way to my house. It is wished that

the fact of the second proposition being acceded to, should only be known to Mr. von Philipson and myself; but if to be perfectly unattended be considered as an insuperable objection, I consent to his being accompanied by a single friend. I shall be alone.

“BECKENDORFF.”

“Well!” said the prince, as Vivian finished the letter.

“The best person,” said Vivian, “to decide upon your highness consenting to this interview is yourself.”

“That is not the point on which I wish to have the benefit of your opinion; for I have already consented. I rode over this morning to my cousin, the Duke of Micromegas, and despatched from his residence a trusty messenger to Beckendorff. I have agreed to meet him—and to-morrow; but on the express terms that I shall not be unattended. Now, then,” continued the prince, with great energy, “now, then, will you be my companion?”

“I!” said Vivian, in the greatest surprise.

“Yes; *you*, my good friend!—*you, you*. I should consider myself as safe if I were sleeping in a burning house, as I should be were I with Beckendorff alone. Although this is not the first time that we have communicated, I have never yet seen him; and I am fully aware, that if the approaching interview were known to my friends, they would consider it high time that my son reigned in my stead. But I am resolved to be firm—to be inflexible. My course is plain. I am not to be again duped by him; which,” continued the prince, very much confused, “I will not conceal that I have been once.”

“But I!” said Vivian; “I—what good can I possibly do? It appears to me, that if Beckendorff is to be dreaded as you describe, the presence or the attendance of no friend can possibly save you from his crafty plans. But surely, if any one attend you, why not be accompanied by a person whom you have known long, and who knows you well—on whom you can confidently rely, and who may be aware, from a thousand signs and circumstances which will never attract my attention, at what particular and pressing moments you may require prompt and energetic assistance. Such is the companion you want; and surely such a one you may find in Arnelm—Von Neuwied—”

“Arnelm! Von Neuwied!” said the prince; “the best hands at sounding a bugle, or spearing a boar, in all Reisenberg! Excellent men, forsooth, to guard their master from the diplomatic deceptions of the wily Beckendorff! Moreover, were they to have even the slightest suspicion of my intended movement, they would commit rank treason out of pure loyalty, and lock me up in my own cabinet! No, no! they will never do: I want a companion of experience and knowledge of the world; with whom I may converse with some prospect of finding my wavering firmness strengthened, or my misled judgment rightly guided, or my puzzled brain cleared,—modes of assistance to which the worthy jagd junker is but little accustomed, however quickly he might hasten to my side in a combat, or the chase.”

“If these, then, will not do, surely there is one man in this castle, who, although he may not be a match for Beckendorff, can be foiled by few others—Mr. Sievers!” said Vivian, with an inquiring eye.

“Sievers!” exclaimed the prince with great eagerness; “the very man! firm, experienced, and sharp-witted—well schooled in political learning, in case I required his assistance in arranging the terms of the intended charter, or the plan of the intended chambers; for these, of course, are the points on which Beckendorff wishes to consult. But one thing I am determined on: I positively pledge myself to nothing, while under Beckendorff’s roof. He doubtless anticipates, by my visit, to grant the liberties of the people on his own terms: perhaps Mr. Beckendorff, for once in his life, may be mistaken. I am not to be deceived twice; and I am determined not to yield the point of the treasury being under the control of the senate. That is the part of the harness which galls; and to preserve themselves from this rather inconvenient regulation, without question, my good friend Beckendorff has hit upon this plan.”

“Then Mr. Sievers will accompany you?” asked Vivian, calling the prince’s attention to the point of consultation.

“The very man for it, my dear friend! but although Beckendorff, most probably respecting my presence, and taking into consideration the circumstances under which we meet, would refrain from consigning Sievers to a dungeon; still, although the minister invites this interview, and although I have no single inducement to conciliate him; yet it would scarcely be correct, scarcely dignified on my part, to prove by the presence of my companion, that I had for a length of time harboured an individual who, by Beckendorff’s own exertions, was banished from the grand-duchy. It would look too much like a bravado.”

“O!” said Vivian, “is it so; and pray of what was Mr. Sievers guilty?”

“Of high treason against one who was not his sovereign.”

“How is that?”

“Sievers, who is a man of most considerable talents, was for a long time a professor in one of our great universities. The publication of many able works procured him a reputation which induced Madame Carolina to use every exertion to gain his attendance at court; and a courtier in time the professor became. At Reisenberg Mr. Sievers was the great authority on all possible subjects—philosophical, literary, and political. In fact, he was the fashion; and, at the head of the great literary journal which is there published, he terrified admiring Germany with his profound and piquant critiques. Unfortunately, like some men as good, he was unaware that Reisenberg was not an independent state; and so, on the occasion of Austria attacking Naples, Mr. Sievers took the opportunity of attacking Austria. His article, eloquent, luminous, profound, revealed the dark colours of the Austrian policy; as an artist’s lamp brings out the murky tints of a Spagnoletto. Every one admires Sievers’ bitter sarcasms, enlightened views, and indignant eloquence. Madame Carolina crowned him with laurel in the midst of her coterie; and it is said that the grand-duke sent him a snuff-box. In a very short time the article reached Vienna; and in a still shorter time Mr. Beckendorff reached the Residence, and insisted on the author being immediately given up to the Austrian government. Madame Carolina was in despair, the grand-duke in doubt, and Beckendorff threatened to resign if the order were not signed. A

kind friend, perhaps his royal highness himself, gave Sievers timely notice, and by rapid flight he reached my castle, and demanded my hospitality; he has lived here ever since, and has done me a thousand services, not the least of which, is the education which he has given my son, my glorious Maximilian."

"And Beckendorff," asked Vivian, "has he always been aware that Sievers was concealed here?"

"That I cannot answer: had he been, it is not improbable that he would have winked at it; since it never has been his policy unnecessarily to annoy a mediatised prince, or without great occasion to let us feel that our independence is gone, I will not, with such a son as I have, say—forever."

"Mr. Sievers, of course, then, cannot visit Beckendorff," said Vivian.

"That is clear," said the prince, "and I therefore trust that now you will no longer refuse my first request."

It was, of course, impossible for Vivian to deny the prince any longer: and indeed he had no objection, as his highness could not be better attended, to seize the singular and unexpected opportunity, which now offered itself, of becoming acquainted with an individual, respecting whom his curiosity was very much excited. It was a late hour ere the prince and his friend retired; having arranged every thing for the morrow's journey, and conversed on the probable subjects of the approaching interview at great length.

CHAPTER XXI.

On the following morning, before sunrise, the prince's valet roused Vivian from his slumbers. According to the appointment of the preceding evening, Vivian repaired in due time to a certain spot in the park. The prince reached it at the same moment. A mounted groom, leading two English horses, of very showy appearance, and each having a travelling case strapped on the back of its saddle, awaited them. His highness mounted one of the steeds with skillful celerity, although Arneln and Von Neuwied were not there to do honour to his bridle and his stirrup.

"You must give me an impartial opinion of your courser, my dear friend," said the prince to Vivian, "for if you deem it worthy of being bestriden by you, my son requests that you will do him the great honour of accepting it; if so, call it Max; and provided it be as thorough-bred as the donor, you need not change it for Bucephalus."

"Not worthy of the son of Ammon!" said Vivian, as he touched the spirited animal with his spur, and proved its fiery action on the springing tart.

A man never feels so proud or so sanguine as when he is bounding on the back of a fine horse. Carefully with the first curvet; and the very sight of a spur is enough to prevent one committing a mistake. What a magnificent creature is man, that a horse's prancing hoof can influence his temper or his destiny!—and I truly, however little there may be to admire in the ride, few things in this wretched world can be conceived more beautiful than a horse, when the bloody spur has thrust some anger in his resentful side. How splendid to view

him with his dilated nostril, his flaming eye, his arched neck, and his waving tail, rustling like a banner in a battle!—to see him champing his slavering bridle, and sprinkling the snowy foam upon the earth, which his hasty hoof seems almost as if it scorned to touch!

When Vivian and his companion had proceeded about five miles, the prince pulled up, and giving a sealed letter to the groom, he desired him to leave them. The prince and Vivian amused themselves for a considerable time by endeavouring to form a correct conception of the person, manners, and habits of the wonderful man to whom they were on the point of paying so interesting a visit.

"I bitterly regret," said Vivian, "that I have forgotten my Montesquieu; and what would I give now to know by rote only one quotation from Machiavel! I expect to be received with folded arms, and a brow lowering with the overwhelming weight of a brain meditating for the control of millions. His letter has prepared us for the mysterious, but not very amusing style of his conversation. He will be perpetually on his guard not to commit himself; and although public business, and the receipt of papers, by calling him away, will occasionally give us an opportunity of being alone; still I regret most bitterly, that I did not put in my case some interesting volume, which would have allowed me to feel less tedious those hours during which you will necessarily be employed with him in private consultation."

After a ride of five hours, the horsemen arrived at a small village.

"Thus far I think I have well piloted you," said the prince: "but I confess my knowledge here ceases; and though I shall disobey the diplomatic instructions of the great man, I must even ask some old woman the way to Mr. Beckendorff's."

While they were hesitating as to whom they should address, an equestrian, who already passed them on the road, though at some distance, came up, and inquired, in a voice which Vivian immediately recognised as that of the messenger who had brought Beckendorff's letter to Turriparva, whether he had the honour of addressing Mr. von Philipson. Neither of the gentlemen answered, for Vivian of course expected the prince to reply; and his highness was, as yet, so unused to his incognito, that he had actually forgotten his own name. But it was evident that the demandant had questioned rather from system than by way of security; and he waited very patiently until the prince had collected his senses, and assumed sufficient gravity of countenance to inform the horseman that he was the person in question. "What, sir, is your pleasure?"

"I am instructed to ride on before you, sir, that you may not mistake your way;" and without waiting for an answer, the laconic messenger turned his steed's head, and trotted off.

The travellers soon left the high road, and turned up a wild turf path, not only inaccessible to carriages, but even requiring great attention from horsemen. After much winding, and some floundering, they arrived at a light and very fanciful iron gate, which apparently opened into a shrubbery.

"I will take your horses here, gentlemen," said the guide; and getting off his horse, he opened the gate. "Follow this path, and you can meet with no difficulty." The prince and Vivian accordingly dismounted; and the guide imme-

diately, with the end of his whip, gave a loud shrill whistle.

The path ran, for a very short way, through the shrubbery, which evidently was a belt encircling the grounds. From thence the prince and Vivian emerged upon an ample lawn, which formed on the farthest side a terrace, by gradually sloping down to the margin of a river. It was enclosed on the other sides by an iron railing of the same pattern as the gate, and a great number of white pheasants were quietly feeding in its centre. Following the path which skirted the lawn, they arrived at a second gate, which opened into a garden, in which no signs of the taste at present existing in Germany for the English system of picturesque pleasure-grounds were at all visible. The walk was bounded on both sides by tall borders, or rather hedges of box, cut into the shape of battlements; the sameness of these turrets being occasionally varied by the immovable form of some trusty warder, carved out of yew or laurel. Raised terraces and arched walks, aloes and orange-trees, mounted on sculptured pedestals, columns of cypress, and pyramids of bay, whose dark foliage strikingly contrasted with the marble statues, and the white vases shining in the sun, rose in all directions in methodical confusion. The sound of a fountain was not wanting; and large beds of the most beautiful flowers abounded; but in no instance did Vivian observe that two kinds of plants were ever mixed together. Proceeding through a very lofty berceau, occasional openings, whose curving walks allowed effective glimpses of a bust or a statue, the companions at length came in sight of the house. It was a long, uneven, low building, evidently of ancient architecture. Numerous stacks of tall and fantastically-shaped chimneys rose over three thick and heavy gables, which reached down farther than the middle of the elevation, forming three compartments, one of them including a large and modern bow-window, over which clustered in profusion the sweet and glowing blossoms of the clematis and the pomegranate. Indeed the whole front of the house was so completely covered with a rich scarlet creeper, that it was almost impossible to ascertain of what materials it was built. As Vivian was admiring a large white peacock, which, attracted by their approach, had taken the opportunity of unfurling its wheeling train, a man came forward from the bow-window.

I shall be particular in my description of his appearance. In height he was about five feet eight inches, and of a spare, but well-proportioned figure. He had very little hair, which was highly powdered, and dressed in a manner to render more remarkable the extraordinary elevation of his conical and polished forehead. His long piercing black eyes were almost closed, from the fullness of their upper lids. His cheeks were sallow, his nose aquiline, his mouth compressed. His ears, which were quite uncovered by hair, were so wonderfully small, that it would be wrong to pass them over unnoticed; as indeed were his hands and feet, which in form were quite feminine. He was dressed in a coat and waistcoat of black velvet, the latter part of his costume reaching to his thighs; and in a button hole of his coat was a large bunch of tube-rose. A small part of his flannel waistcoat appeared through an opening in his exquisitely piated shirt, the broad collar of which, though tied

d with a wide black riband, did not conceal a

neck which agreed well with his beardless chin, and would not have misbecome a woman. In England we should have called his breeches buckskin. They were of a pale yellow leather, and suited his large and spur-armed cavalry boot, which fitted closely to the legs they covered, reaching over the knees of the wearer. A riband round his neck, tucked into his waistcoat pocket, was attached to a small French watch. He swung in his right hand the bow of a violin; and in the other, the little finger of which was nearly hid by a large antique ring, he held a white handkerchief strongly perfumed with violets. Notwithstanding the many feminine characteristics which I have noticed, either from the expression of the eyes, or the formation of the mouth, the countenance of this individual generally conveyed an impression of the greatest firmness and energy. This description will not be considered ridiculously minute by those who have never had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the person of so celebrated a gentleman as Mr. BECKENDORFF.

He advanced to the prince with an air which seemed to proclaim, that as his person could not be mistaken, the ceremony of introduction was perfectly unnecessary. Bowing in the most ceremonious and courtly manner to his highness, Mr. Beckendorff, in a weak, but not displeasing voice, said that he was honoured "by the presence of Mr. von Philipson." The prince answered his salutation in a manner equally ceremonious, and equally courtly; for having no mean opinion of his own diplomatic abilities, his highness determined that neither by an excess of coldness, nor cordiality on his part, should the minister gather the slightest indication of the temper in which he had attended the interview. You see that even the bow of a diplomatist is a very serious business!

"Mr. Beckendorff," said his highness, "my letters doubtless informed you that I should avail myself of your permission to be accompanied. Let me have the honour of presenting to you my friend Mr. Grey, an English gentleman."

As the prince spoke, Beckendorff stood with his arms crossed behind him, and his chin resting upon his chest; but his eyes at the same time so raised as to look his highness full in the face. Vivian was so struck by his posture, and the expression of his countenance, that he nearly omitted to bow when he was presented. As his name was mentioned, the minister gave him a sharp sidelong glance, and moving his head very gently, he invited his guests to enter the house. The gentlemen accordingly complied with his request. Passing through the bow-window, they found themselves in a well-sized room, the sides of which were covered with shelves of richly bound books. There was nothing in the room which gave the slightest indication that the master of the library was any other than a private gentleman. Not a book, not a chair was out of its place. A purple inkstand of Sevre china, and a very highly-tooled morocco port-folio of the same colour, reposed on a rose-wood table, and that was all. No papers, no despatches, no red tape, and no red boxes. Over an ancient chimney, lined with blue china tiles, on which were represented the most grotesque figures—cows playing the harp—monkeys acting monarchs—and tall figures all legs, flying with rapidity from pursuers who were all head-

over this chimney were suspended some curious pieces of antique armour, among which, an Italian dagger, with a chased and jewelled hilt, was the most remarkable and the most precious.

"This," said Mr. Beekendorff, "is my library."

"What a splendid poniard!" said the prince, who had no taste for books; and he immediately walked up to the chimney-piece. Beekendorff followed him, and taking down the admired weapon from its resting-place, proceeded to lecture on its virtues, its antiquity, and its beauty. Vivian seized this opportunity of taking a rapid glance at the contents of his library. He anticipated interleaved copies of Machiavel, Vattel, and Montaigne; and the lightest works that he expected to meet with were the lying memoirs of some intriguing cardinal, or the deluding apology of an exiled minister. To his surprise he found that without an exception, the collection merely consisted of poetry and romance; and while his eye rapidly passed over, not only the great names of Germany, but also of Italy and of France, it was with pride that he remarked upon the shelves an English Shakspeare; and perhaps with still greater delight, a complete edition of the enchanted volumes of our illustrious Scott. Surprised at this most unexpected circumstance, Vivian looked with a curious eye on the unlettered backs of a row of mighty folios on a corner shelf; "These," he thought, "at least must be royal ordinances, and collected state-papers." The sense of propriety struggled for a moment with the passion of curiosity; but nothing is more difficult for the man who loves books, than to refrain from examining a volume which he fancies may be unknown to him. From the jewelled dagger, Beekendorff had now got to an enamelled breast-plate. Two to one he should not be observed; and so, with a desperate pull, Vivian extracted a volume—it was an herbal! He tried another—it was a collection of dried insects! He immediately replaced it, and staring at his host, wondered whether he really could be the Mr. Beekendorff of whom he had heard so much.

"And now," said Mr. Beekendorff, "I will show you my drawing-room."

He opened the door at the further end of the library, and introduced them to a room of a very different character. The sun, which was shining very brightly, lent additional brilliancy to the rainbow-tinted birds of paradise, the crimson macaws, and the green parroquets that glistened on the splendid India paper, which covered not only the walls, but also the ceiling of the room. Over the fire-place, a black frame, projecting from the wall and mournfully contrasting with the general brilliant appearance of the apartment, inclosed a picture of a beautiful female; and bending over its frame, and indeed partly shadowing the countenance, was the withered-branch of a tree. A harpsichord, and several cases of musical instruments were placed in different parts of the room; and suspended by very broad black ribands, from a wall on each side of the picture, were a guitar and a tambourine. On a sofa of unusual size lay a Cremona; and as Mr. Beekendorff passed the instrument, he threw by its side the bow, which he had hitherto carried in his hand.

"We may as well now take something," said Mr. Beekendorff, when his guests had sufficiently

admired the room: "my pictures are in my dining-room—let us go there."

So saying, and armed this time, not only with his bow, but also with his violin, he retraced his steps through the library, and crossing a small passage, which divided the house into two compartments, he opened the door into his dining-room. The moment that they entered the room, their ears were saluted, and indeed their senses ravished, by what appeared to be a concert of a thousand birds; yet none of the winged choristers were to be seen, and not even a single cage was visible. The room, which was very simply furnished, appeared at first rather gloomy; for though lighted by three windows, the silk blinds were all drawn.

"And now," said Mr. Beekendorff, raising the first blind, "you shall see my pictures. At what do you estimate this Breughel!"

The window, which was of stained green glass, gave to the landscape an effect similar to that generally produced by the artist mentioned. The prince, who was already very puzzled by finding one who, at the same time, was both his host and his enemy, so perfectly different a character to what he had conceived, and who, being by temper superstitious, considered that this preliminary false opinion of his was rather a bad omen,—did not express any very great admiration of the gallery of Mr. Beekendorff; but Vivian, who had no ambitious hopes or fears to affect his temper, and who was delighted with the character with whom he had become so unexpectedly acquainted—good-naturedly humoured the fantasies of the minister; and said that he preferred his picture to any Breughel he had ever seen.

"I see you have a fine taste," said Mr. Beekendorff, with a very serious air, but in a most courteous tone; "you shall see my Claude!"

The rich yellow tint of the second window gave to the fanciful garden all that was requisite to make it look Italian.

"Have you ever been in Italy, sir?" asked Beekendorff.

"I have not."

"You have, Mr. von Philipson?"

"Never south of Germany," answered the prince, who was exceedingly hungry, and eyed, with a rapacious glance, the capital luncheon which he saw prepared for him.

"Well then, when either of you go, you will of course not miss the Lago Maggiore. Gaze on Isola Bella at sunset, and you will not view as fair a scene as this! And now, Mr. von Philipson," said Mr. Beekendorff, "do me the favour of giving me your opinion of this Honthorst."

His highness would rather have given his opinion of the fine dish of stewed game which still smoked upon the table, but which he was mournfully convinced would not smoke long; or of the large cucumbers, of which he was particularly fond, and which, among many other vegetables, his amorous eye had already detected. "But," thought he, "this is the last!" and so he very warmly admired the effect produced by the flaming panes, to which Beekendorff swore that no piece ever painted by Gerard Honthorst, for brilliancy of colouring and boldness of outline, could be compared: "besides," continued Beekendorff, "mine are all animated pictures. See that cypress, waving from the gentle breeze which is now stirring—and look! look

at this crimson peacock!—look! Mr. von Philipson.”

“I am looking, Mr. von——I beg pardon, Mr. Beckendorff,” said the prince, with great dignity—making this slight mistake in the name, either from being unused to converse with such low people as had not the nominal mark of nobility, or to vent his spleen at being so unnecessarily kept from the refreshment which he so much required.

“Mr. von Philipson,” said Beckendorff, suddenly turning round; “all my fruits and all my vegetables, are from my own garden. Let us sit down and help ourselves.”

The only substantial food at table was a great dish of stewed game, which I believe I have mentioned before. The prince seized the breast and wings of a young pheasant, Vivian attacked a fine tender hare, and Beckendorff himself cut off the wing of a partridge. The vegetables and the fruits were numerous and superb; and there really appeared to be a fair prospect of the Prince of Little Lilliput making as good a luncheon as if the whole had been conducted under the auspices of Master Rodolph himself,—had it not been for the confounded melody of the unseen vocalists, which, probably excited by the sound of the knives and plates, too evidently increased every moment. But this inconvenience was soon removed by Mr. Beckendorff rising, and giving three loud knocks on the door opposite to the one by which they had entered. Immediate silence ensued.

“Clara will be here in an instant, to change your plate, Mr. von Philipson,” said Beckendorff, —“and here she is.”

Vivian eagerly looked up, not with the slightest idea that the entrance of Clara would prove that the mysterious picture in the drawing-room was a portrait; but it must be confessed with a little curiosity to view the first specimen of the sex who lived under the roof of Mr. Beckendorff. Clara was a hale old woman, with rather an acid expression of countenance; very prim in her appearance, and evidently very precise in her manners. She placed a bottle, and two wine-glasses with long thin stems, on the table; and having removed the game, and changed the plates, she disappeared.

“Pray what wine is this, Mr. Beckendorff?” eagerly asked the prince, with a countenance glowing with delight—and his highness was vulgar enough to smack his lips, which, for a prince, is really shocking.

“I really don’t know. I never drink wine.”

“Not know! Grey, take a glass. What’s your opinion?—I never tasted such wine in my life. Why, I do declare it is real Tokay!”

“Probably it may be,” said Mr. Beckendorff; “I think it was a present from the emperor. I have never tasted it.”

“My dear sir, take a glass!” said the prince; his natural kind and jovial temper having made him completely forget whom he was addressing, the business he had come upon, and indeed every thing else except the astounding circumstance that there was an individual in the room who refused to take his share of a bottle of real Tokay:—“My dear sir, take a glass.”

“I never drink wine; I’m glad you like it, I have no doubt Clara has more.”

“No, no, no! we must be moderate, we must be moderate,” said the prince, who, though a great admirer of a good luncheon, had also a due respect

for a good dinner,—and consequently had no idea at this awkward hour in the day of preventing himself from properly appreciating the future banquet. Moreover, his highness, taking into consideration the very piquant sauce with which the game had been dressed, and the marks of refinement and good taste which seemed to pervade every part of the establishment of Mr. Beckendorff, did not imagine that he was much presuming, when he conjectured that there was a fair chance of his dinner being something very superior. The prince, therefore, opposed a further supply of Tokay, and contented himself for the present with assisting his Gruyère with one of the very fine looking cucumbers—his favourite cucumbers; which, though yet untasted, had not, in spite of the wine, been banished from his memory.

“You seem very fond of cucumbers, Mr. von Philipson,” said Beckendorff.

“So fond of them that I prefer them to any vegetable, and to most fruits. What is more cooling—more refreshing! What—”

“I never eat them myself; but I’ll tell you, if you like, what I think the best way of treating a cucumber.”

His highness was the most ready, and the most graceful of pupils; and Vivian could scarcely suppress his laughter, when the prime minister, with a grave countenance, and in his peculiarly subdued voice, and somewhat precise mode of speaking, commenced instructing his political opponent upon the important topic of dressing a vegetable.

“You must be careful,” said Mr. Beckendorff, “to pick out the straightest, thinnest-skinned, most seedless cucumber that you can find. Six hours before you want to eat it, put the stalk in cold water on a marble slab—not the whole cucumber—that’s nonsense. Then pare it very carefully, so as to take off all the green outside and no more. Slice it as thin as possible, spread it over your dish, and sprinkle it with a good deal of white pepper, red pepper, salt, and mustard-seed. Mix some oil and common vinegar with a little Chili, and drown it in them. Open a large window very wide—and throw it all out!”

It was quite evident that Mr. von Philipson was extremely disappointed, and perhaps a little offended at the unexpected termination of Mr. Beckendorff’s lecture, to which he had listened with the most interested attention. As for Vivian Grey, he did not affect to contain himself any longer, but gave way to a long and loud laugh—a laugh not so much excited by the manner in which Beckendorff had detailed the desired information, although it was extremely humorous, as by the striking contrast which the speaker and the speech afforded to the conceptions which he and his companion had formed of their host during their ride. His rather boisterous risibility, apparently, did not offend Mr. Beckendorff, on whose upper lip, for an instant, Vivian thought he detected a smile or a sneer. It was, however, only for an instant; for the minister immediately rose from table, and left the room by the same door on which his three loud knocks had previously produced so tranquillizing an effect.

The sudden arrival and appearance of some new and unexpected guests through the very mysterious portal by which Mr. Beckendorff had vanished, not only were the source of fresh entertainment to our hero, but also explained the character of the apart-

ment, which, from its unceasing melody, had so much excited his curiosity. These new guests were a crowd of piping bullfinches, Virginia nightingales, French canaries, Java sparrows, and Indian larks; which having been freed from their cages of golden wire by their fond master, had fled, as was their custom, from his superb aviary to pay their respects and compliments at his daily levee.

The table was immediately covered, and the prince immediately annoyed. Nothing did he detest so much as the whole feathered race; and now, as far as he could observe, he might as well have visited a bird-catcher as Mr. Beckendorff. The white pheasants, and the white peacock, could have been borne; but as for the present intrusion, a man had better live in Noah's ark than in the liberties of an aviary. The prince was quite right; it was extremely annoying. A couple of bullfinches respectively perched on each of his shoulders, and commenced a most thrilling and jacobinical hymn of liberty, in celebration of their release; and an impudent little canary attacked his cucumber. As if this were not sufficient to produce instantaneous insanity, a long-tailed scarlet lory lighted on his head, and commenced its usual fondling tricks, by rubbing its beak in the prince's hair, fluttering its wing on his cheek, and pecking his eyebrows. As it got more delighted, it shrieked its joy into his ear with such shrillness, that he started from his chair; and the little favourite consequently slipping down, to save itself from falling, hung upon his lip by his beak. As soon as his highness had extricated himself from this unpleasant situation, the lory, making a perch on the back of his hair, regained its first position.

Just as the prince was asking Vivian to hasten to his assistance, Mr. Beckendorff returned.—“Never mind, Mr. von Philipson,” said the minister, “never mind; it only wants to make a nest, poor thing!”

“But I do mind, Mr. Beckendorff; I detest birds, and this annoying little animal, I beg to inform you, is exceedingly troublesome.”

“*Whough!*” said the Prime Minister of Reisenberg, and the troublesome lory flew to his shoulder. “I am glad to see that you like birds, sir,” said Beckendorff to Vivian; for our good hero, good-naturally humouring the tastes of his host, was impartially dividing the luxuries of a peach among a crowd of gaudy and greedy little sparrows. “You shall see my favourites,” continued Beckendorff, and tapping rather loudly on the table, he held out the forefinger of each hand. The two bullfinches, which were still singing on the shoulder of the prince, recognised the signal, and immediately hastened to their perch.

“My dear!” trilled out one little songster; and it raised its speaking eyes to its delighted master.

“My love!” warbled the other, marking its affection by looks equally personal.

These monosyllables were repeated fifty times; at each one Beckendorff, with sparkling eyes, and a countenance radiant with delight, triumphantly looked round at Vivian, as if the frequent reiteration were a proof of the sincerity of the affection of these singular friends.

At length, to the prince's great relief, Mr. Beckendorff's feathered friends having finished their desert, were sent back to their cages, with a strict injunction not to trouble their master at present with their voices—an injunction which, to Vivian's

great surprise, was obeyed to the letter; and when the door was closed, few persons in the world could have been persuaded that the next room was an aviary.

“I am proud of my peaches, Mr. von Philipson,” said Beckendorff, recommending the fruit to his guest's attention; then, rising from the table, he threw himself on the sofa, and began humming a tune in a very low voice. Presently he took up his Cremona, and using the violin as a guitar, accompanied himself in a very beautiful air, but not in a more audible tone. While Mr. Beckendorff was singing, he seemed quite unconscious that any person was in the room; and the prince, who detested music, certainly gave him no hint, either by his approbation or his attention, that he was listened to. Vivian, however, like most unhappy men, did love music with all his spirit's strength; and actuated by this feeling, and the interest which he began to take in the character of Mr. Beckendorff, he could not, when that gentleman had finished his air, refrain from very sincerely saying “*encore!*”

Beckendorff started and looked around, as if he were for the first moment aware that any being had heard him.

“*Encore!*” said he, with a kind sneer; “who ever could sing or play the same thing twice! Are you fond of music, sir?”

“Very much so, indeed: I fancied I recognised that air. You are an admirer, I imagine, of Mozart!”

“I never heard of him: I know nothing of those gentry. But if you really like music, I'll play you something worth listening to.”

Mr. Beckendorff began a beautiful air very adagio, gradually increasing the time in a kind of variation, till at last his execution became so wonderfully rapid, that Vivian, surprised at the mere mechanical action, rose from his chair in order better to examine the player's management and motion of his bow. Exquisite as were the tones, enchanting as were the originality of his variations, and the perfect harmony of his composition, it was nevertheless extremely difficult to resist laughing at the ludicrous contortions of his face and figure. Now, his body bending to the strain, he was at one moment with his violin raised in the air, and the next instant with the lower nut almost resting upon his foot. At length, by well-proportioned degrees, the air died away into the original soft cadence; and the player becoming completely entranced in his own performance, finished by sinking back on the sofa, with his bow and violin raised over his head. Vivian would not disturb him by his applause. An instant after, Mr. Beckendorff, throwing down the instrument, rushed through an opened window into the garden.

As soon as Beckendorff was out of sight, Vivian looked at the prince; and his highness, elevating his eyebrows, screwing up his mouth, and strutting his shoulders, altogether presented a very comical picture of a puzzled man.

“Well, my dear friend,” said he, “this is rather different to what we expected.”

“Very different indeed; but much more amusing.”

“*Humph!*” said the prince, very slowly, “I do not think it exactly requires a ghost to tell us that Mr. Beckendorff is not in the habit of going to court. I don't know how he is accustomed to conduct himself when he is honoured by a visit from the grand-duke; but I am quite sure, that

as regards his treatment of myself, to say the least, the incognito is very well observed."

"Mr. von Philipson," said the gentleman of whom they were speaking, putting his head in at the window; "you shall see my blue passion-flower.—We'll take a walk round the garden."

The prince gave Vivian a look, which seemed to suppose they must go; and accordingly they stepped into the garden.

"You do not see my garden in its glory," said Mr. Beckendorff, stopping before the bow-window of the library; "this spot is my strong point; had you been here earlier in the year, you might have admired with me my invaluable crescents of tulips—such colours! such brilliancy! so defined! And last year I had three king-tulips; their elegantly-formed creamy cups, I have never seen equalled. And then my double variegated ranunculuses; my hyacinths of fifty bells, in every tint, single and double; and my favourite stands of auriculas, so large and powdered, that the colour of the velvet leaves was scarcely discoverable! The blue passion-flower is, however, now very beautiful. You see that summer-house, sir," continued he, turning to Vivian, "the top is my observatory; you will sleep in that pavilion to-night, so you had better take notice how the walk winds."

The passion-flower was trained against the summer-house in question.

"There!" said Mr. Beckendorff, and he stood admiring with outstretched arms, "the latter days of its beauty, for the autumn frosts will soon stop its flower: Pray, Mr. von Philipson, are either you or your friend a botanist?"

"Why," said the prince, "I am a great admirer of flowers, but I cannot exactly say that—"

"Ah! I see you are no botanist. The flower of this beautiful plant continues only one day, but there is a constant succession from July to the end of the autumn: and if this fine weather continue—Pray, sir, how is the wind?"

"I really cannot say," said the prince; "but I think the wind is either—"

"Ah! do you know how the wind is, sir?" continued Beckendorff to Vivian.

"I think, sir, that it is—"

"Ah! I see it's westerly.—Well! if this weather continue, the succession may still last another month. You will be interested to know, Mr. von Philipson, that the flower comes out at the same joint with the leaf, on a peduncle near three inches long; round the centre of it are two radiating crowns; look, look, sir! the inner inclining towards the centre column—now examine this well, and I'll be with you in a moment." So saying, Mr. Beckendorff, running with great rapidity down the walk, jumped over the railing, and in a moment was coursing across the lawn, towards the river, in a desperate chase after a dragon-fly.

Mr. Beckendorff was soon out of sight; and after lingering half an hour in the vicinity of the blue passion-flower, the prince proposed to Vivian that they should quit the spot. "As far as I can observe," continued his highness, "we might as well quit the house. No wonder that Beckendorff's power is on the wane, for he appears to me to be growing childish. Surely he could not always have been this frivolous creature!"

"I really am so overwhelmed with astonishment," said Vivian, "that it is quite out of my power to assist your highness in any supposition. But

I should recommend you not to be too hasty in your movements. Take care that staying here does not affect the position which you have taken up, or retard the progress of any measures on which you have determined, and you are safe. What will it injure you, if, with the chance of achieving the great and patriotic purpose to which you have devoted your powers and energies, you are subjected for a few hours to the caprices, or even rudeness, of any man whatever. If Beckendorff be the character which the world gives him credit to be, I do not think he can imagine that you are to be deceived twice; and if he do imagine so, we are convinced that he will be disappointed. If, as you have supposed, not only his power is on the wane, but his intellect also, four-and-twenty hours will convince us of the fact; for in less than that time your highness will necessarily have conversation of a more important nature with him. I strenuously recommend, therefore, that we continue here to-day, although," added Vivian, smiling, "I have to sleep in his observatory."

After walking in the garden about an hour, the prince and Vivian again went into the house, imagining that Beckendorff might have returned by another entrance; but he was not there. The prince was very much annoyed; and Vivian, to amuse himself, had recourse to the library. After re-examining the armour, looking at the garden through the painted windows, conjecturing who might be the original of the mysterious picture, and what could be the meaning of the withered branch, the prince was fairly worn out. The precise dinner hour he did not know; and notwithstanding repeated exertions, he had hitherto been unable to find the blooming Clara. He could not flatter himself, however, that there were less than two hours to kill before the great event took place; and so, quite miserable, and heartily wishing himself back again at Turriparva, he prevailed upon Vivian to throw aside his book, and take another walk.

This time they extended their distance, stretched out as far as the river, and explored the adjoining woods; but of Mr. Beckendorff they saw and heard nothing. At length they again returned: it was getting dusk. They found the bow-window of the library closed. They again entered the dining-room; and, to their surprise, found no preparations for dinner. This time the prince was more fortunate in his exertions to procure an interview with Madam Clara, for that lady almost immediately entered the room.

"Pray, my good madam," inquired the prince; "has your master returned?"

"Mr. Beckendorff is in the library, sir," said the old lady, very pompously.

"Indeed! we don't dine in this room, then?"

"Dine, sir!" said the good dame, forgetting her pomposity in her astonishment.

"Yes—dine," said the prince.

"La! sir; Mr. Beckendorff never takes any thing after noon meal."

"Am I to understand, then, that we are to have no dinner?" asked his highness, angry and agitated.

"Mr. Beckendorff never takes any thing after his noon meal, sir; but I'm sure if you and your friend are hungry, sir, I hope there's never a want in this house."

"My good lady, I am hungry, very hungry indeed; and if your master, I mean Mr. von——that

as Mr. Beckendorff, has such a bad appetite that he can satisfy himself with picking, once a day, the breast of a pheasant; why, if he expect his friends to be willing, or even able to live on such fare,—the least that I can say is, that he is very much mistaken; and so, therefore, my good friend Grey, I think we had better order our horses, and be off."

"No occasion for that, I hope," said Mrs. Clara, rather alarmed at the prince's passion; "no want, I trust, ever here, sir; and I make no doubt you'll have dinner as soon as possible; and so, sir, I hope you'll not be hasty."

"Hasty! I have no wish to be hasty; but as for disarranging the whole economy of the house, and getting up an extemporaneous meal for me—I cannot think of it. Mr. Beckendorff may live as he likes, and if I stay here, I am contented to live as he does. I do not wish him to change his habits for me, and I shall take care that, after to-day, there will be no necessity for his doing so. However, absolute hunger can make no compliments; and therefore I will thank you, my good madam, to let me and my friend have the remains of that cold game, if they be still in existence, on which we lunched, or, as you term it, took our noon meal this morning; and which, if it were your own cooking, Mrs. Clara, I assure you, as I observed to my friend at the time, did you infinite credit."

The prince, although his gentlemanly feeling had, in spite of his hunger, dictated a deprecation of Mrs. Clara's making a dinner merely for himself, still thought that a reasonable and deserved compliment to the lady might assist in bringing about a result, which, notwithstanding his politeness, he very much desired; and that was the production of another specimen of her culinary accomplishments. Having behaved, as he considered, with such moderation and dignified civility, he was, it must be confessed, rather astounded, when Mrs. Clara, duly acknowledging his compliment by her courtesy, was sorry to inform him that she dared give no refreshment in this house, without Mr. Beckendorff's special order.

"Special order! why! surely your master will not grudge me the cold leg of a pheasant!"

"Mr. Beckendorff is not in the habit of grudging my thing," answered the house-keeper, with offended majesty.

"Then why should he object?" asked the prince.

"Mr. Beckendorff is the best judge, sir, of the propriety of his own regulations."

"Well, well!" said Vivian, more interested for his friend than himself, "there is no difficulty in asking Mr. Beckendorff."

"None in the least, sir," answered the house-keeper, "when he is awake."

"Awake!" said the prince, "why! is he asleep now?"

"Yes, sir, in the library."

"And how long will he be asleep?" asked the prince, with great eagerness.

"It is uncertain; he may be asleep for hours—he may wake in five minutes; all I can do is to watch."

"But, surely in a case like the present, you can wake your master?"

"I could not wake Mr. Beckendorff, sir, if the house were on fire. No one can enter the room when he is asleep."

"Then how can you possibly know when he is awake?"

"I shall hear his violin immediately, sir."

"Well, well! I suppose it must be so. Grey, I wish we were in Turriparva, that is all I know. Men of my station have no business to be paying visits to the sons of the Lord knows who! peasants, shot-keepers, and pedagogue!"

The Prince of Little Lilliput thought that mankind were solely created to hunt and to fight; and unless you could spear a boar or owned a commission, you were not included in his list of proper men. We smile at what we consider the narrow-minded ideas of a German prince; yet, perhaps, if we inquire, we shall find that mankind, on an average, are influenced in all countries by the same feelings, and in the same degree; and the definition of a *gentleman* by a hero of St. James-street, if not exactly similar, will not be less unwise and less ridiculous, than the Prince of Little Lilliput's description of a *proper man*. An officer in the guards once told me, that no person was a gentleman, who was not the son of a man who had twenty thousand a year landed property. Convinced that his declaration was sincere, I respected his prejudices, and did not dispute his definition. I should have behaved the same, had I been in Africa, and had a Hottentot dandy declared, that no person was to be visited who dared to devour the smoking entrails of a sheep in less than a couple of mouthfuls.

As a fire was blazing in the dining-room, which Mrs. Clara informed them Mr. Beckendorff never omitted having every night in the year, the prince and his friend imagined that they were to remain there, and they consequently did not attempt to disturb the slumbers of Mr. Beckendorff. Resting his feet on the hobs, his highness, for the fiftieth time, declared that he wished he had never left Turriparva; and just when Vivian was on the point of giving up, in despair, the hope of consoling him, Mrs. Clara entered, and proceeded to lay the cloth.

"Your master is awake, then?" asked the prince, very quickly.

"Mr. Beckendorff has been long awake, sir! and dinner will be ready immediately."

His highness's countenance brightened, and in a short time the supper appearing, the prince again fascinated by Mrs. Clara's cookery and Mr. Beckendorff's wine, forgot his chagrin, and regained his temper.

In about a couple of hours Mr. Beckendorff entered.

"I hope that Clara has given you wine you like, Mr. von Philipson?"

"Excellent, my dear sir! the same bin, I'll answer for that."

Mr. Beckendorff had his violin in his hand; but his dress was much changed. His great boots being pulled off, exhibiting the white silk stockings which he invariably wore; and his coat had given place to the easier covering of a very long and handsome brocade dressing-gown. He drew a chair round the fire, between the prince and Vivian. It was a late hour, and the room was only lighted by the glimmering coals, for the flames had long died away. Mr. Beckendorff sat for some time without speaking, gazing very earnestly on the decaying embers. Indeed, before many minutes had elapsed, complete silence prevailed, for both the endeavours of the prince, and of Vivian, to promote conversation had been unsuccessful. At length the master of the house turned round to

the prince, and pointing to a particular mass of coal, said, "I think, Mr. von Philipson, that is the completest elephant I ever saw. We will ring the bell for some coals, and then have a game of whist."

The prince was so surprised by Mr. Beckendorff's remark, that he was not sufficiently struck by the strangeness of his proposition; and it was only when he heard Vivian professing his ignorance of the game, that it occurred to him that to play at whist was hardly the object for which he had travelled from Turriparva.

"An Englishman not know whist!" said Mr. Beckendorff: "Ridiculous!—you do know it. You're thinking of the stupid game they play here, of Boston whist. Let us play! Mr. von Philipson, I know, has no objection."

"But, my good sir," said the prince, "although previous to conversation I may have no objection to join in a little amusement, still it appears to me that it has escaped your memory that whist is a game which requires the co-operation of four persons."

"Not at all! I take dummy. I'm not sure if it is not the finest way of playing the game."

The table was arranged, the lights brought, the cards produced, and the Prince of Little Lilliput, greatly to his surprise, found himself playing whist with Mr. Beckendorff. Nothing could be more dull. The minister would neither bet nor stake; and the immense interest which he took in every card that was played, most ludicrously contrasted with the rather sullen looks of the prince, and the very sleepy ones of Vivian. Whenever Mr. Beckendorff played for dummy, he always looked with the most searching eye into the next adversary's face, as if he would read his cards in his features. The first rubber lasted an hour and a half—three long games, which Mr. Beckendorff, to his triumph, hardly won. In the first game of the second rubber Vivian blundered; in the second he revoked; and in the third, having neglected to play, and being loudly called upon, and rated both by his partner and Mr. Beckendorff, he was found to be asleep. Beckendorff threw down his hand with a loud dash, which roused Vivian from his slumber. He apologized for his drowsiness; but said that he was so extremely sleepy that he must retire. The prince, who longed to be with Beckendorff alone, winked approbation of his intention.

"Well!" said Beckendorff, "you spoiled the rubber. I shall ring for Clara. Why you are all so fond of going to bed, I cannot understand. I have not been to bed these thirty years."

Vivian made his escape; and Beckendorff, pitying his degeneracy, proposed to the prince, in a tone which seemed to anticipate that the offer would meet with instantaneous acceptance—double dummy;—this, however, was too much.

"No more cards, sir, I thank you," said the prince; "if, however, you have a mind for an hour's conversation, I am quite at your service."

"I am obliged to you—I never talk—good night, Mr. von Philipson."

Mr. Beckendorff left the room. His highness could contain himself no longer. He rang the bell.

"Pray, Mrs. Clara," said he, "where are my horses?"

"Mr. Beckendorff will have no quadrupeds within a mile of the house, except Owlface."

"How do you mean?—let me see the man servant."

"The household consists only of myself, sir."

"Why! where is my luggage, then?"

"That has been brought up, sir; it is in your room."

"I tell you, I must have my horses."

"It is quite impossible to-night, sir. I think, sir, you had better retire; Mr. Beckendorff may not be home again these six hours."

"What! is your master gone out?"

"Yes, sir, he is just gone out to take his ride."

"Why! where is his horse kept, then?"

"It's Owlface, sir."

"Owlface, indeed! what, is your master in the habit of riding out at night?"

"Mr. Beckendorff rides out, sir, just when it happens to suit him."

"It is very odd I cannot ride out when it happens to suit me! However, I'll be off to-morrow; and so, if you please, show me my bed-room at once."

"Your room is the library, sir."

"The library! why, there's no bed in the library."

"We have no beds, sir; but the sofa is made up."

"No beds! well! it's only for one night. You are all mad, and I am as mad as you for coming here."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE morning sun peeping through the window of the little summer-house, roused its inmate at an early hour; and finding no signs of Mr. Beckendorff and his guest having yet arisen from their slumbers, Vivian took the opportunity of strolling about the gardens and the grounds. Directing his way along the margin of the river, he soon left the lawn, and entered some beautiful meadows, whose dewy verdure glistened in the brightening beams of the early sun. Crossing these, and passing through a gate, he found himself in a rural road, whose lofty hedge-rows, rich with all the varieties of wild fruit and flower, and animated with the cheering presence of the busy birds chirping from every bough and spray, altogether presented a scene which greatly reminded him of the soft beauties of his own country. With some men, to remember is to be sad; and unfortunately for Vivian Grey, there were few objects which with him did not give rise to associations of a most painful nature. Of what he was thinking as he sat on a bank with his eyes fixed on the ground, it is needless to inquire. He was roused from his reverie by the sound of a trotting horse. He looked up, but the winding road prevented him at first from seeing the steed, which evidently was approaching. The sound came nearer and nearer; and at length, turning a corner, Mr. Beckendorff came in sight. He was mounted on a very strong built, rough, and particularly ugly pony, with an obstinate mane, which, defying the exertions of groom or ostler, fell in equal divisions on both sides of his bottle neck—and a large white face, which, combined with its blind, or blinking vision, had earned for it the euphonious and complimentary title of Owlface.

Both master and steed must have travelled hand and far, for both were covered with dust and mud from top to toe—from mane to hoof. Mr. Beckendorff seemed surprised at meeting Vivian, and pulled up his pony as he reached him.

"An early riser, I see, sir. Where is Mr. von Philipson?"

"I have not yet seen him, and imagined that both he and yourself had not yet risen."

"Hum! how many is it to noon?" asked Mr. Beckendorff, who always spoke astronomically.

"More than four, I imagine."

"Pray, do you prefer the country about here to Turriparva?"

"Both, I think, are very beautiful."

"You live at Turriparva?" asked Mr. Beckendorff.

"When I am there," answered Vivian, smiling, who was too practised a head to be pumped even by Mr. Beckendorff.

"Pray, has it been a fine summer at Turriparva?"

"It has been a fine summer, I believe, everywhere."

"I am afraid Mr. von Philipson finds it rather dull here."

"I am not aware of it."

"He seems a ve—ry!" said Beckendorff, looking keenly in his companion's face. But Vivian did not supply the desired phrase; and so the minister was forced to finish the sentence himself—

"a very—gentlemanly sort of man!" A low bow was the only response.

"I trust, sir, I may indulge the hope," continued Mr. Beckendorff, "that you will honour me with your company another day."

"You are most exceedingly obliging, sir."

"Mr. von Philipson is fond, I think, of a country life!" said Beckendorff.

"Most men are, I think, sir."

"I suppose he has no innate objection to live occasionally in a city?"

"Few men have, I think, sir."

"You probably have known him long?"

"Not long enough to wish our acquaintance at an end."

"Hum!"

They proceeded in silence for about five minutes, and then Beckendorff again turned round, and this time with a direct question.

"I wonder if Mr. von Philipson can make it convenient to honour me with his company another day. Can you tell me?"

"I think the best person to inform of that, sir, would be his highness himself," said Vivian, using his friend's title purposely to show Mr. Beckendorff now very ridiculous he considered his present use of the incognito.

"You think so, sir, do you?" answered Beckendorff, very sarcastically.

They had now arrived at the gate by which Vivian had reached the door.

"Your excuse, sir," said Mr. Beckendorff, "lies that way. I see, like myself, you are no great talker. We shall meet at breakfast." So saying, the minister set spurs to his pony, and was soon out of sight.

When Vivian reached the house he found the bow window of the library thrown open; and as he approached, he saw Mr. Beckendorff enter the room and bow to the prince. His highness had passed a most excellent night, in spite of not sleep-

ing in a bed; and he was at this moment commencing a most delicious breakfast. His ill-humour had consequently all vanished. He had made up his mind that Beckendorff was a madman; and although he had given up all the sweet and flattering hopes which he had dared to entertain when the interview was first arranged, he nevertheless did not regret his visit, which on the whole had been very amusing, and had made him acquainted with the person and habits, and, as he believed, the intellectual powers of a man with whom, not probably, he should soon be engaged in open hostility. Vivian took his seat at the breakfast table, and Beckendorff stood conversing with them with his back to the fire-place, and occasionally, during the pauses of conversation, pulling the strings of his violin with his fingers. It did not escape Vivian's observation that the minister was particularly courteous, and even attentive to his highness; and that he endeavoured by his quick, and more communicative answers, and occasionally by a stray observation, to encourage the good humour which was visible on the cheerful countenance of the prince.

"Have you been long up, Mr. Beckendorff?" asked the prince; for his host had resumed his dressing-gown and slippers.

"I generally see the sun rise."

"And yet you retire late!—out riding last night, I understand?"

"I never go to bed."

"Indeed!" said the prince. "Well, for my part, without my regular rest I am nothing. Have you breakfasted, Mr. Beckendorff?"

"Chara will bring my breakfast immediately."

The dame accordingly soon appeared, bearing a tray with a basin of boiling water, and one very large thick biscuit. This, Mr. Beckendorff having well soaked in the hot fluid, eagerly devoured; and then taking up his violin, amused himself until his guests had finished their breakfast.

When Vivian had ended his meal, he left the prince and Mr. Beckendorff alone, determined that his presence should not be the occasion of the minister any longer retarding the commencement of business. The prince, who by a private glance had been prepared for his departure, immediately took the opportunity of asking Mr. Beckendorff, in a very decisive tone, whether he might flatter himself that he could command his present attention to a subject of great importance. Mr. Beckendorff said that he was always at Mr. von Philipson's service; and drawing a chair opposite him, the prince and Mr. Beckendorff now sat on each side of the fire-place.

"Hem!" said the prince, clearing his throat; and he looked at Mr. Beckendorff, who sat with his heels close together, his toes out square, his hands resting on his knees, which, as well as his elbows, were turned out, his shoulders bent, his head reclined, and his eyes glancing.

"Hem!" said the Prince of Little Lilliput. "In compliance, Mr. Beckendorff, with your wish, developed in the communication received by me on the—inst, I assented in my answer to the arrangement then proposed; the object of which was, to use your own words, to facilitate the occurrence of an oral interchange of the sentiments of various parties interested in certain proceedings, by which interchange it was anticipated that the mutual interests might be respectively considered and finally

arranged. Prior, Mr. Beckendorff, to either of us going into any detail upon those points of probable discussion, which will, in all likelihood, form the fundamental features of this interview, I wish to recall your attention to the paper which I had the honour of presenting to his royal highness, and which is alluded to in your communication of the — inst. The principal heads of that document I have brought with me abridged in this paper."

Here the prince handed to Mr. Beckendorff a MS. pamphlet, consisting of about sixty foolscap sheets closely written. The minister bowed very graciously as he took it from his highness's hand; and then, without even looking at it, he laid it on the table.

"You, sir, I perceive," continued the prince, "are acquainted with its contents; and it will, therefore, be unnecessary for me at present to expatiate upon their individual expediency, or to argue for their particular adoption. And, sir, when we observe the progress of the human mind, when we take into consideration the quick march of intellect, and the wide expansion of enlightened views and liberal principles—when we take a bird's-eye view of the history of man from the earliest ages to the present moment, I feel that it would be folly in me to conceive for an instant, that the measures developed and recommended in that paper, will not finally receive the approbation of his royal highness. As to the exact origin of slavery, Mr. Beckendorff, I confess that I am not, at this moment, prepared distinctly to speak. That the divine author of our religion was its decided enemy, I am informed, is clear. That the slavery of ancient times was the origin of the feudal service of a more modern period, is a point on which men of learning have not precisely made up their minds. With regard to the exact state of the ancient German people, Tacitus affords us a great deal of most interesting information. Whether or not, certain passages which I have brought with me marked in the Germania, are incontestable evidences that our ancestors enjoyed or understood the practice of a wise and well regulated liberty, is a point on which I shall be happy to receive the opinion of so distinguished a statesman as Mr. Beckendorff. In stepping forward, as I have felt it my duty to do, as the advocate of popular rights and national privileges, I am desirous to prove that I have not become the votary of innovation and the professor of revolutionary doctrines. The passages of the Roman author in question, and an ancient charter of the Emperor Charlemagne, are, I consider, decisive and sufficient precedents for the measures which I have thought proper to sanction by my approval, and to support by my influence. A minister, Mr. Beckendorff, must take care that in the great race of politics, the minds of his countrymen do not leave his own behind them. We must never forget the powers and capabilities of man. On this very spot, perhaps, some centuries ago, savages clothed in skins were committing cannibalism in a forest. We must not forget, I repeat, that it is the business of those to whom Providence has allotted the responsible possession of power and influence—that it is their duty, our duty, Mr. Beckendorff—to become guardians of our weaker fellow-creatures—that all power is a trust—that we are accountable for its exercise—that from the people, and for the people, all springs, and all must exist; and that, unless we conduct ourselves with the requisite

wisdom, prudence, and propriety, the whole system of society will be disorganized; and this country, in particular, fall a victim to that system of corruption and misgovernment, which has already occasioned the destruction of the great kingdoms mentioned in the Bible; and many other states besides—Greece, Rome, Carthage, &c."

Thus ended the peroration of an harangue consisting of an incoherent arrangement of imperfectly-remembered facts, and misunderstood principles; all gleaned by his highness from the enlightening articles of the Reisenberg journals. Like Brutus, the Prince of Little Lilliput paused for a reply.

"Mr. von Philipson," said his companion, when his highness had finished, "you speak like a man of sense." Having given this answer, Mr. Beckendorff rose from his seat, and walked straight out of the room.

The prince, at first, took the answer for a compliment; but Mr. Beckendorff not returning, he began to have a very faint idea that he was neglected. In this uncertainty, he rang the bell for his old friend Clara.

"Mrs. Clara! where is your master?"

"Just gone out, sir."

"How do you mean?"

"He has gone out with his gun, sir."

"You are quite sure he has gone out?"

"Quite sure, sir. I took him his coat and boots myself."

"I am to understand, then, that your master has gone out?"

"Yes, sir, Mr. Beckendorff has gone out. He will be home for his noon meal."

"That is enough!—Grey!" hallooed the indignant prince, darting into the garden; "Grey! Grey! where are you, Grey?"

"Well, my dear prince," said Vivian; "what can possibly be the matter?"

"The matter! insanity can be the only excuse; insanity can alone account for his preposterous conduct. We have seen enough of him. The repetition of absurdity is only wearisome. Pray assist me in getting our horses immediately."

"Certainly, if you please; but remember you brought me here as your friend and counsellor. As I have accepted the trust, I cannot help being sensible of the responsibility. Before, therefore, you finally resolve upon departure, pray let me be fully acquainted with the circumstance which has impelled you to this sudden resolution."

"Willingly, my good friend, could I only command my temper; and yet to fall into a passion with a madman is almost a mark of madness: but his manner and his conduct are so provoking and so puzzling, that I cannot altogether repress my irritability. And that ridiculous incognito! why I sometimes begin to think that I really am Mr. von Philipson! An incognito, forsooth! for what? to deceive whom? His household apparently only consists of two persons, one of whom has visited me in my own castle; and the other is a cross old hag, who would not be able to comprehend my rank if she were aware of it. But to the point! When you left the room, I was determined to be trifled with no longer, and I asked him in a firm voice, and very marked manner, whether I might command his immediate attention to very important business. He professed to be at my service. I opened the affair by taking a cursory,

yet definite review of the principles in which my political conduct had originated, and on which it was founded. I flattered myself that I had produced an impression. Sometimes, my dear Grey, we are in a better cue for these expositions than at others, and to-day I was really unusually felicitous. My memory never deserted me. I was, at the same time, luminous and profound; and while I was guided by the philosophical spirit of the present day, I showed by my various reading, that I respected the experience of antiquity. In short, I was perfectly satisfied with myself; and with the exception of one single point about the origin of slavery, which unfortunately got entangled with the feudal system, I could not have got on better had Sievers himself been at my side. Nor did I spare Mr. Beekendorff; but, on the contrary, my good fellow, I said a few things which, had he been in his senses, must, I imagine, have gone home to his feelings. Do you know, I finished by drawing his own character, and showing the inevitable effects of his ruinous policy: and what do you think he did?"

"Left you in a passion?"

"Not at all. He seemed very much struck by what I had said, and apparently understood it. I have heard that in some species of insanity the patient is perfectly able to comprehend every thing addressed to him, though at that point his sanity ceases, and he is unable to answer or to act. This must be Beekendorff's case; for no sooner had I finished, than he rose up immediately, and saying that I spoke like a man of sense, he abruptly quitted the room. The housekeeper says he will not be at home again till that infernal ceremony takes place, called the noon meal. Now do not you advise me to be off as soon as possible!"

"It will require some deliberation. Pray did you not speak to him last night?"

"Ah! I forgot that I had not been able to speak to you since then. Well! last night, what do you think he did? When you were gone, he had the insolence to congratulate me on the opportunity then afforded of playing double dummy; and when I declined his proposition, but said that if he wished to have an hour's conversation I was at his service, he very coolly told me that he never talked, and bade me good night! Did you ever know such a madman? He never goes to bed. I only had a sofa. How the deuce did you sleep?"

"Well, and safely, considering that I was in a summer-house without lock or bolt."

"Well! I need not ask you now as to your opinion of our immediately getting off. We shall have, however, some trouble about our horses, for we will not allow a quadruped near the house, except some monster of an animal that he rides himself; and, by St. Hubert! I cannot find out where our steeds are. What shall we do?" But Vivian did not answer. "Grey," continued his highness, "what are you thinking of? Why don't you answer?"

"Your highness must not go," said Vivian, shaking his head.

"Not go! why so, my good fellow?"

"Depend upon it, you are wrong about Beekendorff. That he is a humorist, there is no doubt; but it appears to me to be equally clear, that his queer and singular mode of life are not of late adoption. What he is now, he must have been these ten, perhaps these twenty years, perhaps

more. Of this there are a thousand proofs about us. As to the overpowering cause which has made him the character he appears at present, it is needless for us to inquire. Probably some incident in his private life, in all likelihood connected with the mysterious picture. Let us be satisfied with the effect. If the case be as I state it, in his private life and habits Beekendorff must have been equally incomprehensible and equally singular at the very time that, in his public capacity, he was producing such brilliant results, as at the present moment. Now, then, can we believe him to be insane! I anticipate your objections. I know you will enlarge upon the evident absurdity of his inviting his political opponent to his house, for a grave consultation on the most important affairs, and then treating him as he has done you; when it must be clear to him that you cannot be again duped, and when he must feel that were he to amuse you for as many weeks as he has days, your plans and your position would not be injuriously affected. Be it so. Probably a humorist like Beekendorff cannot, even in the most critical moment, altogether restrain the bent of his capricious inclinations. However, my dear prince, I will lay no stress upon this point. My opinion, indeed my conviction is, that Beekendorff acts from design. I have considered his conduct well; and I have observed all that you have seen, and more than you have seen, and keenly. Depend upon it, that since you assented to the interview, Beekendorff has been obliged to shift his intended position for negotiation. Some of the machinery has gone wrong. Fearful, if he had postponed your visit, that you should imagine that he was only again amusing you, and consequently listen to no future overtures, he has allowed you to attend a conference for which he is not prepared. That he is making desperate exertions to bring the business to a point, is my firm opinion; and you would perhaps agree with me, were you as convinced as I am, that since we parted last night our host has been to Reisenberg and back again."

"To Reisenberg, and back again!"

"Ay! I rose this morning at an early hour, and imagining that both you and Beekendorff had not yet made your appearance, I escaped from the grounds, intending to explore part of the surrounding country. In my stroll I came to a narrow winding road, which I am convinced lies in the direction towards Reisenberg; there, for some reason or other, I loitered more than an hour, and very probably should have been too late for breakfast, had I not been recalled to myself by the approach of a horseman. It was Beekendorff, covered with dust and mud. His horse had been evidently hard ridden. I did not think much of it at the time, because I supposed he might have been out for three or four hours, and hard worked, but I nevertheless was struck by his appearance; and when you mentioned that he went out riding at a late hour last night, it immediately occurred to me, that had he come home at one or two o'clock, it was not very probable that he would have gone out again at four or five. I have no doubt that my conjecture is correct—Beekendorff has been at Reisenberg."

"You have placed this business in a new and important light," said the prince, his expiring hopes reviving; "what, then, do you advise me to do?"

"To be quiet. If your own view of the case be right, you can act as well to-morrow or the next day as this moment; on the contrary, if mine be the correct one, a moment may enable Beckendorff himself to bring affairs to a crisis. In either case, I should recommend you to be silent, and in no manner to allude any more to the object of your visit. If you speak, you only give opportunities to Beckendorff of ascertaining your opinions and your inclinations; and your silence, after such frequent attempts on your side to promote discussion upon business, will soon be discovered by him to be systematic. This will not decrease his opinion of your sagacity and firmness. The first principle of negotiation is to make your adversary respect you."

After long consultation, the prince determined to follow Vivian's advice; and so firmly did he adhere to his purpose, that when he met Mr. Beckendorff at the noon meal, he asked him, with a very unembarrassed voice and manner, "what sport he had had in the morning?"

The noon meal again consisted of a single dish, as exquisitely dressed, however, as the preceding one. It was a splendid haunch of venison.

"This is my dinner, gentlemen," said Beckendorff; "let it be your luncheon: I have ordered your dinner at sunset."

After having eaten a slice of the haunch, Mr. Beckendorff rose from table, and said, "We will have our wine in the drawing-room, Mr. von Philippon, and then you will not be disturbed with my birds."

He left the room.

To the drawing-room, therefore, his two guests soon adjourned. They found him busily employed with his pencil. The prince thought it must be a chart or a fortification at least, and was rather surprised when Mr. Beckendorff asked him the magnitude of Mirac in Boötes: and the prince confessing his utter ignorance of the subject, the minister threw aside his unfinished planisphere, and drew his chair to them at the table. It was with great pleasure that his highness perceived a bottle of his favourite Tokay; and with no little astonishment he observed, that to-day, there were three wine-glasses placed before them. They were of peculiar beauty, and almost worthy, for their elegant shapes and great antiquity, of being included in the collection of the Duke of Schoss Johannisberger.

"Your praise of my cellar, sir," said Mr. Beckendorff, very graciously, "has made me turn wine-drinker." So saying, the minister took up one of the rare glasses and held it to the light. His keen, glancing eye, detected an almost invisible cloud on the side of the delicate glass, and jerking it across him, he flung it into the farthest corner of the room—it was shivered into a thousand pieces. He took up the second glass, examined it very narrowly, and then sent it, with equal force, after its companion. The third one shared the same fate. He rose and rang the bell.

"Clara!" said Mr. Beckendorff, in his usual tone of voice, "some clean glasses, and sweep away that litter in the corner."

"He is mad, then!" thought the Prince of Little Lilliput, and he shot a glance at his companion, which Vivian could not misunderstand.

After exhausting their bottle, in which they were assisted to the extent of one glass by their

host, who drank Mr. von Philippon's health with cordiality, they assented to Mr. Beckendorff's proposition of visiting his fruitery.

To the prince's great relief, dinner-time soon arrived; and having employed a couple of hours on that meal very satisfactorily, he and Vivian adjourned to the drawing-room, having previously pledged their honour to each other, that nothing should again induce them to play dummy whist. Their resolutions and their promises were needless. Mr. Beckendorff, who was sitting opposite the fire when they came into the room, neither by word nor motion acknowledged that he was aware of their entrance. Vivian found refuge in a book; and the prince, after having examined and re-examined the brilliant birds that figured on the drawing-room paper, fell asleep upon the sofa. Mr. Beckendorff took down the guitar, and accompanied himself in a low voice for some time; then he suddenly ceased, and stretching out his legs, and supporting his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, he leaned back in his chair, and remained perfectly motionless, with his eyes fixed upon the picture. Vivian, in turn, gazed upon this singular being, and the fair pictured form which he seemed to idolize. Was he, too, unhappy? Had he, too, been bereft in the hour of his proud and perfect joy? Had he, too, lost a virgin bride?—His agony overcame him, the book fell from his hand, and he groaned aloud! Mr. Beckendorff started, and the prince awoke. Vivian, confounded, and unable to overpower his emotions, uttered some hasty words, explanatory, apologetical, and contradictory, and retired. In his walk to the summer-house, a man passed him. In spite of a great cloak, Vivian recognised him as their messenger and guide; and his ample mantle did not conceal his riding-boots, and the spurs which glistened in the moonlight.

It was an hour past midnight when the door of the summer-house softly opened, and Mr. Beckendorff entered. He started when he found Vivian still undressed, and pacing up and down the little chamber. The young man made an effort, when he witnessed an intruder, to compose a countenance whose agitation could not be concealed.

"What, are you up again?" said Mr. Beckendorff. "Are you ill?"

"Would I were as well in mind as in body! I have not yet been to rest. We cannot command our feelings at all moments, sir; and at this, especially, I felt that I had a right to consider myself alone."

"I most exceedingly regret that I have disturbed you," said Mr. Beckendorff, in a very kind voice, and in a manner which responded to the sympathy of his tone. "I thought that you had been long asleep. There is a star which I cannot exactly make out. I fancy it must be a comet, and so I ran to the observatory; but let me not disturb you," and Mr. Beckendorff was retiring.

"You do not disturb me, sir. I cannot sleep—pray ascend."

"O, no! never mind the star. But if you really have no inclination to sleep, let us sit down and have a little conversation; or perhaps we had better take a stroll. It is a very warm night." As he spoke, Mr. Beckendorff gently put his arm within Vivian's, and led him down the steps.

"Are you an astronomer, sir?" asked Beckendorff.

"I can tell the Great Bear from the Little Dog; but I confess that I look upon the stars rather in a poetical than a scientific spirit."

"Hush! I confess I do not."

"There are moments," continued Vivian, "when I cannot refrain from believing that these mysterious luminaries have more influence over our fortunes than modern times are disposed to believe. I feel that I am getting less sceptical, perhaps I should say more credulous, every day; but sorrow makes us superstitious."

"I discard all such fantasies," said Mr. Beckendorff; "they only tend to enervate our mental energies, and paralyze all human exertion. It is the belief in these, and a thousand other deceptions I could mention, which teach man that he is not the master of his own mind, but the ordained victim, or the chance sport of circumstances; that makes millions pass through life unimpressive as shadows; and has gained for this existence the stigma of a vanity which it does not deserve."

"I wish that I could think as you do," said Vivian; "but the experience of my life forbids me. Within only these last two years, my career has, in so many instances, indicated that I am not the master of my own conduct; that, no longer able to resist the conviction which is hourly impressed on me, I recognise in every contingency the pre-ordination of my fate."

"A delusion of the brain!" said Beckendorff, very quickly. "Fate, destiny, chance, particular and special providence—idle words! Dismiss them all, sir! A man's fate is his own temper; and according to that will be his opinion as to the particular manner in which the course of events is regulated. A consistent man believes in destiny—a capricious man in chance."

"But, sir, what is a man's temper? It may be changed every hour. I started in life with very different feelings to those which I profess at this moment. With great deference to you, I imagine that you mistake the effect for the cause; for surely temper is not the origin, but the result of those circumstances of which we are all the creatures."

"Sir, I deny it. Man is not the creature of circumstances. Circumstances are the creatures of men. We are free agents, and man is more powerful than matter. I recognise no intervening influence between that of the established course of nature and my own mind. Truth may be distorted—may be stifled—be suppressed. The invention of cunning deceptions may, and in some instances does, prevent man from exercising his own powers. They have made him responsible to a realm of shadows, and a suitor in a court of shades. He is ever dreading authority which does not exist, and fearing the occurrence of penalties which there are none to enforce. But the mind that dares to extricate itself from these vulgar prejudices, that proves its loyalty to its Creator by devoting all its adoration to his glory—such a spirit as this becomes a master-mind, and that master-mind will invariably find that circumstances are its slaves."

"Mr. Beckendorff, yours is a very bold philosophy, of which I, myself, was once a votary. How successful in my service, you may judge by finding men wanderer."

"Sir! your present age is the age of error; your whole system is founded on a fallacy; you believe that a man's temper can change. I deny it. If

you have ever seriously entertained the views which I profess; if, as you lead me to suppose, you have dared to act upon them, and failed, sooner or later, whatever may be your present conviction and your present feelings, you will recur to your original wishes and your original pursuits. With a mind experienced and matured, you may in all probability be successful; and then, I suppose, stretching your legs in your easy chair, you will at the same moment be convinced of your own genius, and recognise your own destiny."

"With regard to myself, Mr. Beckendorff, I am convinced of the erroneousness of your views. It is my opinion, that no one who has dared to think, can look upon this world in any other than a mournful spirit. Young as I am, nearly two years have elapsed since, disgusted with the world of politics, I retired to a foreign solitude. At length, with passions subdued, and, as I flatter myself, with a mind matured, convinced of the vanity of all human affairs, I felt emboldened once more partially to mingle with my species. Bitter as my lot had been, as a philosopher, I had discovered the origin of my misery in my own unbridled passions; and, tranquil and subdued, I now trusted to pass through life as certain of no fresh sorrows, as I was of no fresh joys. And yet, sir, I am at this moment sinking under the infliction of unparalleled misery—misery which I feel I have a right to believe was undeserved. But why expatiate to a stranger on sorrow which must be secret! I deliver myself up to my remorseless fate."

"What is grief?" said Mr. Beckendorff;—"if it be excited by the fear of some contingency, instead of grieving, a man should exert his energies, and prevent its occurrence. If, on the contrary, it be caused by an event, that which has been occasioned by any thing human, by the co-operation of human circumstances, can be, and invariably is, removed by the same means. Grief is the agony of an instant; the indulgence of grief the blunder of a life. Mix in the world, and in a month's time you will speak to me very differently. A young man, you meet with disappointment,—in spite of all your exalted notions of your own powers, you immediately sink under it. If your belief of your powers were sincere, you should have proved it by the manner in which you struggled against adversity, not merely by the mode in which you laboured for advancement. The latter is but a very inferior merit. If in fact you wish to succeed, success, I repeat, is at your command. You talk to me of your experience; and do you think that my sentiments are the crude opinions of an unpractised man? Sir! I am not fond of conversing with any person; and, therefore, far from being inclined to maintain an argument in a spirit of insincerity, merely for the sake of a victory of words. Mark what I say; it is truth. No minister ever fell but from his own inefficiency. If his downfall be occasioned, as it generally is, by the intrigues of one of his own creatures, his downfall is merited for having been the dupe of a tool, which, in all probability, he should never have employed. If he fall through the open attacks of his political opponents, his downfall is equally deserved, for having occasioned by his impolicy the formation of a party; for having allowed it to be formed; or for not having crushed it when formed. No conjuncture can possibly occur, however fearful, however tremendous it

may appear, from which a man, by his own energy, may not extricate himself—as a mariner by the rattling of his cannon can dissipate the impending water-spout !”

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was on the third day of the visit to Mr. Beckendorff, just as that gentleman was composing his mind after his noon meal with his favourite Cremona, and in a moment of rapture raising his instrument high in air, that the door was suddenly dashed open, and Essper George rushed into the room. The intruder, the moment that his eye caught Vivian, flew to his master, and seizing him by the arm, commenced and continued a loud shout of exultation, accompanying his scream the whole time by a kind of quick dance ; which, though not quite as clamorous as the Pyrrhic, nevertheless completely drowned the scientific harmony of Mr. Beckendorff.

So perfectly astounded were the three gentlemen by this unexpected entrance, that some moments elapsed ere either of them found words at his command. At length the master of the house spoke.

“Mr. von Philipson, I beg the favour of being informed who this person is ?”

The prince did not answer, but looked at Vivian in great distress ; and just as our hero was about to give Mr. Beckendorff the requisite information, Essper George, taking up the parable himself, seized the opportunity of explaining the mystery.

“Who am I?—who are you? I am an honest man, and no traitor ; and if all were the same, why then there would be no rogues in Reisenberg, and no lone houses in woods and by-places to wheedle young lords to. Who am I?—a man. There’s an arm! there’s a leg! Can you see through a wood by twilight? if so, yours is a better eye than mine. Can you eat an unskinned hare, or dine on the haunch of a bounding stag? if so, your teeth are sharper than mine. Can you hear a robber’s footstep when he’s kneeling before murder? or can you listen to the snow falling on midsummer’s day? if so, your ears are finer than mine. Can you run with a chamois?—can you wrestle with a bear?—can you swim with an otter?—if so, I’m your match.—How many cities have you seen?—how many knaves have you gulled?—what’s the average price of lawyer’s breath in all the capitals of Christendom?—which is dearest, bread or justice?—Why do men pay more for the protection of life, than life itself?—who first bought gold with diamonds?—Is cheater a staple at Constantinople as it is at Vienna?—and what’s the difference between a Baltic merchant and a Greek pirate? Tell me all this, and I will tell you who went in mourning in the moon at the death of the last comet. Who am I, indeed !”

The agony of the prince and Vivian, while Essper George with inconceivable rapidity addressed to Mr. Beckendorff these choice queries, was inconceivable. Once Vivian tried to check him, but in vain. He did not repeat his attempt, for he was sufficiently employed in restraining his own agitation, and keeping his own countenance ; for in spite of the mortification and anger that Essper’s appearance had excited in him, still an unfortunate but innate taste for the ludicrous, did not allow him

to be perfectly insensible to the humour of the scene. Mr. Beckendorff listened very quietly till Essper had finished—he then rose.

“Mr. von Philipson,” said he, “as a personal favour to yourself, and to my own great inconvenience, I consented that in this interview you should be attended by a friend. I did not reckon upon your servant, and it is impossible that I can tolerate his presence for a moment. You know how I live, and that my sole attendant is a female. I allow no male servants within this house. Even when his royal highness honours me with his presence, he is unattended. I desire that I am immediately released from the presence of this buffoon.”

So saying, Mr. Beckendorff left the room.

“Who are you !” said Essper, following him, with his back bent, his head on his chest, and his eyes glancing. The imitation was perfect.

As soon as Mr. Beckendorff had retired, the prince raised his eyes to heaven, and clasped his hands with a look of great anguish.

“Well, Grey! here’s a business. What is to be done ?”

“Essper,” said Vivian, “your conduct is inexcusable, the mischief that you have done irreparable, and your punishment shall be most severe.”

“Severe! Why, what day did your highness sell your gratitude for a silver groschen? Severe! Is this the return for finding you out, and saving you from a thousand times more desperate gang than that baron at Ems? Severe! Severe indeed will be your lot when you are in a dungeon in Reisenberg Castle, with black bread for roast venison, and sour water for Rhenish! Severe, indeed.”

“Why, what are you talking about !”

“Talking about! About bloody treason, and arch traitors, and an old scoundrel who lives in a lone lane, and dares not look you straight in the face. Why, his very blink is enough to hang him without trial! Talking about! About a young gentleman, whom, if he were not my master, no one, with my leave, should say was not as neat a squire as ever kissed a maid instead of going to church.”

“Essper, you will be so good as to drop all this gesticulation, and let this rhodomontade cease immediately ; and then in distinct terms inform his highness and myself of the causes of this unparalleled intrusion.”

The impressiveness of Vivian’s manner produced a proper effect ; and except that he spoke somewhat affectedly slow, and ridiculously precise, Essper George delivered himself with great clearness.

“You see, your highness never let me know that you were going to leave, and so, when I found that you didn’t come back, I made bold to speak to Mr. Arnem when he came home from hunting ; but I couldn’t get enough breath out of him to stop a ladybird on a rose-leaf. I didn’t much like it, your honour, for I was among strangers, and so were you, you know. Well, then I went to Master Rodolph : he was very kind to me, seeing me in low spirits, and thinking me, I suppose, in love, or in debt, or that I had done some piece of mischief, or had something or other preying on my mind ; he comes to me, and says, ‘Essper,’ said he—you remember Master Rodolph’s voice, your highness ?”

"Go on, go on—to the point. Never let me hear Master Rodolph's name again."

"Yes, your highness! Well, well! he said to me, 'Come and dine with me in my room,' says I, 'I will.' A good offer should never be refused, unless we have a letter one at the same time. Whereupon, after dinner, Master Rodolph said to me—'We'll have a bottle of Burgundy for a treat.' You see, sir, we were rather sick of the Ithenish. Well, your highness, we were free with the wine; and Master Rodolph, who is never easy, except when he knows every thing, must be trying, you see, to get out of me what it was that made me so down in the mouth. I, seeing this, thought I'd put off the secret to another bottle; which being produced, I did not conceal from him any longer what was making me so low. 'Rodolph,' said I, 'I don't like my young master going out in this odd way: he's of a temper to get into scrapes, and I should like very much to know what he and the prince (saying your highness's presence) are after. They have been shut up in that cabinet these two nights, and though I walked by the door pretty often, devil a bit of a word ever came through the key-hole; and so, you see,—Rodolph,' said I, 'it requires a bottle or two of Burgundy to keep my spirits up.' Well, your highness, strange to say, no sooner had I spoken, than Master Rodolph,—he has been very kind to me—very kind indeed—he put his head across the little table—we dined at the little table on the right hand of the room as you enter—"

"Go on."

"I am going on. Well! he put his head across the little table, and said to me in a low whisper, and cocking his odd-looking eye at the same time; 'I tell you what, Essper, you're a damned sharp fellow!' and so, giving a shake of his head, and another wink of his eye, he was quiet. I smelt a rat, but I didn't begin to pump directly, but after the third bottle—'Rodolph,' said I, 'with regard to your last observation, (for we had not spoken lately, Burgundy being too fat a wine for talking,) we are both of us damned sharp fellows; I dare say now, you and I are thinking of the same thing.' 'No doubt of it,' said Rodolph. And so, your highness, he agreed to tell me what he was thinking of, on condition that I should be equally frank afterwards. Well, your highness, he told me that there were sad goings on at Turriparva."

"The deuce!" said the prince.

"Let him tell his story," said Vivian.

"Sad goings on at Turriparva! He wished that his highness would hunt more, and attend less to politics; and then he told me quite confidentially, that his highness the prince, and heaven knows how many other princes besides, had leagued together, and were going to dethrone the grand-duke, and that his master was to be made king, and he, Master Rodolph, prime minister. Hearing all this, and duly allowing for a tale over a bottle, I made no doubt, as I find to be the case, that your highness was being led into some mischief; and as I know that conspiracies are always unsuccessful, I've done my best to save my master; and I beseech you, upon my knees, my darling sir, to get out of the scrape as soon as you possibly can." Here Essper George threw himself at Vivian's feet, and entreated him in the most earnest terms, to quit the house immediately.

"Was ever any thing so absurd and mischief-

ous!" ejaculated the prince; and then he conversed with Vivian for some time in a whisper. "Essper," at length Vivian said, "you have committed one of the most perfect and most injurious blunders that you could possibly perpetrate. The mischief which may result from your imprudent conduct is incalculable. How long is it since you have thought proper to regulate your conduct on the absurd falsehoods of a drunken steward? His highness and myself wish to consult in private; but on no account leave the house. Now mind me; if you leave this house without my permission, you forfeit the little chance which remains of being retained in my service."

"Where am I to go, sir?"

"Stay in the passage."

"Suppose (here he imitated Beckendorff) comes to me."

"Then open the door, and come into this room."

Essper looked very doubtful, and rather disappointed. He quitted the room, and the prince and Vivian thought themselves alone; but Essper suddenly opened the door, and said in a loud and very lamentable tone, with a most rueful expression of countenance—"O, my young master! beware! beware!"

"Well," said the prince, when the door was at length shut; "one thing is quite clear. He does not know who Beckendorff is."

"So far satisfactory; but I feel the force of your highness's observations. It is a most puzzling case. To send him back to Turriparva would be madness: the whole affair would be immediately revealed over another bottle of Burgundy with Master Rodolph: in fact, your highness's visit would be a secret to no one in the country: your host would be soon discovered, and the evil consequences are incalculable. I know no one to send him to at Reisenberg; and if I did, it appears to me, that the same objections equally apply to his proceeding to that city as to his returning to Turriparva. What is to be done? Surely, some demon must have inspired him. We cannot now request Beckendorff to allow him to stay here; and if we did, I am convinced, from his tone and manner, that nothing could induce him to comply with our wish. The only course to be pursued is certainly an annoying one; but as far as I can judge, it is the only mode by which very serious mischief can be prevented. Let me proceed forthwith to Reisenberg with Essper. Placed immediately under my eye, and solemnly adjured by me to silence, I think I can answer, particularly when I give him a gentle hint of the station of Beckendorff, for his preserving the confidence with which it will now be our policy partially to intrust him. It is, to say the least, awkward and distressing to leave you alone, but what is to be done? It does not appear that I can now be of any material service to you. I have assisted you as much, and more than we could reasonably have supposed it would have been in my power to have done, by throwing some light upon the character and situation of Beckendorff. With the clue to his conduct, which my chance meeting with him yesterday morning has afforded us, the only point for your highness to determine is, as to the length of time you will resolve to wait for his communication. As to your final agreement together, with your highness's settled views and decided purpose, all the difficulty of negotiation will be on his side. Whatever, my dear

prince," continued Vivian, with a very significant voice and very marked emphasis; "whatever, my dear prince, may be your secret wishes, be assured that to attain them in your present negotiation, you have only to be firm. Let nothing divert you from your purpose, and the termination of this interview must be gratifying to you."

The Prince of Little Lilliput was very disinclined to part with his shrewd counsellor, who had already done him considerable service; and he strongly opposed Vivian's proposition. His opposition, however, like that of most other persons, was unaccompanied by any suggestion on his part; and as both agreed that something must be done, it of course ended in the prince's being of opinion that Vivian's advice must be followed. Having once come to a resolution, it was always a rule with Vivian Grey to carry it into effect as quickly as possible; and he therefore suggested that they should immediately go to Beckendorff, and inform him of the result of their consultation. The prince was really very much affected by this sudden and unexpected parting with one for whom, though he had known him for so short a time, he began to entertain a very sincere regard. "I owe you my life," said the prince; "and perhaps more than my life; and here we are about suddenly to part, never to meet again. I wish I could get you to make Turriparva your home. You should have your own suite of rooms, your own horses, your own servants; and never feel for an instant that you were not master of all around you. In truth," continued the prince, with great earnestness, "I wish, my dear friend, you would really think seriously of this. You know you could visit Vienna, and even Italy, and yet return to me. Max would be delighted to see you: he loves you already, and Sievers and his library would be at your command. Agree to my proposition, my dear friend."

"I cannot express to your highness how sensible I am of your kindness. Your friendship I sincerely value, and shall never forget; but I am too unhappy and unlucky a being to burden any one with my constant presence. Adieu! or will you go with me to Beckendorff?"

"O, go with you by all means! But," said the prince, taking a ruby ring of great antiquity off his finger, "I should feel happy if you would wear this for my sake."

The prince was so much affected at the thought of parting with Vivian, that he could scarcely speak. Vivian accepted the ring with a cordiality which the kind-hearted donor deserved; and yet our hero unfortunately had had rather too much experience of the world, not to be aware that, most probably, in less than another week his affectionate friend would not be able to recall his name under an hour's recollection. Such are friends! The moment that we are not at their side, we are neglected; and the moment that we die, we are forgotten!

They found Mr. Beckendorff in his library. In apprising Mr. Beckendorff of his intention of immediately quitting his roof, Vivian did not omit to state the causes of his sudden departure. These not only accounted for the abruptness of his movement, but also gave Beckendorff an opportunity of preventing its necessity, by allowing Essper to remain. But the opportunity was not seized by Mr. Beckendorff. The truth was, that gentleman had a particular wish to see Vivian out of his house. In allowing the Prince of Little Lilliput to be at-

tended during the interview by a friend, Beckendorff had prepared himself for the reception of some brawny jagd junker, or some thick-headed chamberlain, who he reckoned would act rather as an encumbrance than an aid to his opponent. It was with great mortification, therefore, that he found him accompanied by a shrewd, experienced, wary, and educated Englishman. A man like Beckendorff soon discovered that Vivian Grey's was no common mind. His conversation with him, of the last night, had given him high notions of his powers: and the moment that Beckendorff saw Essper George enter the house, he determined that he should be the cause of Vivian leaving it. There was also another and weighty reason for Mr. Beckendorff desiring that the Prince of Little Lilliput should at this moment be left to himself.

"Mr. Grey will ride on to Reisenberg immediately," said the prince; "and, my dear friend, you may depend upon having your luggage by the day after to-morrow. I shall be at Turriparva early to-morrow morning, and it will be my first care."

This was said in a very loud voice, and both gentlemen watched Mr. Beckendorff's countenance as the information was given; but no emotion was visible.

"Well, sir, good morning to you," said Mr. Beckendorff; "I am very sorry you are going. Had I known it sooner, I would have given you a letter. If you are likely to travel much, I would recommend you to wear flannel waistcoats. Perhaps you do wear them. Mr. von Philipson," said Beckendorff, "do me the favour of looking over that paper." So saying, Mr. Beckendorff put some official report into the prince's hand; and while his highness' attention was attracted by this sudden request, Mr. Beckendorff laid his finger on Vivian's arm, and said, in a lower tone, "I shall take care that you find a powerful friend at Reisenberg!"

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

As Vivian left the room, Mr. Beckendorff was seized with an unusual desire to converse with the Prince of Little Lilliput, and his highness was consequently debarred the consolation of walking with his friend as far as the horses. At the little gate Vivian and Essper encountered the only male attendant who was allowed to approach the house of Mr. Beckendorff. As Vivian quietly walked his horse up the rough turf road, he could not refrain from recurring to his conversation of the previous night; and when he called to mind the adventures of the last six days, he had new cause to wonder at, and perhaps to lament over, his singular fate. In that short time he had saved the life of a powerful prince, and been immediately signalled out, without any exertion on his part, as the object of that prince's friendship. The moment he arrives at his castle, by a wonderful contingency, he becomes the depository of important state secrets, and assists in a consultation of the utmost importance with one of the most powerful ministers in Europe. And now the object of so much friendship, confidence, and honour, he is suddenly on the road to the capital of the state of which his late host is the prime minister, and his friend the chief subject,

without even the convenience of a common letter of introduction; and with no prospect of viewing with even the usual advantages of a common traveller, one of the most interesting of European courts.

When he had proceeded about halfway up the turf lane, he found a private road to his right; which, with that spirit of adventure for which Englishmen are celebrated, he immediately resolved must not only lead to Reisenberg, but also carry him to that city much sooner than the regular high road. He had not advanced far up this road before he came to the gate at which he had parted with Beekendorff on the morning that gentleman had roused him so unexpectedly from his reverie in a green lane. He was surprised to find a horseman dismounting at the gate. Struck by this singular circumstance, the appearance of the stranger was not unnoticed. He was a tall and well-proportioned man, and as the traveller passed he stared Vivian so full in the face, that our hero did not fail to remark his very handsome countenance, the expression of which, however, was rather vacant and unpleasing. He was dressed in a riding-coat, exactly similar to the one always worn by Beekendorff's messenger; and had Vivian not seen him so distinctly, he would have mistaken him for that person. The stranger was rather indifferently mounted, and carried his cloak and a small portmanteau at the back of his saddle.

"I suppose it is the butler," said Essper George, who now spoke for the first time since his dismissal from the room. Vivian did not answer him; not because he entertained any angry feeling on account of his exceedingly unpleasant visit. By no means—it was impossible for a man like Vivian Grey to cherish an irritated feeling for a second. The Emperor Augustus, (I quote from my last school theme;) the Emperor Augustus had a habit, whenever he was on the point of falling into a passion, of repeating his alphabet. It was then the fashion for emperors to be somewhat more erudite than they are at present. Whether the Roman's recipe for keeping his temper could be pursued by some modern emperors, or many private persons that I could mention, is a point on which I do not feel qualified to decide. Saying the alphabet, for instance, accurately in the language of Thibet, where the characters are of two kinds—the *uchem* and the *umin*—and consist principally of arbitrary guttural and nasal sounds, would be no joke. My plan to moderate a temper is much briefer than that of imperial Cæsar. You have only to repeat nine letters, and spell *human life*; and if there be a man who can grieve or rage when any thing so inexpressibly ludicrous is recited to his attention, why then he deserves to live all his life in a volcano, and snuff high-dried cayenne instead of pounded tobacco.

But Vivian Grey did not exchange a syllable with Essper George, merely because he was not in the humour to speak. He could not refrain from musing on the singular events of the last few days; and, above all, the character of Beekendorff particularly engrossed his meditation. Their extraordinary conversation of the preceding night excited in his mind new feelings of wonder, and revived emotions which he thought were dead, or everlastingly dormant. Apparently, the philosophy on which Beekendorff had regulated his extraordinary career, and by which he had arrived at his almost

unparalleled pitch of greatness, was exactly the same with which he himself, Vivian Grey, had started in life; which he had found so fatal in its consequences: which he believed to be so vain in its principles. How was this! What radical error had he committed! It required little consideration. Thirty, and more than thirty years had passed over the head of Beekendorff, ere the world felt his power, or indeed was conscious of his existence. A deep student, not only of man in detail, but of man in groups—not only of individuals, but of nations—Beekendorff had lived up his ample knowledge of all subjects which could interest his fellow-creatures; and when that opportunity, which in this world occurs to all men, occurred to Beekendorff, he was prepared. With acquirements equal to his genius, Beekendorff depended only upon himself, and succeeded. Vivian Grey, with a mind inferior to no man's, dashed on the stage, in years a boy, though in feelings a man. Brilliant as might have been his genius, his acquirements necessarily were insufficient. He could not depend only upon himself; a consequent necessity arose to have recourse to the assistance of others; to inspire them with feelings which they could not share and humour and manage the petty weakness which he himself could not experience. His colleagues were, at the same time, to work for the gratification of their own private interests, the most palpable of all abstract things; and to carry into execution a great purpose, which their feeble minds, interested only by the first point, cared not to comprehend. The unnatural combination failed; and its originator fell. To believe that he could recur again to the hopes, the feelings, the pursuits of his boyhood, he felt to be the vainest of delusions. It was the expectation of a man like Beekendorff—whose career, though difficult, though hazardous, had been uniformly successful—of a man who mistook cares for grief, and anxiety for sorrow.

The travellers entered the city at sunset. Proceeding through an ancient and unseemly town, full of long, narrow, and ill-paved streets, and black uneven built houses, they ascended the hill, on the top of which was situated the new and Residence town of Reisenberg. The proud palace, the white squares, the architectural streets, the new churches, the elegant opera house, the splendid hotels, and the gay public gardens full of busts, vases, and statues, and surrounded by an iron railing cast out of the cannon taken from both sides during the war, by the Reisenberg troops, and now formed into pikes and fasces, glittering with gilded heads—all these shining in the setting sun, produced an effect which, at any time, and in any place, would have been beautiful and striking; but on the present occasion were still more so, from the remarkable contrast they afforded to the ancient, gloomy, and filthy town through which Vivian had just passed; and where, from the lowness of its situation, the sun had already set. There was as much difference between the old barbarous margrave and the new and noble grand-duke.

A man is never sooner domesticated than in a first-rate hotel, particularly on the Continent; where, in fact, life is never domestic, and where dining every day as you do at a table d'hôte, at which half of the respectable housekeepers in the city attend, you feel from this circumstance that there is no mode of life to be preferred to the one that your

situation obliges you to adopt. In London it is sometimes different; and a man retiring, after his daily lounge, to his solitary meal at Long's or Stevens's, is apt sometimes to feel lonely, particularly when he has not an engagement for the evening, or his claret is not in the most superb condition.

CLARET, bright claret! solace of the soul, and the heart's best friend! How many suicides hast thou prevented! how many bruised spirits and breaking hearts has thy soft and soothing flow assuaged and made whole! Man, do thy worst—and woman, do thy best—one consolation always remains. Long bills and libels, a duel and a dun, a jealous woman and a boring man are evils, and the worst—as also are a rowing father and a surly son, pert daughters and manœuvring mothers. Some dislike old maids, few dislike young ones. Few have a partiality for taxes; but this is a national grievance, and if judiciously arranged, does not press upon the individual. Sermons on Sunday are proper and pleasant, if not over long. I only know one man who loves a losing card. Poetry also is endurable, particularly if it be a tragedy, and make us laugh. A rabid poetaster, foaming over a critique, none can tolerate. Yet bills and slander, duels, duns, and dungeons, and bores and green-eyed dames, disorganized families, old maids and cold maids, and grinding taxes, sermons and tragedies, and bards and cards, all can be borne if we may only forget their noise and nonsense in the red glories of thy oblivious stream! By stream, I mean the stream of claret. From the length of the sentence, it might be misunderstood; and if any one, in our chill winter clime, at any time find this liquor lie cold within its accustomed receptacle, why, after every third glass, let him warm it with one of Cogniac.

"Chill winter clime" is, after all, a vulgar error, and merely brought in to round the period. Our atmosphere, like our taste, has of late much improved; and it is probable, that when our present monarch has concluded his architectural labours by perfectly banishing brick from all outward appearance, our climate proportionately improving, an Italian sky may illumine our palaces of stucco. By which phrase I do not mean to sneer at modern London. Some wiseheads laugh at our plaster, and talk of our unhappy deficiency in marble. I wish to know which of the boasted cities of the European continent is built of this vaunted marble? As for myself, the only difference that I ever observed between our own new streets and the elevation of foreign cities, is, that our stucco being of a much superior quality, and kept in a much superior condition, produces a general effect which their cracked and peeling walls never can. But we are the victims of smoke, and the Italians have a magnificent climate! True! they have a sky like Belshazzar's purple robe, and a sea blue enough to make a modern poet a bedlamite. They have a land covered with myrtle, and glittering with aloes, and radiant with orange, and lemon, and citron trees. They have all these, and a thousand other glories besides. The Italians live in a garden of Eden; but it is a paradise which they will never forfeit by plucking the golden fruit. All their religion consists in confession, and all their food in macaroni. What can you expect from such a people? A length of time elapses before the action of the air affects their stucco; but when it is affected, it is never renovated. The boasted palladium pa-

laces are all of stucco, and look like the lonely and dilapidated halls of Irish lords.

The result of midnight promenades, whether philosophical or poetical, analytical or amatory, is usually the same—a cold; and as Vivian Grey sat shivering in his chair on the evening of his arrival at Reisenberg, he sent Mr. Beckendorff and his theory, his politics, his philosophy, and his summer-house, to the devil, with a most hearty imprecation. It is astonishing how a little indisposition unfits us for meditation. Man with a headache, a cold, or a slight spasm, is not exactly in the humour to pile Ossa upon Pelion, and scale the skies. The perfectibility of the species seems never at a more woful discount than on a morning after a debauch; and ourselves never less like reasoning animals than when suffering under indigestion. Nothing is more ludicrous than a philosopher with the toothache,—except perhaps a poet with the gout.

Essper George, who, in a much more serious illness, had already proved himself to Vivian the most skilful of nurses, was now of infinite use. Though having the greatest contempt for the power and professors of medicine when in perfect health, Vivian, now that he was indisposed, was quite ready to accept the proffered assistance of the first quack who presented himself. The landlord of the hotel had a relation who, since the war, had given up his profession of farrier, and commenced that of physician. This disciple of Esculapius was speedily introduced to our hero, as the first physician at Reisenberg; and judging by his appearance that his patient was a man of blood, he proceeded to prescribe for him the remedies usually applied to a first-rate courser. This indeed was the grand and sole principle of Dr. von Hoofstetstein's pharmacopœia. Considering his present patients as horses, he arranged them in classes according to their station in society. A substantial burgher, went for a stout cavalry charger; a peasant, for a sutler's hack; a lawyer or ignoble official, was treated as attentively as the steed of an aid-de-camp; and the precedent for a recipe for a prime minister, might be found in that of his former general's crack charger. Prime ministers, however, were persons whom Von Hoofstetstein seldom had the pleasure of killing; for he was not the court-physician. Seeing that Vivian had a cold and slight fever, he ordered him a very recherche mash, and wished him good morning. Essper George saved our hero from a dose strong enough to have reduced a cart-horse to a lady's jennet; and by quickly extricating his master from the fatal grasp of this Galen of fetlocks, whose real origin he suspected from the odd manner in which he felt a pulse, his action strangely resembling a delicate examination of a hoof—Essper, perhaps, prevented the history of Vivian Grey from closing with the present chapter.

On the second day after his arrival at Reisenberg, Vivian received the following letter from the Prince of Little Lilliput. His luggage did not accompany the epistle.

"MR. VON GREY.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—By the time you have received this, I shall have returned to Turriparva. My visit to a certain gentleman was prolonged for one day. I never can convey to you by words the sense I entertain of the value of your friendship, and of your services; I trust that time will afford me opportunities of testa-

fyng it by my actions. I return home by the same road by which we came; you remember how excellent the road was, as indeed are all the roads in Reisenberg; that must be confessed by all. I fear that the most partial admirers of the old regime cannot say as much for the convenience of travelling in the time of our fathers.—Good roads are most excellent things, and one of the first marks of civilization and prosperity. The Emperor Napoleon, who, it must be confessed, was after all no common mind, was celebrated for his roads. You have doubtless admired the Route Napoleon on the Rhine, and if you travel into Italy, I am informed that you will be equally, and even more struck by the passage over the Simplon, and the other Italian roads. Reisenberg has certainly kept pace with the spirit of the time; nobody can deny that; and I confess to you, that the more I consider the subject, it appears to me that the happiness, prosperity, and content of the state, are the best evidences of the wisdom and beneficent rule of a government. Many things are very excellent in theory, which are quite the reverse in practice, and even ridiculous. And while we should do our utmost to promote the cause and uphold the interests of rational liberty, still, at the same time, we should ever be on our guard against the crude ideas and revolutionary systems of those who are quite inexperienced in that sort of particular knowledge which is necessary for all statesmen. Nothing is so easy as to make things look fine on paper,—we should never forget that: there is a great difference between high sounding generalities, and laborious details. Is it reasonable to expect that men who have passed their lives dreaming in colleges and old musty studies, should be at all calculated to take the head of affairs, or know what measures those at the head of affairs ought to adopt?—I think not. A certain personage, who, by-the-by, is one of the most clear-headed, and most perfect men of business that I ever had the pleasure of being acquainted with; a real practical man, in short; he tells me that Professor Skyrocket, whom you will most likely see at Reisenberg, wrote an article in the Military Quarterly Review which is published there, on the probable expenses of a war between Austria and Prussia, and forgot the commissariat altogether. Did you ever know any thing so ridiculous! What business have such fellows to meddle with affairs of state? They should certainly be put down: that I think none can deny. A liberal spirit in government is certainly a most excellent thing; but we must always remember that liberty may degenerate into licentiousness. Liberty is certainly an excellent thing,—that all admit; but, as a certain person very well observed, so is physic, and yet it is not to be given at all times, but only when the frame is in a state to require it. People may be as unprepared for a wise and discreet use of liberty, as a vulgar person may be for the management of a great estate unexpectedly inherited: there is a great deal in this, and in my opinion there are cases in which to force liberty down a people's throat, is presenting them, not with a blessing, but a curse. I shall send your luggage on immediately. It is very probable that I may be in town at the end of the week, for a short time. I wish much to see, and to consult you, and therefore hope that you will not leave Reisenberg before you see—

“Your faithful and obliged friend,

“LITTLE LILLIPUT.”

Two days after the receipt of this letter, Essper George ran into the room with greater animation than he was usually accustomed to exhibit in the chamber of an invalid; and with a much less solemn physiognomy than he had thought proper to assume since his master's arrival at Reisenberg.

“Lord, sir! whom do you think I have just met?”

“Whom?” asked Vivian with eagerness, for, as is always the case when such questions are asked us, he was thinking of every person in the world except the right one. It might be—

“To think that I should see him!” continued Essper.

“It is a man then,” thought Vivian;—“who is it at once, Essper?”

“I thought your highness would not guess; it will quite cure you to hear it—Master Rodolph!”

“Master Rodolph!”

“Ay! and there's great news in the wind.”

“Which, of course, you have confidentially extracted from him. Pray let us have it.”

“The Prince of Little Lilliput is coming to Reisenberg,” said Essper.

“Well! I had some idea of that before,” said Vivian.

“O! then your highness knows it all, I suppose,” said Essper, with a look of great disappointment.

“I know nothing more than I have mentioned,” said his master.

“What! does not your highness know that the prince has come over; that he is going to live at court; and be. Heaven knows what! that he is to carry a staff every day before the grand-duke at dinner, stuffed out with padding, and covered with orders; does not your highness know that!”

“I know nothing of all this; and so tell me in plain German what the case is.”

“Well, then,” continued Essper; “I suppose you do not know that his highness the prince is to be his excellency the grand-marshal—that unfortunate, but principal officer of state, having received his dismissal yesterday; they are coming up immediately. Not a moment is to be lost; which seems to me very odd. Master Rodolph is arranging every thing; and he has this morning purchased from his master's predecessor, his palace, furniture, wines, and pictures; in short, his whole establishment: the late grand-marshal consoling himself for his loss of office, and revenging himself on his successor, by selling him his property at a hundred per cent. profit. However, Master Rodolph seems quite contented with his bargain, and your luggage is come, sir. His highness, the prince, will be in town at the end of the week; and all the men are to be put in new livery. Mr. Arnelm is to be his highness's chamberlain; and Von Neuwied master of the horse. So you see, sir, you were right; and that old puss in boots was no traitor, after all. Upon my soul, I did not much believe your highness, until I heard all this good news.”

CHAPTER II.

ABOUT a week after his arrival at Reisenberg, as Vivian was at breakfast, the door opened, and Mr. Sievers entered.

“I did not think that our next meeting would be in this city,” said Mr. Sievers, smiling.

"His highness, of course, informed me of your arrival," said Vivian, as he greeted him very cordially.

"You, I understand, are the diplomatist whom I am to thank for finding myself again at Reisenberg. Let me, at the same time, express my gratitude for your kind offices to me, and congratulate you on the brilliancy of your talents for negotiation. Little did I think when I was giving you, the other day, an account of Mr. Beckendorff, that the information would have been of such service to you."

"I am afraid you have nothing to thank me for; though certainly, had the office of arranging the terms between the parties devolved on me, my first thoughts would have been for a gentleman for whom I have so much regard and respect as Mr. Sievers."

"Sir! I feel honoured: you already speak like a finished courtier. Pray, what is to be your office?"

"I fear Mr. Beckendorff will not resign in my favour; and my ambition is so exalted, that I cannot condescend to take any thing under the premiership."

"You are not to be tempted by a grand-marshalship?" said Mr. Sievers, with a very peculiar look. "You hardly expected, when you were at Turriparva, to witness such a rapid termination of the patriotism of our good friend. I think you said you have seen him since your arrival: the interview must have been piquant!"

"Not at all. I immediately congratulated him on the judicious arrangements which had been concluded; and, to relieve his awkwardness, took some credit to myself for having partially assisted in bringing about the result. The subject was not again mentioned, and I dare say never will be."

"It is a curious business," said Sievers. "The prince is a man who, rather than have given me up to the grand-duke—me, with whom he was not in the slightest degree connected, and who, of my own accord, sought his hospitality—sooner, I repeat, than have delivered me up, he would have had his castle razed to the ground, and fifty swords through his heart; and yet, without the slightest compunction, has this same man deserted, with the greatest coolness, the party of which, ten days ago, he was the zealous leader. How can you account for this, except it be, as I have long suspected, that in politics there positively is no feeling of honour? Every one is conscious that not only himself, but his colleagues and his rivals, are working for their own private purpose; and that however a party may apparently be assisting in bringing about a result of common benefit, that nevertheless, and in fact, each is conscious that he is the tool of another. With such an understanding, treason is an expected affair; and the only point to consider is, who shall be so unfortunate as to be the deserted, instead of the deserter. It is only fair to his highness to state, that Beckendorff gave him incontestable evidence that he had had a private interview with every one of the mediatised princes. They were the dupes of the wily minister. In these negotiations he became acquainted with their plans and characters, and could estimate the probability of their success. The golden bribe, which was in turn dangled before the eyes of all, had been always reserved for the most powerful—our friend. His secession, and the consequent desertion of his relatives, destroy the party forever; while, at the

same time, that party have not even the consolation of a good conscience to uphold them in their adversity; but feel that in case of their clamour, or of any attempt to stir up the people by their hollow patriotism, it is in the power of the minister to expose and crush them forever."

"All this," said Vivian, "makes me the more rejoice that our friend has got out of their clutches—he will make an excellent grand-marshal; and you must not forget, my dear sir, that he did not forget you. To tell you the truth, although I did not flatter myself that I should benefit during my stay at Reisenberg by his influence, I am not the least surprised at the termination of our visit to Mr. Beckendorff. I have seen too many of these affairs, not to have been quite aware the whole time, that it would require very little trouble, and very few sacrifices on the part of Mr. Beckendorff, to quash the whole cabal. By-the-by, our visit to him was highly amusing; he is a most singular man."

"He has had, nevertheless," said Sievers, "a very difficult part to play. Had it not been for you, the prince would have perhaps imagined that he was only being trifled with again, and terminated the interview abruptly and in disgust. Having brought the grand-duke to terms, and having arranged the interview, Beckendorff of course imagined that all was finished. The very day that you arrived at his house, he had received despatches from his royal highness recalling his promise, and revoking Beckendorff's authority to use his unlimited discretion in this business. The difficulty then was to avoid discussion with the prince, with whom he was not prepared to negotiate; and at the same time, without letting his highness out of his sight, to induce the grand-duke to resume his old view of the case. The first night that you were there, Beckendorff rode up to Reisenberg—saw the grand-duke; was refused, through the intrigues of Madame Carolina, the requested authority—and resigned his power. When he was a mile on his return, he was summoned back to the palace; and his royal highness asked, as a favour from his tutor, four-and-twenty hours' consideration. This Beckendorff granted, on the condition that, in case the grand-duke assented to the terms proposed, his royal highness should himself be the bearer of the proposition; and that there should be no more written promises to recall, and no more written authorities to revoke. The terms were hard, but Beckendorff was inflexible. On the second night of your visit, a messenger arrived with a despatch, advising Beckendorff of the intended arrival of his royal highness on the next morning. The ludicrous intrusion of your amusing servant prevented you from being present at the great interview, in which I understand Beckendorff, for the moment, laid aside all his caprices. Our friend acted with great firmness and energy. He would not be satisfied even with the personal pledge and written promise of the grand-duke, but demanded that he should receive the seals of office within a week; so that, had the court not been sincere, his situation with his former party would not have been injured. It is astonishing how very acute even a dull man is, when his own interests are at stake! Had his highness been the agent of another person, he would most probably have committed a thousand blunders,—have made the most disadvantageous terms, or perhaps have been thoroughly duped. Self-interest is the finest eye-water."

"And what says Madame Carolina to all this?"

"O! according to custom, she has changed already, and thinks the whole business most admirably arranged. His highness is her grand favourite, and my little pupil Max, her pet. I think, however, on the whole, the boy is fondest of the grand-duke; whom, if you remember, he was always informing you in confidence, that he intended to assassinate. And as for your obedient servant," said Sievers, bowing, "here am I once more the Aristarchus of her coterie. Her friends, by-the-by, view the accession of the prince with no pleased eyes; and, anticipating that his juncture with the minister is only a prelude to their final dispersion, they are compensating for the approaching termination of their career, by unusual violence and fresh fervour—stinging like mosquitos before a storm, conscious of their impending destruction from the clearance of the atmosphere. As for myself, I have nothing more to do with them. Liberty and philosophy are very fine words; but until I find men are prepared to cultivate them both in a wiser spirit, I shall remain quiet. I have no idea of being banished and imprisoned, because a parcel of knaves are making a vile use of the truths which I disseminate. In my opinion, philosophers have said enough; now let men act. But all this time I have forgotten to ask you how you like Reisenberg."

"I can hardly say: with the exception of yesterday, when I rode Max round the ramparts, I have not been once out of the hotel. But to-day I feel so well, that if you are disposed for a lounge, I should like it above all things."

"I am quite at your service; but I must not forget that I am the bearer of a message to you from his excellency the grand-marshal. He wishes you to join the court-dinner to-day, and be presented—"

"Really, my dear sir, an invalid—"

Well! if you do not like it, you must make your excuses to him; but it really is the pleasantest way of commencing your acquaintance at court, and only allowed to distinguished; among which, as you are the friend of the new grand-marshal, you are of course considered. No one is petted so much as a political apostate, except, perhaps, a religious one; so at present we are all in high feather. You had better dine at the palace to-day. Every thing quite easy; and, by an agreeable relaxation of state, neither swords, bags, nor trains, are necessary. Have you seen the palace? I suppose not; we will look at it, and then call on the prince."

The gentlemen accordingly left the hotel; and proceeding down the principal street of the New Town, they came into a very large square, or Place d'Armes. A couple of regiments of infantry were exercising in it.

"A specimen of our standing army," said Sievers. "In the war time this little state brought thirty thousand highly disciplined and well appointed troops into the field. This efficient contingent was, at the same time, the origin of our national prosperity, and our national debt. For we have a national debt, sir! I assure you we are very proud of it, and consider it the most decided sign of being a great people. Our force in times of peace is, of course, very much reduced. We have, however, still eight thousand men, who are perfectly unnecessary. The most curious thing is,

that, to keep up the patronage of the court, and please the nobility, though we have cut down our army two-thirds, we have never reduced the number of our generals; and so, at this moment, among our eight thousand men, we count about forty general officers, being one to every two hundred privates. We have, however, which perhaps you would not suspect, one military genius among our multitude of heroes. The Count von Sohnspeer is worthy of being one of Napoleon's marshals. Who he is, no one exactly knows: some say an illegitimate son of Beekendorff. Certain it is, that he owes his nobility to his sword; and as certain it is that he is to be counted among the very few who share the minister's confidence. Von Sohnspeer has certainly performed a thousand brilliant exploits; yet, in my opinion, the not least splendid day of his life, was that of the battle of Leipsic. He was on the side of the French, and fought against the allies with desperate fury. When he saw that all was over, and the allies triumphant, calling out 'Germany forever!' he dashed against his former friends, and captured from the flying Gauls a hundred pieces of cannon. He hastened to the tent of the emperors with his blood-red sword in his hand, and at the same time congratulated them on the triumph of their cause, and presented them with his hard-earned trophies. The manoeuvre was perfectly successful; and the troops of Reisenberg, complimented as true Germans, were pitied for their former unhappy fate in being forced to fight against their fatherland, and were immediately enrolled in the allied army: as such, they received a due share of all the plunder. He is a grand genius, young Master von Sohnspeer."

"O, decidedly! Quite worthy of being a companion of the fighting bastards of the middle ages. This is a fine square!"

"Very grand indeed! Precedents for some of the architectural combinations could hardly be found at Athens or Rome; nevertheless the general effect is magnificent. Do you admire this plan of making every elevation of an order consonant with the purpose of the building? See! for instance, on the opposite side of the square is the palace. The Corinthian order, which is evident in all its details, suits well the character of the structure. It accords with royal pomp and elegance—with fêtes and banquets, and interior magnificence. On the other hand, what a happy contrast is afforded to this gorgeous structure, by the severe simplicity of this Tuscan Palace of Justice. The School of Arts, in the farthest corner of the square, is properly entered through an Ionic portico. Let us go into the palace. Here, not only does our monarch reside, but, an arrangement which I much admire, here are deposited, in a gallery worthy of the treasures it contains, our very superb collection of pictures. They are the private property of his royal highness; but, as is usually the case under despotic princes, the people, equally his property, are flattered by the collection being styled the 'Public Gallery.' We have hardly time for the pictures to-day; let us enter this hall, the contents of which, if not as valuable, are to me more interesting—the Hall of SCULPTURE.

"Germany, as you must be aware, boasts no chef-d'œuvres of ancient sculpture. In this respect, it is not in a much more deplorable situation than, I believe, England is itself; but our grand-

duke, with excellent taste, instead of filling a room with uninteresting busts of ancient emperors, or any second-rate specimens of antique art, which are sometimes to be purchased, has formed a collection of casts from all the celebrated works of antiquity. These casts are of great value, and greater rarity.

"There," said Mr. Sievers, pointing to the *Venus de Medicis*, "there is a goddess, whose divinity is acknowledged in all creeds. It is commonly said, that no cast of this statue conveys to you the slightest idea of the miraculous original. This I deny: the truth is, that the plaster figures which everywhere abound under the title of the *Venus de Medicis*, are copies five hundred times repeated, and of course all resemblance is lost. It would be lost in a great measure, were the original a dancing Faun or a fighting Gladiator. The incalculable increase of difficulty in transferring the delicate traits of female beauty, need not be expatiated on. Of this statue the whole of the right arm, a portion of the left, and some other less important parts, are restorations. But who cares for this? Who, in gazing on the *Venus*, dwells on any thing but the body? Here is the magic! Here is to be discovered the reason of the universal fame of this work of art! We do not consider the *Venus de Medicis* as the personification of a sculptor's dream. Her beauty is not ideal."

Mr. Sievers did not stop here in his criticism on the *Venus de Medicis*, but fully demonstrated, which has never yet been done, the secret cause of the fame of this statue. His language, though highly philosophical, might, however, be misinterpreted in this precise age; and as this work is chiefly written for the entertainment of families, I have been induced to cut out the most instructive passage in the book.

"And this, of course, is a very fine cast?" asked Vivian.

"Admirable! It was presented by the Grand-duke of Tuscany to his royal highness, and is, of course, from the original. See, now! the *Belvidere Apollo*; an inferior production, I think, to the *Venus*—perhaps a copy. Yet, in that dilated nostril, that indignant lip, and that revengeful brow, we recognise the indomitable *Pythius*; or, rather, perhaps, the persecutor of the miserable *Niobe*. The director of the gallery has made, with great discrimination, the unhappy rival of *Latona* the object to which the god of the silver bow points his avenging arm. The *Niobe* is a splendid production. Some complain of her apparent indifference to the fate of her offspring. But is not this in character? To me, the figure appears faultless. Even as I now gaze on her, the mother and the marble are still struggling; and, rooted to the ground by her overwhelming affliction, she seems weeping herself into a statue. I have often thought that some hidden meaning lurked under the dark legend of *Niobe*. Probably she and her family were the first victims of priestcraft. Come, my dear fellow, as protestants, let us, though late, pay our tribute of respect to the first heretic." Here Mr. Sievers bowed with great solemnity before the statue.

"I will now show you," resumed Mr. Sievers "four works of art, which, if not altogether as exquisite as those we have examined, nevertheless, for various reasons, deserve our attention. And let us stop before this dying man. This statue is generally known by the title of the *Dying Gladiator*.

According to Winkelman, he is a dying herald: either *Polifontes*, herald of *Laius*, killed by *Edipus*; or *Cepreas*, herald of *Euritheus*, killed by the Athenians; or *Antiemocritus*, herald of the Athenians, killed by the *Megarenses*; or, in short, any other herald who ever happened to be killed. According to another antiquary, he is a Spartan shield-bearer; and according to a third, a barbarian. What an imagination it requires to be a great antiquary!" said Mr. Sievers, shrugging his shoulders.

"I think this statue is also supposed to be a copy," said Vivian.

"It is; and the right arm is altogether by *Michel Angelo*, the ablest restorer that ever existed. He was deeply imbued with the spirit of antiquity, though himself incapable of finishing a single work. Had he devoted himself to restoration, it had been better for posterity.

"This," continued Mr. Sievers, pointing to a kneeling figure, "is a most celebrated work; and one of which you have doubtless heard. It generally is known by the name of the *Knife-grinder*; though able judges have not yet decided whether it be a representation of that humble artisan, or of the flayer of *Marsyas*, or the barber of *Julius Cæsar*. I never can sufficiently admire these classical antiquaries! They are determined to be right: see, for instance, that heroic figure! The original is in the *Louvre*, and described in the catalogue of the French savans as a statue of 'Jason, otherwise *Cincinnatus*.' What a pity that it did not occur to *Plutarch* to write a parallel between two characters in which there is, in every respect, such a striking similarity!"

"What are these horses?" said Vivian. "They surely are not the *Elgin*?"

"O, no!" said Mr. Sievers; "as an Englishman, you should know better. These are casts of the *Elgin* marbles presented to his royal highness by the King of England. The exquisite tact, and wise liberality with which your accomplished monarch has disseminated sets of these casts among the principal galleries of Europe, has made the Continent at length believe that it is no longer high treason in your country to admire a picture or a statue. The horses which you have remarked are, I assure you, very celebrated beasts; although, for my part, I confess that their beauty is not to me very evident. Either the ancients had no conception how to mould a horse, or their breeds were poor. These are casts from the famous brazen steeds of *Venice*, in front of the church of *St. Mark's*. They were given by the Emperor of Austria. That the originals are antique, there is no doubt: I will not trouble you with my opinion as to their nation. Learn, however, from far deeper scholars than myself, that they are either Roman or Grecian—either Roman of the reign of *Nero*, or Grecian of the isle of *Chios*, or of the work of *Lysippus*. All these opinions are developed and supported by ponderous dissertations in quarto; and scarcely a year escapes without these brazen beasts giving rise to some controversy or other. O! these antiquaries! Count *Cicognara*, the President of the Venetian Academy, has lately summed up the merits of the long agitated question, and given it as his opinion, that to come to a final and satisfactory result, we must search and compare all the horses, of all the cabinets of all Europe. What sublime advice about nothing! O! I am tired,

these fellows. In my opinion, this little Cupid of Dennecker is worth all St. Mark's together. It is worthy of being placed by the Venus. When you were at Frankfort, you saw his Ariadne?"

"Yes! at Bethmann's, and a delightful work it is. Ease and grace are produced by an original but most involved attitude, and that is the triumph of art."

The hour of court-dinner at Reisenberg was two o'clock; about which time, in England, a St. James's man first remembers the fatal necessity of shaving; though, by-the-by, this allusion is not a happy one, for in this country shaving is a ceremony at present somewhat obsolete. Were the celebrated Paekwood now living, he would have as much chance of making a fortune by the sale of his instruments in this refined city, as at a settlement of blue baboons. At two o'clock, however, our hero, accompanying the grand-marshal and Mr. Sievers, reached the palace. In the saloon were assembled various guests, chiefly attached to the court. Immediately after the arrival of our party, the grand-duke and Madame Carolina, followed by their chamberlains and ladies in waiting, entered. The little Prince Maximilian strutted in between his royal highness and his fair consort, having hold of a hand of each. The urchin was very much changed in appearance since Vivian first saw him; he was dressed in the complete uniform of a captain of Royal Guards; having been presented with a commission on the day of his arrival at court. A brilliant star glittered on his scarlet coat, and paled the splendour of his golden epaulets. The duties, however, of the princely captain were at present confined to the pleasing exertion of carrying the bon-bon box of Madame Carolina, the contents of which were chiefly reserved for his own gratification. In the grand-duke, Vivian was not surprised to recognise the horseman whom he had met in the private road on the morning of his departure from Mr. Beckendorf's; his conversation with Sievers had prepared him for this. Madame Carolina was in appearance Parisian of the highest order. I am not in a humour for a laboured description, at which, very probably, few will grieve. The phrase I have used will enable the judicious reader to conceive all that is necessary. "Parisian of the highest order,"—that is to say, an exquisite figure and an indescribable tournure, an invisible foot, a countenance full of esprit and intelligence, without a single regular feature, and large and very bright black eyes. Madame's hair was of the same colour, and arranged in the most effective manner. Her cachemere would have graced the Feast of Roses, and so engrossed your attention, that it was long before you observed the rest of her costume, in which, however, traces of a creative genius were immediately visible: in short, Madame Carolina was not fashionable, but fashion herself. In a subsequent chapter, at a ball which I have in preparation, I will make up for this brief notice of her costume, by publishing her court-dress. For the sake of my fair readers, however, I will not pass over the ornament in her hair. The *combe* which supported her elaborate curls was invisible, except at each end, whence it threw out a large Psyche's wing of the finest golden web, the eyes of which were formed of precious garnets encircled with turquoises. Let Mr. Hamlet immediately introduce this ornament, and make his fortune by the "Carolina Comb."

The royal party made a progress round the circle,

to which the late lamented Mr. Nichols could have done more justice than myself. Madame Carolina first presented her delicate and faintly rouged cheek to the hump-backed crown prince, who did not raise his eyes from the ground as he performed the accustomed courtesy. One or two royal relatives, who were on a visit at the palace, were honoured by the same compliment. The grand-duke bowed in the most gracious and graceful manner to every individual; and his lady accompanied the bow by a speech, which was at the same time personal and piquant. The first great duty of a monarch is to know how to bow skilfully! nothing is more difficult, and nothing more important. A royal bow may often quell a rebellion, and sometimes crush a conspiracy. It should, at the same time, be both general and individual; equally addressed to the company assembled, and to every single person in the assembly. Our own king bows to perfection. His bow is eloquent, and will always render an oration on his part perfectly unnecessary; which is a great point, for harangues are not regal. Nothing is more undignified than to make a speech. It is from the first an acknowledgment that you are under the necessity of explaining, or conciliating, or convincing, or confuting; in short, that you are not omnipotent, but opposed. Every charlatan is an orator, and almost every orator a charlatan. But I never knew a quack or an adventurer who could bow well. It requires a dignity which can only result from a consciousness of high breeding, or a high moral character. The last cause, of course, will never inspire the charlatan; and for the first, I never met a scoundrel, however exalted his situation, who in his manners was a perfect high-bred gentleman. He is either ridiculously stiff, pompous and arrogant, or his base countenance is ever gilt by an insidious, cunning, conciliatory smile, which either is intended to take you in, or, if habitual, seems to imply, "What a confounded clever fellow I am; how I understand human nature; how skilfully I adapt myself to the humours of mankind; how I sneak with a smile into their bosoms!" Miserable knaves! these fellows are invariably overbearing and tyrannical to their inferiors. They pass their mornings in cringing to a minister, and then go home and bully their butler.

The bow of the Grand-duke of Reisenberg was a first-rate bow, and always produced a great sensation with the people, particularly if it were followed up by a proclamation for a public fête or fire-works; then his royal highness's popularity was at its height. But Madame Carolina, after having by a few magic sentences persuaded the whole room that she took a peculiar interest in the happiness of every individual present, has reached Vivian, who stood next to his friend the grand-marshal. He was presented by that great officer, and received most graciously. For a moment the room thought that his royal highness was about to speak; but he only smiled. Madame Carolina, however, said a great deal; and stood not less than five minutes, complimenting the English nation, and particularly the specimen of that celebrated people who now had the honour of being presented to her. No one spoke more in a given time than Madame Carolina; and as, while the eloquent words fell from her deep red lips, her bright eyes were invariably fixed on those of the person she addressed, what she did say, as invariably, was very effective. Vivian had only time to give a nod

of recognition to his friend Max, for the company, arm-in-arm, now formed into a procession to the dining saloon. Vivian was parted from the grand-marshal, who, as the highest officer of state present, followed immediately after the grand-duke. Our hero's companion was Mr. Sievers. Although it was not a state dinner, the party, from being swelled by the suites of the royal visitors, was numerous; and as the court occupied the centre of the table, Vivian was too distant to listen to the conversation of madame, who, however, he well perceived, from the animation of her countenance and the eloquent energy of her action, was delighted and delighting. The grand-duke spoke little; but listened, like a lover of three days, to the accents of his accomplished consort. The arrangement of a German dinner promotes conversation. The numerous dishes are at once placed upon the table; and when the curious eye has well examined their contents, the whole dinner, untouched, disappears. Although this circumstance is rather alarming to a novice, his terror soon gives place to self-congratulation, when he finds the banquet re-appear, each dish completely carved and cut up. A bottle of wine being placed to each guest, your only business is, at the same time, to refresh both your body and your mind, by gratifying your palate and conversing with your neighbour. Would that this plan were adopted in our own country!

And now, having placed them at dinner, I will, for once in my life, allow the meal to pass over without reporting the conversation; for I have a party in the evening which must not be slurred over; and if my characters may not sometimes be dumb, I fear the plot, which all this time is gradually developing, will stand a chance of being neglected. Therefore imagine the dinner over.

"Not being Sunday," said Mr. Sievers, "there is no opera to-night. We are to meet again, I believe, at the palace, in a few hours, at Madame Carolina's soirée. In the mean time, you had better accompany his excellency to the public gardens; that is the fashionable drive. I shall go home and smoke a pipe."

Let us pass over the drive without a description—why should it be described? The circle of the Public Gardens of Reisenberg exhibited exactly, although upon a smaller scale, the same fashions and the same frivolities, the same characters and the same affectations, as the Hyde Park of London, or the Champs Elysées of Paris, the Prater of Vienna, the Corso of Rome or Milan, or the Cascine of Florence. There was the female leader of ton, hated by her own sex, and adored by the other, and ruling both—ruling both by the same principle of action, and by the influence of the same quality which creates the arbitress of fashion in all countries—by courage to break through the conventional customs of an artificial class, and by talents to ridicule all those who dare follow her innovating example—attracting universal notice by her own singularity, and at the same time conciliating the support of those from whom she dares to differ, by employing her influence in preventing others from violating their laws. The arbitress of fashion is one who is allowed to be singular, in order that she may suppress singularity; she is exempted from all laws; but, by receiving the dictatorship, she ensures the despotism. Then there was that mysterious being, whose influence is perhaps even more surprising than the dominion of the female

despot of manners, for she wields a power which can be analyzed and comprehended,—I mean the male authority in coats, cravats, and chargers; who, without fortune and without rank, and sometimes merely through the bold obtuseness of a fantastic taste, becomes the glass of fashion, in which even royal dukes and the most aristocratic nobles hasten to adjust themselves; and the mould by which the ingenious youth of a whole nation is enthusiastically formed. There is a Brunsmell in every country.

Vivian, who, after a round or two with the grand-marshal, had mounted Max, was presented by the young Count von Bernstorff, the son of the grand-chamberlain, to whose care he had been specially commended by the prince, to the lovely Countess von S—. The examination of this high authority was rigid, and her report satisfactory. When Vivian quitted the side of her britchska, half a dozen dandies immediately rode up to learn the result; and, on being informed, they simultaneously cantered on to young Von Bernstorff, and requested to have the honour of being introduced to his highly interesting friend. All these exquisites wore white hats lined with crimson, in consequence of the head of the all-influential Emilius von Aslingen having, on the preceding day, been kept sacred from the profaning air by that most tasteful covering. The young lords were loud in their commendations of this latest evidence of Von Aslingen's happy genius, and rallied, with a most unmerciful spirit, the unfortunate Von Bernstorff for not having yet mounted the all-perfect *chapeau*. Like all Von Aslingen's introductions, it was as remarkable for good taste as for striking singularity: they had no doubt it would have a great run; exactly the style of thing for a hot autumn; and it suited so admirably with the claret-coloured riding-coat, which madame considered Von Aslingen's *chef-d'œuvre*. Inimitable Von Aslingen! As they were in these raptures, to Vivian's great delight, and to their great dismay, the object of their admiration appeared. Our hero was of course anxious to see so interesting a character; but he could scarcely believe that he, in fact, beheld the ingenious introducer of white and crimson hats, and the still happier inventor of those *chef-d'œuvres*, claret-coloured riding-coats, when his attention was directed to a horseman who wore a peculiarly high, heavy black hat, and a frogged and furred frock, buttoned up, although it was a most sultry day, to his very nose. How singular is the slavery of fashion! Notwithstanding their mortification, the unexpected costume of Von Aslingen appeared only to increase the young lords' admiration of his character and accomplishments, and instead of feeling that he was an insolent pretender, whose fame originated in his insulting their tastes, and existed only by their sufferance, all cantered away with the determination of wearing on the next day, even if it were to cost them each a calenture, furs enough to keep a man warm during a winter party at St. Petersburg,—not that winter parties ever take place there; on the contrary, before the winter sets in, the court moves on to Moscow; which, from its situation and its climate, will always, in fact, continue the real capital of Russia.

The royal carriage, drawn by six horses and backed by three men-servants, who would not have disgraced the fairy equipage of Cinderella has now left the gardens.

CHAPTER III.

MADAME CAROLINA held her soiree in her own private apartments; the grand-duke himself appearing in the capacity of a visitor. The company was very numerous and very brilliant. His royal highness, surrounded by a select circle, dignified one corner of the saloon: Madame Carolina at the other end of the room, in the midst of poets, philosophers, and politicians, in turn decided upon the most interesting and important topics of poetry, philosophy, and politics. Boston, and zwicklen, and whist, interested some; and puzzles, and other ingenious games, others. A few were above conversing, or gambling, or guessing; superior intelligences, who would be neither interested nor amused;—among these, Eniluis von Aslingen was the most prominent; he leaned against a door, in full uniform, with his vacant eyes fixed on no object. The others were only awkward copies of an easy original; and among these, stiff or stretching, loathing on a *chaisi-longur*, or posted against the wall, Vivian's quick eye recognised more than one of the unhappy votaries of white hats lined with crimson.

When Vivian made his bow to the grand-duke, he was surprised by his royal highness coming forward a few steps from the surrounding circle, and extending to him his hand. His royal highness continued conversing with him for upwards of a quarter of an hour; expressed the great pleasure he felt at seeing at his court a gentleman of whose abilities he had the highest opinion; and after a variety of agreeable compliments—compliments are doubly agreeable from crowned heads—the grand-duke retired to a game of Boston with his royal visitors. Vivian's reception made a great sensation through the room. Various rumours were immediately afloat.

"Who can he be?"

"Don't you know?—O! most curious story! killed a bear as big as a bonassus, which was ravaging half Reisenberg, and saved the lives of his excellency the grand-marshal and his whole suite."

"What is that about the grand-marshal, and a bear as big as a bonassus? Quite wrong—natural son of Beckendorf!—know it for a fact—don't you see he is being introduced to Von Solmspoeper?—brothers, you know—managed the whole business about the leagued princes—not a son of Beckendorf, only a particular friend—the son of the late General —, I forget his name exactly—killed at Leipzig, you know—that famous general, what was his name?—that very famous general—don't you know? Never mind—well! he is his son—father particular friend of Beckendorf!—college friend—brought up the orphan—very handsome of him!—they say he does handsome things sometimes."

"Ah! well—I've heard so too—and so this young man is to be the new under-secretary! very much approved by the Countess of S—."

"No, it can't be!—your story is quite wrong. He is an Englishman."

"An Englishman! no!"

"Yes, he is. I had it from madame—high rank incog.—going to Vienna—secret mission."

"Something to do with Greece? of course independence recognised!"

"O! certainly—pay a tribute to the Porte, and governed by a hospodar. Admirable arrangement!"

have to support their own government and a foreign one besides!"

It was with great pleasure that Vivian at length observed Mr. Sievers enter the room, and extricating himself from the enlightened and enthusiastic crowd, who were disserting round the tribunal of madame, he hastened to his amusing friend.

"Ah! my dear sir, how glad I am to see you! I have, since we met last, been introduced to your fashionable ruler, and some of her most fashionable slaves. I have been honoured by a long conversation with his royal highness, and have listened to some of the most eloquent of the Carolina coterie. What a Babel! there all are, at the same time, talkers and listeners. To what a pitch of perfection may the 'science' of conversation be carried! My mind teems with original ideas to which I can annex no definite meaning. What a variety of contradictory theories, which are all apparently sound! I begin to suspect that there is a great difference between reasoning and reason!"

"Your suspicion is well founded, my dear sir," said Mr. Sievers; "and I know no circumstance which would sooner prove it, than listening for a few minutes to this little man in a snuff-coloured coat, near me. But I will save you from so terrible a demonstration. He has been endeavouring to catch my eye these last ten minutes, and I have as studiously avoided seeing him. Let us move."

"Willingly: who may this fear-inspiring monster be?"

"A philosopher," said Mr. Sievers, "as most of us call ourselves here: that is to say, his profession is to observe the course of nature; and if by chance he can discover any slight deviation of the good dame from the path which our ignorance has marked out as her only track, he claps his hands, cries *éureka!* and is dubbed 'illustrious' on the spot. Such is the world's reward for a great discovery, which generally in a twelve-month's time is found out to be a blunder of the philosopher, and not an eccentricity of nature. I am not underrating those great men who, by deep study, or rather by some mysterious inspiration, have produced combinations, and effected results, which have materially assisted the progress of civilization and the security of our happiness. No, no! to them be due adoration. Would that the reverence of posterity could be some consolation to these great spirits, for neglect and persecution when they lived! I have invariably observed of great natural philosophers, that if they lived in former ages they were persecuted as magicians, and in periods which profess to be more enlightened, they have always been ridiculed as quacks. The succeeding century the real quack arises. He adopts and develops the suppressed, and despised, and forgotten discovery of his unfortunate predecessor; and fame trumpets this resurrection-man of science with as loud a blast of rapture, as if, instead of being merely the accidental animator of the corpse, he were the cunning artist himself, who had devised and executed the miraculous machinery which the other had only wound up."

"Let us sit down on this sofa. I think we have escaped from your brown-coated friend."

"Ay! I forgot we were speaking of him. He is, as the phrase goes, a philosopher. To think that a student of butterflies and beetles, a nice observer of the amorous passions of an ant, or the caprices of a cockchafer, should bear a title once

consecrated to those lights of nature who taught us to be wise, and free, and eloquent. Philosophy! I am sick of the word."

"And this is an entomologist, I suppose?"

"Not exactly. He is about to publish a quarto on the Villa Pliniana on the Lake of Como. Sir Philosopher, forsooth! has been watching for these eight months the intermittent fountain there; but though his attention was quite unlike his subject, no 'discovery' has taken place. Pity that a freak of nature should waste eight months of a philosopher's life! Though annoyed by his failure, my learned gentleman is consoled by what he styles, 'an approximation to a theory;' and solves the phenomenon by a whisper of the evening winds."

"But in this country," said Vivian, "surely you have no reason to complain of the want of moral philosophers, or the respect paid to them. The country of Kant—of—"

"Yes, yes! we have plenty of metaphysicians, if you mean them. Watch that lively-looking gentleman, who is stuffing kalte schale so voraciously in the corner. The leader of the idealists—a pupil of the celebrated Fichte! To gain an idea of his character, know that he out-herods his master; and Fichte is to Kant, what Kant is to the unenlightened vulgar. You can now form a slight conception of the spiritual nature of our friend who is stuffing kalte schale. The first principle of his school is to reject all expressions which incline in the slightest degree to substantiality. *Existence* is, in his opinion, a word too absolute. *Being, principle, essence*, are terms scarcely sufficiently ethereal, even to indicate the subtle shadows of his opinions. Some say that he dreads the contact of all real things, and that he makes it the study of his life to avoid them. Matter is his great enemy. When you converse with him, you lose all consciousness of this world. My dear sir," continued Mr. Sievers, "observe how exquisitely nature revenges herself upon these capricious and fantastic children. Believe me, nature is the most brilliant of wits; and that no repartees that were ever inspired by hate, or wine, or beauty, ever equalled the calm effects of her indomitable power upon those who are rejecting her authority. You understand me? Methinks that the best answer to the idealism of Mr. Fichte is to see his pupil devouring kalte schale!"

"And this is really one of your great lights?"

"Verily! his works are the most famous, and the most unreadable, in all Germany. Surely you have heard of his 'Treatise on Man?' A treatise on a subject in which every one is interested, written in a style which no one can understand.

"I could point you out," continued Mr. Sievers, "another species of idealist more ridiculous even than this. Schelling has revived pantheism in Germany. According to him, on our death our identity is lost forever, but our internal qualities become part of the great whole. I could show you also, to prove my impartiality, materialists more ridiculous than both these. But I will not weary you. You asked me, however, if, in Germany, we had not philosophers. I have pointed them out to you. My dear sir, as I told you before, philosophy is a term which it is the fashion for every one to assume. We have a fellow at Reisenberg who always writes 'On the Philosophy' of something. He has just published a volume 'On the Philosophy of Pipe-heads!' We have even come

to this! But considering the term *philosophy* as I do myself, and as I have reason to believe you do, I am not rash when I say, that in Germany she has no real votaries. All here are imitating to excess the only part of the ancient philosophy, which is as despicable as it is useless. The ever inexplicable enigma of the universe is what the modern Germans profess to solve; the ring which they ever strive to carry off in their intellectual tilts. In no nation sooner than in Germany, can you gain more detailed information about every other world except the present. Here, we take nothing for granted; an excellent preventive of superficialness; but as our premises can never be settled, it unfortunately happens that our river of knowledge, though very profound, is extremely narrow. While we are all anticipating immortality, we forget that we are mortal. Believe me, that the foundations of true philosophy are admissions. We must take something for granted. In morals, as well as in algebra, we must form our calculations by the assistance of unknown numbers. Whatever doubts may exist as to the causes of our being, or the origin of our passions, no doubt can exist respecting their results. It is those results that we must regulate, and it is them that we should study. For the course of the river, which is visible to all, may be cleared or changed; but the unknown and secret fountain—what profits it to ponder on its origin, or even to discover its site, or to plumb its unfathomable and mysterious waters? When I find a man, instead of meditating on the nature of our essence and the principle of our spirit,—on which points no two persons ever agreed—developing and directing the energies of that essence and that spirit, energies which all feel and all acknowledge; when I find a man, instead of musing over the absolute principle of the universe, forming a code of moral principles by which this single planet may be regulated and harmonised; when I find him, instead of pouring forth obscure oracles on the reunion of an inexplicable soul with an unintelligible nature, demonstrating the indissoluble connexion of private happiness and public weal, and detailing the modes by which the interests of the indispensable classes of necessary society may at the same time be considered and confirmed, I recognise in this man the true philosopher; I distinguish him from the dreamers who arrogate that title; and if he be my countryman, I congratulate Germany on her illustrious son."

"You think, then," said Vivian, "that posterity will rank the German metaphysicians with the latter Platonists?"

"I hardly know—they are a body of men not less acute, but I doubt whether they will be as celebrated. In this age of print, notoriety is more attainable than in the age of manuscript; but lasting fame certainly is not. That tall thin man in black, that just bowed to me, is the editor of one of our great Reisenberg reviews. The journal he edits is one of the most successful periodical publications ever set afloat. Among its contributors may assuredly be classed many men of eminent talents; yet to their abilities the surprising success and influence of this work is scarcely to be ascribed: it is the result rather of the consistent spirit which has always inspired its masterly critiques. One principle has ever regulated its management: it is a simple rule, but an effective one—every author is reviewed by his personal enemy. You may ima-

gine the point of the critique; but you would hardly credit, if I were to inform you, the circulation of the review. You will tell me that you are not surprised, and talk of the natural appetite of our species for malice and slander. Be not too quick. The rival of this review, both in influence and in sale, is conducted on as simple a principle, but not a similar one. In this journal every author is reviewed by his personal friend—of course, perfect panegyric. Each number is flattering as a lover's tale,—every article an eulogy. What say you to this? These are the influential literary and political journals of Reisenberg. There was yet another; it was edited by an eloquent scholar; all its contributors were, at the same time, brilliant and profound. It numbered among its writers some of the most celebrated names in Germany; its critiques and articles were as impartial as they were able—as sincere as they were sound; it never paid the expense of the first number. As philanthropists and admirers of our species, my dear sir, these are gratifying results; they satisfactorily demonstrate, that mankind have no innate desire for scandal, calumny, and backbiting; it only proves that they have an innate desire to be gulled and deceived.

“The editor of the first review,” continued Mr. Sievers, “is a very celebrated character here. He calls himself a philosophical historian. Professing the greatest admiration of Montesquieu, this luminous gentleman has, in his ‘History of Society in all Nations and all Ages,’ produced one of the most ludicrous caricatures of the ‘Esprit des Loix,’ that can be possibly imagined. The first principle of these philosophical historians is *to generalise*. According to them, man, in every nation and in every clime, is the same animal. His conduct is influenced by general laws, and no important change ever takes place in his condition through the agency of accidental circumstances, or individual exertion. All, necessarily, arises by a uniform and natural process, which can neither be effectually resisted, nor prematurely accelerated. From these premises our philosophical historian has deduced a most ingenious and agreeable delineation of the progress of society from barbarism to refinement. With this writer, recorded truth has no charms, and facts have no value. They are the consequence of his theory; and it is therefore easier for him, at once, to imagine his details, than to give himself the trouble of collecting them from dusty chronicles, or original manuscripts. With these generalizers, man is a machine. Accident and individual character, the two most powerful springs of revolution, are not allowed to influence their theoretic calculations; and setting out, as they all do, with an avowed opinion of what man ought to be, they have no difficulty in providing what, in certain situations, he has been, and what, in singular situations, he ever must be.”

“We have no want of these gentry in my country,” said Vivian; “although of late years this mode of writing history has become rather unfashionable. The English are naturally great lovers of detail. They like a Gerard Dow better than a Poussin; and in literature, in spite of their philosophical historians, their old chronicles are not yet obsolete. Of late, indeed, even the common people have exhibited a taste for this species of antique literature.”

“The genius and delightful works of the Che-

valier Scott, (the Germans always use titles, and speaking even of their most illustrious men, never omit their due style,—as ‘the Baron von Göthe,’ the ‘Baron von Leibnitz,’) of the Chevalier Scott,” continued Mr. Sievers, “has in a great measure revived this taste. You are of course aware that he has influenced the literatures of the Continent scarcely less than that of his own country: he is the favourite author of the French, and in Germany we are fast losing our hobgoblin taste. When I first came to Reisenberg, now eight years ago, the popular writer of fiction was a man, the most probable of whose numerous romances was one in which the hero sold his shadow to a demon, over the dice-box; then married an unknown woman in a church-yard; afterwards wedded a river nymph; and having committed bigamy, finally stabbed himself, to enable his first wife to marry his own father. He and his works are quite obsolete; and the star of his genius, with those of many others, has paled before the superior brilliancy of that literary comet, Mr. von Chronicle, our great historical novelist. Von Chronicle is one of those writers who never would have existed had it not been for the Chevalier Scott: he is a wonderful copyist of that part of your countrymen's works which is easy to copy, but without a spark of his genius. According to Von Chronicle, we have all, for a long time, been under a mistake, and your great author among us. We have ever considered that the first point to be studied in novel writing, is *character*: miserable error! It is *costume*. Variety of incident, novelty, and nice discrimination of character; interest of story, and all those points which we have hitherto looked upon as necessary qualities of a fine novel, vanish before the superior attractions of variety of dresses, exquisite descriptions of the cloak of a signor, or the trunk-hose of a serving-man.

“Amuse yourself while you are at Reisenberg, by turning over some volumes which every one is reading; Von Chronicle's last great historical novel. The subject is a magnificent one—Rienzi—yet it is strange that the hero only appears in the first and the last scenes. You look astonished. Ah! I see you are not a great historical novelist. You forget the effect which is produced by the contrast of the costume of Master Nicholas, the notary in the quarter of the Jews, and that of Rienzi, the tribune, in his robe of purple, at his coronation in the capitol. Conceive the effect, the contrast. With that coronation, Von Chronicle's novel terminates: for, as he well observes, after that, what is there in the career of Rienzi which would afford matter for the novelist? Nothing! All that afterwards occurs is a mere contest of passions, and a development of character; but where is a procession, a triumph, or a marriage?”

“One of Von Chronicle's great characters in this novel is a cardinal. It was only last night that I was fortunate enough to have the beauties of the work pointed out to me by the author himself. He entreated, and gained my permission, to read to me what he himself considered ‘the great scene;’ I settled myself in my chair, took out my handkerchief, and prepared my mind for the worst. While I was anticipating the terrors of a heroine, he introduced me to his cardinal. Thirty pages were devoted to the description of the prelate's costume. Although clothed in purple, still, by a skilful adjustment of the drapery, Von Chronicle managed to bring in six other petticoats. I thought this beginning

would never finish, but to my surprise, when he had got to the seventh petticoat, he shut his book, and leaning over the table, asked me what I thought of his 'great scene?' 'My friend,' said I, 'you are not only the greatest historical novelist that ever lived, but that ever will live.'

"I shall certainly get *Rienzi*," said Vivian; "it seems to me to be an original work."

"Von Chronicle tells me that he looks upon it as his master-piece, and that it may be considered as the highest point of perfection to which his system of novel-writing can be carried. Not a single name is given in the work, down even to the rabble, for which he has not contemporary authority; but what he is particularly proud of, are his oaths. Nothing, he tells me, has cost him more trouble than the management of the swearing; and the Romans, you know, are a most profane nation. The great difficulty to be avoided, was using the ejaculations of two different ages. The 'sblood' of the sixteenth century must not be confounded with the 'zounds' of the seventeenth. Enough of Von Chronicle! The most amusing thing," continued Mr. Sievers, "is to contrast this mode of writing works of fiction, with the prevalent and fashionable method of writing works of history. Contrast the '*Rienzi*' of Von Chronicle, with the '*Haroun Al Raschid*' of Madame Carolina. Here we write novels like history, and history like novels: all our facts are fancy, and all our imagination reality." So saying, Mr. Sievers rose, and wishing Vivian good night, quitted the room. He was one of those prudent geniuses who always leave off with a point.

Mr. Sievers had not left Vivian more than a minute, when the little Prince Maximilian came up and bowed to him in a very condescending manner.

Our hero, who had not yet had an opportunity of speaking with him, thanked him cordially for his handsome present, and asked him how he liked the court.

"O, delightful! I pass all my time with the grand-duke and madame;" and here the young apostate settled his military stock, and arranged the girdle of his sword. "Madame Carolina," continued he, "has commanded me to inform you that she desires the pleasure of your attendance."

The summons was immediately obeyed, and Vivian had the honour of a very long conversation with the interesting consort of the grand-duke. He was, for a considerable time, complimented by her enthusiastic panegyric of England; her original ideas of the character and genius of Lord Byron; her veneration for Sir Humphrey Davy, and her admiration of Sir Walter Scott. Not remiss was Vivian in paying, in his happiest manner, due compliments to the fair and royal authoress of the Court of Charlemagne. While she spoke his native tongue, he admired her accurate English; and while she professed to have derived her imperfect knowledge of his perfect language from a study of its best authors, she avowed her belief of the impossibility of ever speaking it correctly, without the assistance of a native. Conversation became more interesting. Madame Carolina lamented Vivian's indisposition, and fearing that he had not been properly attended, she insisted upon his seeing the court physician. It was in vain he protested that he was quite well. She, convinced by his looks, insisted upon sending Dr. von Spittergen to him the next morning.

When Vivian left the palace, he was not unmindful of an engagement to return there the next day, to give a first lesson in English pronunciation to Madame Carolina.

CHAPTER IV.

ON the morning after the court dinner, as Vivian was amusing himself over Von Chronicle's last new novel, Essper George announced Dr. von Spittergen. Our hero was rather annoyed at the kind interest which Madame Carolina evidently took in his convalescence. He was by no means in the humour to endure the affectations and perfumes of that most finical of prigs, a court physician; but so important a personage could scarcely be refused admission, and accordingly Dr. von Spittergen entered the room. He was a very tall, and immensely stout man, with a small head, short neck, and high shoulders. His little quick gray eye saved his countenance from the expression of sullen dullness, which otherwise would have been given to it by his very thick lips. His dress was singular, and was even more striking from the great contrast which it afforded to the costume which Vivian had anticipated. There was no sword, no wig, no lace ruffles, no diamond ring. The tail of his dark mixture coat nearly reached the ground; its waist encircled his groin, and the lappets of his waistcoat fell over his thighs. He wore very square-toed shoes, and large silver buckles, and partridge-coloured woollen stockings were drawn over the knees of his black pantaloons. Holding in one hand his large straw hat, and in the other a gold-headed cane as big as Goliath's spear, without any preliminary, he thus addressed, in a loud voice, his new patient:—

"Well, sir! what is the matter with you?"

"Pray be seated, doctor. The honour of this visit—very sensible—"

"Never sit down."

As Vivian, rather confounded by the unexpected appearance and manners of his visiter, did not immediately answer, Dr. von Spittergen again spoke.

"Well, sir! have you got any thing to say to me?"

"Really, doctor, you are so very kind! unnecessarily so.—I am not quite well—that is, not exactly quite well; perhaps a little cold—nothing more."

"Little cold, indeed! Why, what would you have, young man;—the plague?"

"Dr. von Spittergen," thought Vivian, "is evidently one of those mild practitioners, who are of opinion, that Learning is never so lovely as when Brutality is her handmaid; and that Skill is never so respected, as when she not only cures but disgusts you."

"Ah!" continued the doctor; "I suppose you got this cold by forgetting to wear your gloves one day. Gloves are the origin of every disease. Nobody can expect to be well, who ever covers the palm of his hand."

"Well, doctor, I confess I do not ascribe my present indisposition to encouraging the glove manufactory of Reisenberg."

"Pish! what should you know about it, sir?"

"O! nothing. Do not be alarmed that I am about to destroy a favourite theory."

"Pish! young men have always something to say; never to the purpose. Show your teeth, sir! I don't want to see your tongue; show your teeth—all pulled out at five years old!—suppose you know nothing about it: well! if they were not, there is no chance for you;—you will be an invalid all your life."

"Well, doctor!" said Vivian, with imperturbable good humour; "however crazy may be my body, I still trust, with your good assistance, to reach a very advanced period."

"You do, do you? I don't know what you; there's nothing of you; no stamina:—see what can be done, though." Here the good doctor rang the bell.

"Kelner! go and ask your master for his list of medicines."

"Sir!" said the astonished waiter at the Grand Hotel of the Four Nations—"Sir!"

"What, are you deaf!—Gd, and bring the list directly."

"I don't know what you mean, sir."

"How long have you lived here?"

"Three days, sir."

"Pish!—go, and tell your master what I said."

The waiter accordingly departed; and the master of the house, bowing and smiling, soon appeared in his own person.

"I beg your pardon, doctor," said he; "but it was a new hand who answered your bell;" and so saying, the good gentleman delivered to Dr. von Spittergen the *carte des vins*.

"Stop here a moment, my friend!" said Von Spittergen, "while I prescribe for this young man." He began reading—"Vins de Bourgogne—pish! Clos de Vougeot—Mousseux—Chambertin—St. George—Richebourg—pish! vins de Bordeaux—Lafitte—Margaux—Hautbrion—Leoville—Medoc—Sauterne—Barsac—Preignac—Grave—pish! pish! pish! Côtes du Rhône—paille-rouge—grillé—St. Peray—pish! pish! pish!—Champagne—p-i-s-h!—Vins du Rhine—drank too much of them already—Porto-Porto—Ah! that will do—Give him a pint at two—Let him dine at that hour, en particulier—and not at the table d'hôte—Give him a pint, I say, with his dinner, and repeat the dose before he goes to bed. Young man, I have done for you all that human skill can—I have given you a very powerful medicine, but all medicine is trash—Are you a horse-man?—you are! very well! I will send my daughter to you—good morning!"

Vivian duly kept his appointment with Madame Carolina. The chamberlain ushered him into a library, where Madame Carolina was seated at a large table covered with books and manuscripts. Her costume, and her countenance were equally engaging. Fascination was alike in her smile and her sash—her bow and her buckle. What a delightful pupil to perfect in English pronunciation! Madame pointed, with a pride pleasing to Vivian's feelings as an Englishman, to her shelves, graced with the most eminent of English writers. Madame Carolina was not like one of those admirers of English literature which you often meet on the Continent: people who think that Beattie's Minstrel is our most modern and fashionable poem; that the Night Thoughts are the masterpiece of our literature; and that Richardson is our only

novelist. O, no!—Madame Carolina would not have disgraced May Fair. She knew Childe Harold by rote, and had even peeped into Don Juan. Her admiration of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews, was great and similar. To a Continental liberal, indeed, even the Toryism of the Quarterly is philosophy; and not an under-secretary ever yet massacred a radical innovator, without giving loose to some sentiments and sentences, which are considered rank treason in the meridian of Vienna.

After some conversation, in which Madame evinced great eagerness to gain details about the persons and manners of our most eminent literary characters, she naturally began to speak of the literary productions of other countries; and in short, ere an hour was passed, Vivian Grey, instead of giving a lesson in English pronunciation to the consort of the Grand-duke of Reisenberg, found himself listening, in an easy chair, and with folded arms, to a long treatise by that lady *de l'Esprit de Conversation*. It was a most brilliant dissertation. Her kindness in reading it to him was most particular; nevertheless, for unexpected blessings we are not always sufficiently grateful.

Another hour was consumed by the treatise. How she refined! what unexpected distinctions! what exquisite discrimination of national character! what skilful eulogium of her own! Nothing could be more splendid than her elaborate character of a repartee; it would have sufficed for an epic poem. At length Madame Carolina ceased *de l'Esprit de Conversation*, and Vivian was most successful in concealing his weariness, and testifying his admiration. "The evil is over," thought he; "I may as well gain credit for my good taste." The lesson in English pronunciation, however, was not yet terminated. Madame was charmed with our hero's uncommon discrimination and extraordinary talents. He was the most skilful, and the most agreeable critic with whom she had ever been acquainted. How invaluable must the opinion of such a person be to her, on her great work! No one had yet seen a line of it; but there are moments when we are irresistibly impelled to seek a confidant—that confidant was before her. The Morocco case was unlocked, and the manuscript of Haroun Al Raschid revealed to the enraptured eye of Vivian Grey.

"I flatter myself," said Madame Carolina, "that this work will create a great sensation; not only in Germany. It abounds, I think, with the most interesting story, the most engaging incidents, and the most animated and effective descriptions. I have not, of course, been able to obtain any new matter respecting his sublimity, the Caliph. Between ourselves, I do not think this is very important. As far as I have observed, we have matter enough in this world on every possible subject already. It is *manner* in which the literature of all nations is deficient. It appears to me, that the great point for persons of genius now to direct their attention to, is the *expansion of matter*. This I conceive to be the great secret; and this must be effected by the art of *picturesque writing*. For instance, my dear Mr. Grey, I will open the Arabian Night's Entertainments, merely for an exemplification, at the one hundred and eighty-fifth night—good! Let us attend to the following passage:—

"In the reign of the Caliph Haroun Al Raschid,

CHAPTER V.

there was at Bagdad a druggist, called Alboussan Ebn Thaher, a very rich, handsome man. He had more wit and politeness than people of his profession ordinarily have. His integrity, sincerity, and jovial humour, made him beloved and sought after by all sorts of people. The caliph, who knew his merit, had an entire confidence in him. He had so great an esteem for him, that he entrusted him with the care to provide his favourite ladies with all the things they stood in need of. He chose for them their clothes, furniture, and jewels, with admirable taste. His good qualities, and the favour of the caliph, made the sons of emirs, and other officers of the first rank, be always about him. His house was the rendezvous of all the nobility of the court."

"What capabilities lurk in this dry passage!" exclaimed Madame Carolina; "I touch it with my pen, and transform it into a chapter. It shall be one of those that I will read to you. The description of Alboussan alone demands ten pages. There is no doubt that his countenance was oriental. The tale says that he was handsome: I paint him with his eastern eye, his thin arched brow, his fragrant beard, his graceful mustachio. The tale says he was rich: I have authorities for the costume of men of his dignity in contemporary writers. In my history, he appears in an upper garment of green velvet, and loose trousers of pink satin; a jewelled dagger lies in his golden girdle; his slippers are of the richest embroidery; and he never omits the bath of roses daily. On this system, which in my opinion elicits truth, for by it you are enabled to form a conception of the manners of the age, on this system I proceed throughout the paragraph. Conceive my account of his house being the 'rendezvous of all the nobility of the court.' What a brilliant scene! what a variety of dress and character! what splendour! what luxury! what magnificence! Imagine the detail of the banquet; which, by-the-by, gives me an opportunity of inserting, after the manner of your own Gibbon, 'a dissertation on sherbet.' What think you of the picturesque writing?"

"Admirable!" said Vivian; "Von Chronicle himself—"

"How can you mention the name of that odious man!" almost shrieked Madame Carolina, forgetting the dignity of her semi-regal character, in the jealous feelings of the author. "How can you mention him! A scribbler without a spark, not only of genius, but even of common invention. A miserable fellow, who seems to do nothing but clothe and amplify, in his own fantastic style, the details of a parcel of old chronicles!"

Madame's indignation reminded Vivian of a very true, but rather vulgar proverb of his own country; and he extricated himself from his very awkward situation, with a dexterity worthy of his former years.

"Von Chronicle himself," said Vivian, "Von Chronicle himself, as I was going to observe, will be the most mortified of all on the appearance of your work. He cannot be so blinded by self-conceit, as to fail to observe that your history is a thousand times more interesting than his fiction. Ah! Madame Carolina, if you can thus spread enchantment over the hitherto weary page of history, what must be your work of imagination!"

ARTHUR brought up with due detestation of the Methuan treaty, Vivian by no means disapproved of Dr. von Spittergen's remedy. The wine was good and very old; for, not being a very popular liquor with any other European nation, except ourselves, the Porto-Porto had been suffered to ripen under the cobwebs of half a century, in the ample cellar of the grand hotel of the Four Nations, at Reisenberg. As Vivian was hesitating whether he should repeat the dose, or join the court-dinner, Essper George came into the room.

"Please your highness, here is a lady, who wants you!"

"A lady!—who can she be?"

"She did not give her name, but wishes to speak to you."

"Ask her to come up."

"I have, your highness; but she is on horseback, and refused."

"What kind of person is she?"

"O," drawled out Essper, "she is not as tall as a horseguard, and yet might be mistaken for a church-steeple when there was a cloud over the moon; she is not as stout as Master Rodolph, and yet she would hardly blow away when the wind was down."

The fair horsewoman must not, however, be kept waiting, even if she were as mysterious as an unladen ghost, or a clerk in a public office; and consequently, Vivian speedily made his bow to his interesting visitant.

Miss Melinda von Spittergen, for the amazon was no other than the dread doctor's fair daughter, was full six feet high, thin, and large-boned; her red curly hair was cut very short behind; yet, in spite of this, and her high-boned cheeks, her fine florid complexion, blue eyes, small mouth, and regular white teeth, altogether made up a countenance which was prepossessing. She was mounted on a very beautiful white horse, which never ceased pawing the ground the whole time that it stood before the hotel; and she was dressed in a riding-habit of blue and silver, with buttons as large as Spanish dollars. As the construction of riding-habits is a subject generally interesting to English women, let me say, that Miss von Spittergen's was of a very full make, with a very long waist, and a very high collar. A pink cravat almost as effectively contrasted with the colour of her dress, as her white hat and feathers. She sat on her spirited steed with the nonchalance of a perfect horsewoman; and there was evidently no doubt, that, had it been necessary, she could have used with becoming spirit her long-lashed riding-whip; the handle of which, I should not omit to mention, was formed of a fawn's foot, graced by a silver shoe.

"Good morning, sir!" said Miss von Spittergen, as Vivian advanced. "My father hopes to have the pleasure of your company at dinner to-day. A ride is the very best thing he can prescribe for you; and if you will order your horse, we will be off immediately."

"Dr. von Spittergen is very kind!" said Vivian, quite confused—quite wonder-struck.

"O! not at all; my father is always most happy to see his friends."

"Dr. von Spittergen is very kind," again stam-

mered out our hero, "but I fear an unfortunate engagement—an—"

"I must take no refusal," said Miss von Spittergen, smiling: "a physician's commands are peremptory. You can have no engagement which may not be broken; for you should not have made one without his permission. He expects you at dinner, and to stay the night. Your bed is prepared."

"Really, Dr. von Spittergen is very kind—but—quite ashamed—so much trouble—so—"

"O! not at all. If it were trouble, of course, we should not insist on that which would be alike disagreeable to our friends and to ourselves. Come, order your horse!"

"Really I cannot withstand," said Vivian, a little more collected, "what is at the same time an invitation and a command. It gives me equal pleasure both to accept and to obey."

"I am very happy that I have not failed in my embassy," said Miss von Spittergen. "We will then be off: time presses. Marcus Aurelius flung a shoe on the road, and lost me half an hour, and I wish you to see a little of the country before dinner."

"I will detain you not five minutes; but will you not dismount and walk up stairs till my horse is ready?"

"No: if I dismount, I must stand at his head," said Miss von Spittergen, pointing to her horse; "I cannot trust Marcus Aurelius to any strange groom."

"Well, then, you will excuse me for a moment. I am half engaged at the court-dinner; and I must scribble a line to his excellency the grand-marshal. You will excuse me?"

"Most assuredly! but give them directions about your horse at once."

In ten minutes' time, Vivian and Miss Melinda von Spittergen had left the hotel of the Four Nations. They cantered through the public gardens, and quitted the city through a new gate, which may truly be described as commemorative of the triumph of the Reisenberg troops during the late war. This arch was commenced by Napoleon, after the arrangement of the Confederation of the Rhine. It was not finished, when the event of the battle of Leipsic virtually dissolved that body. By skilfully placing the most personal bas-reliefs in the very highest and obscurest parts of the elevation, and by adroitly converting the countenances in those already placed into the more successful heads of the allied sovereigns, the triumphal arch of the Emperor Napoleon finally commemorated his defeat; and, at this moment, it bears the dignified title of the Gate of the Allies. Through this portal, gayly cantered Miss Melinda von Spittergen and Mr. Vivian Grey.

"This road," said the lady, "leads to our house; but half an hour would carry us there, and from so short a ride you cannot expect any very great benefit; therefore we will make a round, and as there is no cross-road nigh, follow me." So saying, Miss von Spittergen cleared a hedge, with an air which, had it been witnessed by certain gentlemen whom I could mention, would have caused her immediately to be elected an honourable member of the Melton. Vivian Grey followed. Miss von Spittergen, touching Marcus Aurelius with a silver spur, dashed over a field of stubble. Max was not

to be beat, even by Marcus Aurelius! and his master consequently kept by the lady's side. Another leap, and another field, and then a gate—ah at a full gallop. An extensive plain succeeded, over which Miss Melinda and Vivian scudded for an hour without speaking, like Faust and Mephistopheles on the enchanted steeds. The plain is passed, and a downhill gallop over most rugged and broken ground, proved at the same time the sure-footedness of the horses, the courage of Miss von Spittergen, and the gallantry of Vivian Grey. At the bottom of the hill they found themselves in marsh ground, and the next turn revealed to them a river: the stream was broad and strong, and looked deep.

"Come on!" said Miss von Spittergen, turning round.

"Are we obliged to cross this river?" asked Vivian. "Is there no bridge—no ferry?"

"Bridge or ferry!" said Miss von Spittergen, laughing; "what do you want with a bridge or ferry? Follow me, if you please. We'll soon cure this 'little cold' of yours!" So saying, Miss von Spittergen pulled up Marcus Aurelius, turned her knees over his neck, and then tucking her habit several times round them, so that no part of it hung lower than her horse's mane, she cracked her whip with great spirit, skilfully lashed the Roman emperor on the ham, and almost before Vivian had observed what she was doing, Marcus Aurelius and Miss Melinda von Spittergen were buffeting the boisterous waves. To be outdone by a woman!—impossible!—and so Vivian Grey, elevating his legs as much as he possibly could, and throwing his stirrups over his saddle, dashed into the stream. It was a tight business; and certainly, had not the summer been extremely dry, the river would not have been fordable. As it was, after much puffing, and panting, and struggling, the lady and gentleman found themselves on the opposite bank. They had now to ascend a while, for the stream which they had just forded watered a valley. The road being very steep, and the horses being rather pressed by their passage, Miss von Spittergen, to Vivian's great relief, did not immediately start off at full gallop; and consequently her companion, who actually had not yet had an opportunity of conversing with her, seized the present one to compliment her on her horsemanship.

"A most delightful run!" continued Vivian:—"I trust it will not fatigue you."

"Why should it?" said Miss von Spittergen, smiling her surprise at his apprehensions. "What then!—I suppose you think, because I chance to wear a riding-habit instead of a frock-coat, that I am to sink under the effects of half an hour's canter. I know that is your regular English creed."

"No, indeed!" said Vivian—"but such exertions as clearing hedges, and fording rivers!"

"Clearing hedges! fording rivers! you have gone over nothing this morning which need have prevented you sleeping on your horse's back. I see you are not prepared for German cross-roads; a little amble in the park, in the morning, and a dance with a fainting fair one for two or three hours in the evening, furnish, I suppose, your ideas of fatigue. Now if I were to pass such a day, I should die at the end of it."

"Really, you are shockingly severe;" said Vivian, in a deprecating tone. "One would think that

I was Emilius von Aslingen himself, by your description of my life. I had hoped that my prowess this morning would have saved me from such a reputation; but as I now learn that these feats count for nothing, I confess that I begin to tremble."

"I was not dreaming of casting the least imputation on you," rejoined Miss von Spittergen; "I was merely undeceiving you as regarded myself. If you think that any accidental exhilaration of spirits has produced this exertion, and that I am consequently to be a stupid, sleepy companion for the rest of the day, your alarm will cease, when I inform you that I have not this morning taken one-fourth of my usual exercise; and that even if I were ever so tired, I should be immediately refreshed by half an hour's diving in our great bath. But if you were to tighten me up like one of your native belles, and set me gliding through a quadrille in a hot room, I should expire on the spot. Now, as you look either surprised or incredulous, remember I have proved to you that I can ride; now see that I am prepared to swim." And taking off her hat, Miss von Spittergen exhibited to her companion her close cut hair, in a state as naturally dishevelled as his own.

"Indeed your proof is unnecessary!" said Vivian; "I admire, but do not doubt. Believe me that I did not remonstrate with you from any selfish anticipation for the evening; but from an habitual apprehension for the natural fragility of the sex."

"The natural fragility of the sex!" exclaimed Miss von Spittergen, laughing. "Good heavens, Mr. Grey, what a very pretty apprehension! I have a vast mind, as a reward for your consideration, that you should listen to a lecture from my father to-night, on the natural powers of the sex. He will tell you, what I am sure is very true—that your creed is a gallant apology for idleness; and vain as that which it attempts to excuse. Depend upon it, that if woman choose to put forth her energies, she will equal you lords of the universe, much as you may think of yourselves!"

"I am the last man in the world to dispute woman's superiority on any point," rejoined Vivian, "except as to that physical power which is no proof of excellence; it being an attribute we can neither acquire nor command, and one in which even the brutes surpass us. For all those qualities of mind which distinguish—"

"Mercy! Mr. Grey," exclaimed Miss von Spittergen, "you are running headlong into metaphysics, which always distract me. I am not a metaphysician, but a naturalist; and I argue from the experience of facts, that the natural power of woman is equal to the natural power of man, bodily and mental; and that the difference supposed to exist, does not arise from want of capability, but from want of exercise—just as we ridiculously imagine that the right hand is stronger and more useful than the left, and that the feet are given to us only to walk with. I can fire a musket, and hit my mark as surely with the one hand as with the other; and I know a man who writes beautifully, and can adjust the nicest piece of mechanism with his feet, because, being born without arms, he has used the substitute which nature has given him. But our argument and our ride must now end together; for see! we are at home, and my father is just arriving before us."

Miss von Spittergen pointed through a rising plantation to an old-fashioned house, many rooms

in which would have been consigned to utter obscurity, had it not been for the light which streamed through a small heart cut in the upper part of their heavy oak window-shutters. The house stood on a green, which was surrounded by a wall not more than two feet high; and to the left, barns, stables, stacks, and piles of wood presented the appearance of a well-ordered farm. Miss von Spittergen and Vivian crossed a dike from the plantation, and immediately passing through a large white wooden gate, with two hideous griffins grinning on the top of it, Marcus Aurelius dashed up to the stable door, followed by Max. They were instantly saluted by an immense Newfoundland, whose joyous bark was answered by a responsive neigh from his companion of the stable; and in an instant, Triton was scrambling up Marcus Aurelius, for the pleasure of biting Miss von Spittergen's silver buttons, and licking her face with his great red tongue.

"Down—down, Triton!"

Triton obeyed very unwillingly, but turning round, felt himself greatly consoled for his rebuff, by seeing that he had to welcome a visitor. He flew up at Max's neck. The princely pet, unused to such rude embraces, showed certain signs of exclusiveness, which made Vivian exercise his whip across master Triton's back; who, in his turn, was equally irate at this unusual and ungrateful reception of his caresses. The dog slunk from under Vivian's lash, and springing up behind Max, made him give a sudden and violent kick, which sent Vivian, unprepared as he was, head foremost into some low, thick bushes of box, which had been planted to screen a pig-sty. It was fortunate for him that he did not make an unexpected appearance in the abode of Miss von Spittergen's favourite Columбина—a Chinese lady-pig, with a young family of delicate daughters, all so exquisitely high-bred, that they were almost without heads, bones, or feet. Columбина's maternal fears might have inflicted on Vivian some wounds, which he escaped receiving in the yielding box—from which, indeed, he most quickly extricated himself—animated in his rapid exertions to regain the dignified perpendicular by the loud and unrestrained laughter of Miss von Spittergen, who saw that he had not received the slightest injury, and was therefore most unmercifully mirthful.

"Well, Mr. Grey! my father need not have been afraid of your inertness. I never met with a finer instance of agility. It is fortunate that I did not take Triton out with me, according to my usual custom, if this be a specimen of the result of your companionship. How came you to jump off your horse in such a hurry! You should have given Max a lesson, instead of leaving him to caper about by himself."

"How came I to jump off!" said Vivian; "in truth, Max was not courteous enough to offer me an alternative; but we must remember that he is not yet used to your treatment, and excuse a little ill-humour."

A vis-à-vis drove up to the door, just as Miss von Spittergen and Vivian were about to enter. They were met on the broad flight of steps by a very old white-headed domestic, who bowed low as they passed them, to open the carriage door for his master. The door was opened, but no Dr. von Spittergen alighted. The old valet gently closed it again, but remained standing by the side of the vehicle.

"Well, Francis," said Miss von Spittergen; "why have you shut the door?"

"Please you, my young lady," said the venerable attendant; "my master is dozing. is it your pleasure that I should try to wake him?"

"Asleep, is he? oh! I'll wake him myself—Sir! here is Mr. Grey, our visitor; will not you come into the house?"

"Ah! ah! true! which is he? how much does he weigh? more than me?" asked the good doctor, waking, his morning doze having presented to him an image, of which he was always either thinking or dreaming—a man larger than himself. This character, Dr. von Spittergen had not yet been so fortunate as to meet; though his first inquiry, on the mention of any stranger's name, invariably was, "how much does he weigh?"

Miss von Spittergen, perfectly aware that her father was not yet quite awake, only laughed at his question, and instead of replying to it, asked another.

"Whom have you seen to-day, sir—and what news have you brought us?"

"News! why, I have been in a confounded passion; perhaps that is no news."

"What is all this about, sir? who has been disobeying orders?"

"If you ask twenty questions at the same time, I should like to know how I am to answer them; let me out!"

The doctor descended, and leaning on the arm of his daughter, and followed by Vivian, he entered the house; muttering the whole way without ceasing, much after the following fashion.

"My mind's made up. I have said it before—most people make a great talk, and it ends in nothing—that's not my way—when I say a thing, I do it. Melinda! why haven't you gathered the seed of that geranium? it won't be worth a kreuzer. How do you feel after your ride, Mr. Grey? Don't both speak at the same time—I can't bear such a Babel in my ears—not that I believe there ever was such a thing! Well, sir! you haven't told me how you are, though—glad to go to your room, I suppose? But, I say, Melinda—in spite of all I have said to the grand-duke, here's Madame Carolina ill again—that is, I don't think there's any thing the matter with her—some whim-wham! though if she were to die, I shouldn't much wonder, breathing the same air over and over again every night, smothered up in that state-bed. I told the grand-duke this morning, for the hundredth time, that bed-curtains were the origin of every disease, and that if he doesn't order away those heavy hangings, he may find a court physician where he can. Where's Theresa, that she doesn't come to show Mr. Grey his room? He's tired to death, I dare say; just as I said—nothing of him! no stamina! Pray, sir, what sort of man was your father? how much did he weigh?"

"This way, sir, if you please," said a little thin old woman, in a starched ruff and cap, as she led Vivian down a long passage. "Mind the step, sir, if you please; these old houses are full of them; master often talks of levelling them, but it's all talk with him, sir. I have lived in this house fifty years without seeing any alteration. This is your room, sir; you will remember it by the great bow-pot which I have put beside your toilet table. I don't know whether you'll find the bed too high at the head, sir, we have no curtains, and master

does not allow any of us to sleep under eider down. He has his peculiarities, and there's no getting him out of an old way. This bottle is rose-water, sir, for your face; and this is cau de Cologne of my own making. There is a bell, sir. I wish you good day!"

Although Vivian's toilet was far from being a complicated one, a considerable time elapsed before it was completed. Indeed, he found some difficulty, even in taking off his coat; for every exertion of his arms set him sliding a yard or two on the highly polished floor, and in five minutes he had unwittingly described all the complicated figures of a first-rate skater. He first flew up against a large embroidered fire-screen, which the delicate fingers of some female Von Spittergen had, ages ago, covered with carnations and ranunculus; and then whirling through the mazes of a figure of eight, he nearly drove his elbow through a small pane of the heavy-framed window. A semi-circle brought him in contact with the foot of his low bed, from which he bounded off at a right angle, and found himself seated in a high-backed, carved oaken chair. Here, while he sat forming plans for reaching the so often missed toilet-table, the sound of the dinner-bell made him desperate; and thinking that he could best secure his steps by walking fearlessly over the floor, he made a courageous advance, which ended in upsetting Mistress Theresa's bow-pot. Scarcely flattering himself that the good lady would suspect a favourite cat of the injury done to her toilet furniture, Vivian, in a precipitate retreat, forgot the fatal step, of which he had been previously warned, and measured his length in the corridor.

CHAPTER XI.

"WELL, MR. GREY," said the doctor, as Vivian entered the dining-room, "have you been asleep after your ride, or has Mistress Theresa, according to her usual custom, been showing you the family curiosities?"

"Neither the one nor the other, doctor; but I was delayed in my room."

"Ah! I don't want any explanation. I hate explanations. What sort of an appetite have you got?"

"O! a very good one; and I have no doubt that I shall do full justice to—"

"Ah! you need not tell me what you are going to do. Come, sit down to the table. Melinda, give me some soup—and, Mr. Grey, I'll thank you for an outside slice of that beef in it—and, Francis, bring me some sour kroust, and those stewed apricots from the side table."

While Miss von Spittergen was helping Vivian, the doctor proceeded to chop and mash up all these contrasting viands in his large soup plate. Four spoonfuls emptied it, before his guest had tasted a mouthful; for, though in violation of all etiquette, Vivian could not take his eyes off the owner of the appetite. His astonishment did not escape notice.

"What are you looking at?" asked the doctor, gruffly. "You had better eat your own dinner than stare at me."

"I beg pardon, but—"

"Ah! don't beg pardon. I hate apologies.

Vivian, much confused, turned round to his

fairer neighbour; and, to his horror, found that she was consuming her dinner after the same fashion, though it must be confessed, not with equal rapidity of execution.

"You see your dinner, Mr. Grey," said Miss von Spittergen. "We never consider any one a stranger. Shall I give you some more soup?"

"More soup! what, is he going to dine off soup? Why don't you give him some beef, and cream, and kid, and custard? He must eat."

"Yes, doctor, I thank you; I will taste all your good dishes—but not all at once."

"Pish! what should you know about it! You eat your dinner on a wrong principle, or rather on no principle at all. Take all that you want on your plate at once. I suppose, if you were set down to a venison pasty, you would eat the flour and water, and butter and balls, and eggs and truffles, and wine and spices, and fat and flesh, all separately! that's your notion of feeding, is it? What are you laughing at?"

"Do you, then, recommend, doctor—"

"Recommend! I recommend nothing! what's the use of recommending! people never attend."

"But I will attend, doctor," said Vivian. "Remember, I am already an obedient patient; therefore, I believe I shall trouble you, Miss von Spittergen, in the first place, for a small slice of that kid—"

"Couldn't take any thing worse! no nourishment in it! How comes it here, Melinda?"

"Well, then, doctor, I'll follow your example, and take some of the beef."

"Ah! you should have begun with it at once: better late than never, though. You have been badly managed, I see that! Stay with us a month; we'll get you round. Now, you must have some of your physic! Francis, give Mr. Grey the wine."

"Perhaps I may have the honour of taking a glass with you, Miss von Spittergen?" asked Vivian.

"Taking a glass with her! what's the matter with her, that she is to take wine?"

"Possibly you are not aware, Mr. Grey," said Miss von Spittergen, "that in this house we never take wine except as a medicine; let me join you in my usual beverage."

"A glass of filtered water!" growled the doctor; "if you are a wise man, you'll make that your drink; that is, as soon as we have made something of you."

"Filtered water!" exclaimed Vivian with surprise.

"Yes, filtered water! who the deuce drinks water without filtering it? I suppose you are fond of fattening yourself with the scum of eels, vipers, lizards, newts, tadpoles, frogs, rats, and all other filth, animal and vegetable."

"If water contain all these monsters and horrors," said Vivian laughing, "I should have thought that it would have been the favourite beverage of your system, doctor. Is it not correct, then, to drink all things at once, as well as eat them? But surely," continued Vivian "a glass of spring water must be free from all these disgusting appurtenances."

"Pish! it shows how much you know about the matter. Did you ever see a drop of water through a microscope?—You haven't, eh?—I thought not. Melinda, after dinner show him the microscope. We'll amuse you as well as we can."

Dinner being over, the doctor retired to his study, and Miss von Spittergen and Vivian agreed to take a stroll.

"Now, Mr. Grey," said the lady, "you must know that I am a great walker. Some dislike moving after dinner; but if that be not your case. I propose taking you my usual round: and first of all, as I see Peter coming out of the stable, I wish to say a word to him about Marcus Aurelius." Miss von Spittergen proceeded to give directions for all her horse's shoes to be taken off over-night, and his frogs looked to in the morning. "Now," continued she, "I must see how they go on with their wood stacking. We have lately had a fall of beech-wood; and although all of us have been busily picking and splitting for the last week, we have not yet finished. It is very important that the stacks should be well piled. Last year, when I was absent, and trusted the business to our neighbour's steward, we had more than half our stock spoiled by the rains, and a great quantity besides fell over. I admire nothing more than a well-stacked pile of wood. It is always a sign of good management."

"I am ashamed to own," said Vivian, "how ignorant I am upon all these points; though I assure you I do not the less admire your perfect acquaintance with the subject. To me, it is equally new and delightful to see a lady so completely interesting herself in her domestic economy."

"There is little merit in my exertions," said Miss von Spittergen. "Although I am, at the present moment, extremely fond of the life I lead, necessity, not choice, first made me mistress of these details. Their acquisition is, at least, a proof of the truth of my observations this morning; though, I suppose, according to your theory," continued Miss von Spittergen, smiling; "to direct a fall of wood, or the thatching of a granary, which I must superintend to-morrow morning, are not very meritorious actions; I being, in a great measure, enabled to interfere in such affairs, from the possession of that unfortunate physical strength, which, if you remember, Mr. Grey, is no proof of excellence."

The walk lasted some hours; there was much done—much said. The fields, the meadows, the orchards, the woods, all demanded some care, and received some superintendence. Many men were to be instructed, and ordered, and directed. One field was to lie fallow, another to be sown with different seed. The cattle were to change their meadows. Some woods were to be counted, some hills to be planted. On all these affairs, and on all these subjects, Miss von Spittergen was the directing head. No one applied to her, and returned unsatisfied: every one received a ready answer. Yet with all these calls upon her attention and her judgment, she did not fail to prove a most interesting companion. Her general conversation showed that her mind was highly cultivated and accomplished. She also detailed to Vivian, as passing objects gave rise to the subject, the various plans of her father and herself for the amelioration of the condition of their tenants, which they wished principally to bring about by extricating them from the harassing restraints of the old feudal system, injurious alike to the landlord and the tenant. Her admiration of nature also was sincere, and her taste refined. As they walked alone, she called her companion's attention to any striking combination

and effect—a peep at the distant country, through an opening in a deep wood—the light of the declining sun, seen through the trunks of a grove of beeches—a waterfall caused by a strong brook dashing over some sand rocks, and cooling the boughs of the white-rind willows. Although Vivian, in the latter years of his life, had actually lived in a forest, it seemed that he had gained more information on his much-loved trees in a few hours' walk with Miss von Spittergen, than he had during the whole time that he was roaming about Heidelberg. He was now strongly reminded of the great difference between reverie and observation. He remembered sitting for hours with his eyes fixed upon a tree, of whose nature he now found himself utterly ignorant; for Miss von Spittergen spoke of the physiology of trees; and Vivian was ashamed when he confessed his want of knowledge. While he expressed his wonder and admiration of much that she said, she promised that in the evening, the microscope should elucidate and reveal more. The air was mild and sweet—the exercise exhilarating—conversation never flagged. Without annoying such a woman with unmeaning compliments, Vivian properly evinced his admiration of Miss von Spittergen's accomplishments; and delicately conveyed to her his sincere declarations that, for a long time, he had not passed a day so agreeably, and with such satisfaction.

“I told you continued Miss von Spittergen, “that necessity, not choice, first induced me to adopt a mode of life, which now has for me the greatest charms. I passed my earliest years with an uncle, an old baron, in a Gothic castle. A library full of romances soon convinced me that I was born to be a heroine, and that unless I were a heroine life had no delight. For the commonplace realities of life I entertained a thorough disgust: I rode all day through my uncle's park and forests, in quest of a hero for the romance which I formed in my nightly reveries. I lived in a world of my own creation; I conversed with no one. My mind was constantly occupied with an impossible idea. Passing my time thus, I formed no conception of the existence of duties. My fellow-creatures, if I thought of them at all, were merely the instruments by whose agency I was to pass my life in a constant state of excitement. Very short time elapsed before I was convinced that I was a peculiar being, and was ordained to occasion some singular revolution. I expected, every day, the crisis of my fate. About this time my dear and only brother died in battle; and my mother, overcome by the loss, followed him in a few weeks to the grave. My desolate parent now demanded from my uncle his only remaining child. I left the castle with no reluctance, for I was firmly convinced that my career was now to begin. The appearance of my father, whom I had seen regularly every year, was the first shock to my romance. He was so overwhelmed by his misery, that his terrible grief called forth in me those natural sensations of the existence of which I was ignorant. You must know, Mr. Grey,” continued Miss von Spittergen, with a smile, “that I am the most decided enemy of long stories, and therefore I shall cut my own very short. The result of my return to my home is evident to you. To be the consolator, and then the confidant, and then the assistant of my father, were quick decrees of my destiny. A mind naturally ardent and enthusiastic, was

now, I am sure, well directed; and has been, I trust, well employed. To my beloved and highly gifted parent, I have endeavoured to be both wife, and son, and daughter. By my exertions, the loss of his dear connections has not disarranged the accustomed tenour of his life; nor has his mind been troubled by duties, for which his temper and education have completely unfitted him. Under a rough exterior, he conceals the most generous and beneficent of dispositions; and in spite of his quaint humour, you cannot live many days with him without discovering the cultivation of his intellect. I need not add that my romance was quickly dissipated, and my father has become to me the hero of my reality.”

Miss von Spittergen entered the house, to arrange her dress for the evening. Vivian remained on the terrace. The red autumnal sun had just sunk over an immense extent of champagne country. The evening mists from the ruddy river were already ascending, and the towers and steeples of a neighbouring city rose black against the shining sky. Sunset is the time when memory is most keen; and as Vivian Grey sat on the marble wall, gazing on the wide landscape, his sorrowing mind was not inactive. Never, until this moment, had he felt how precious, how invaluable were the possession and performance of a duty! The simple tale of his late companion had roused a thousand thoughts. His early, his insane career, flitted across his mind. He would have stifled the remembrance with a sigh; but man is the slave of memory. He, too, had thought himself a peculiar creature: he, too, had lived in a world of his own creation: he, too, had sacrificed himself to an idea; he, too, had looked upon his fellow-creatures as the puppets of his will. Would that his reveries had been as harmless as this maiden's! Would that he could compensate for his errors, and forget his follies in a life of activity, of usefulness, of beneficence! To the calm satisfaction and equal tenour of such a life, why had he madly preferred the wearing anxiety, the consuming care, the eternal vigilance, the constant contrivance, the agonizing suspense, the distracting vicissitudes of his own career! Alas! it is our nature to sicken, from our birth, after some object of unattainable felicity—to struggle through the freshest years of our life in an insane pursuit after some indefinite good, which does not even exist! But sure and quick is the dark hour which cools our doting frenzy in the frigid waves of the ocean of oblivion! We dream of immortality until we die. Ambition! at thy proud and fatal altar we whisper the secrets of our mighty thoughts, and breathe the aspirations of our inexpressible desires. A clouded flame licks up the offering of our ruined souls, and the sacrifice vanishes in the sable smoke of death.

But where are his thoughts wandering! Had he forgotten that day of darkest despair! There had that happened to him which had happened to no other man. In the conflict of his emotions he ceased to reason. This moment he believed himself the slave of destiny, and the next, the sport of chance. Sad, and serious, and wavering, Vivian entered the house, uncertain of every thing except his misery.

He found Dr. von Spittergen and his agreeable daughter at the tea-table.

“Well, Mr. Grey,” said the doctor, “which do you prefer? the *Ficki-tsiaa* or the *Ben-tsiaa*?”

"Really, sir, I am almost afraid to avow, that I am perfectly ignorant of what you are talking about."

"Perfectly ignorant of what I am talking about! Why, Melinda, here is Mr. Grey drinking tea every day of his life, and does not know the proper name of it, even when he hears it mentioned; and he belongs to a tea-drinking nation, too!"

"Why, my good sir, I know the difference between black and green tea."

"How do you know that there is a difference? Linnaeus says there is: Thunberg says there is not. If you can decide, pray instruct us."

"I believe," said Vivian, "there is no nation which drinks more tea, and knows less of its nature and culture, than the English. We are always satisfied to take what is given us for black or green."

"You are not so easy to be dealt with about wine though," said the doctor, laughing: "merely to be aware of the difference between red and white wine is, I imagine, information not sufficiently definite to tempt an Englishman to taste it; and why should you be less particular about tea, of which you receive in your country eight or nine different kinds? I suppose you are so indifferent about it, because you drink it twice a-day, and wine only once! Ho! ho—o—o!" This was the learned doctor's laugh: something like the hoot of a facetious owl.

"Well, my dear father," said Miss von Spittergen, "the best way to teach Mr. Grey the difference will be, to give him a basin of your curious *Ficki-tsiaa*."

"Yes; and while you make it, I'll tell him what it means. As society is divided into three classes," continued the doctor, "so there are three different gatherings of tea, suited to the quality of each. I suppose you know that tea is the leaf of a shrub? The first gathering commences in the beginning of March, when the leaves are small and tender, not more than four days' growth. This kind you are going to drink—the *Ficki-tsiaa*, or imperial, kept for the court and people of quality. This was given to me by the young Prince of Orange, who sickened at our court. No wonder! He thought I had saved his life: I only sent him home. The second gathering takes place in the beginning of April. The leaves are then pretty well grown. This they call *Too-tsiaa*: this infusion is good enough for the middling classes. And in June, all the leaves which have not been stripped off for their betters, get tough and pungent, and are left for the mob, and this they call *Ben-tsiaa*; and I think it is the best of all. We always drink it—don't we, Melinda?"

Vivian, though very much amused by the doctor's lecture, could not help watching his fair daughter, whose novel method of infusing this very rare beverage not a little surprised him. Miss von Spittergen first filled a cup with boiling water, and then threw into it a tea-spoonful of powder, which she took out of a small porcelain vase. She stirred the powder in the water until the liquid began to foam: then she offered the cup to Vivian.

"Drink it off!" said the doctor; "and let us hear how you like *ficki-tsiaa*."

"But are not all these particles to settle first?" asked Vivian, who was rather fearful of the boiling draught.

"I suppose," said the doctor, "you let all your

vegetables settle in your soup, before your delicacy can venture to sip it. Drink it off, man! Perhaps you think it is like that confounded stuff made in England, called bohea, which deposits in every cup a mash of sloe-leaves!"

The doctor drank plentifully of his favourite *ben-tsiaa*, and praised the shrub in proportion to his enjoyment. He compared it with wine, on which latter beverage he wreaked his spleen without mercy, enumerating all the evils which the immoderate use of fermented liquors produces; while tea, on the contrary, he declared would contribute more to the sobriety of a nation, than the severest laws, the most eloquent sermons, or the best moral treatises. It was a perfect antidote to intemperance. The man who relishes tea, seldom wants wine.

Vivian reminded Miss von Spittergen of her promise about the microscope and the trees; and in a few minutes they were busily examining a cutting of ash. She first pointed out to him the bark, and described its uses; and then explained the sap-vessels, the lymph-ducts, the great and lesser air-vessels, the pith, and the true wood. She also pointed out the annual rings which mark the age of the tree, and showed likewise a dissected leaf, exhibiting the nerves branching out into innumerable small threads; and explained to him how the pores in the leaf served both for perspiration and absorption. Vivian was quite surprised to discover the proximity in the economy of vegetable and animal life. It appeared to him, that, with the exception of sensibility and motion, one system was nearly as complete as the other. Nor, while he found himself acquiring so much new information, could he help mournfully feeling, how very different an acquaintance with the world is to a knowledge of nature.

CHAPTER VII.

THE acquaintance between Master Rodolph and Essper George had been renewed with as much cordiality as that between their respective masters. When one man is wealthy, and another agreeable, intimacy soon ensues. The wit is delighted with the good dishes of the man of wealth, and the man of wealth with the good sayings of the wit. Such friendships, in general, are as lasting as they are quickly cemented. They are formed on equal terms. Each party has some failing to be excused, as each has some good quality to recommend him. While the pun of the wit is bartered for the pasty of his host, he can endure the casual arrogance of the master of the feast, provided he may occasionally indulge in a little malice of his own.

A place was never wanting for Essper George at the table of the former steward of the Prince of Little Lilliput; or, as he was now styled, the Intendant of his excellency the grand-marshal; and as the worthy Master Rodolph pressed with vehemence his puffy sides, from a well founded apprehension that his frequently excited laughter might disturb the organization of his stupendous system, he felt that the good stories of Essper George amply repaid him for his often-exercised hospitality. But it was not merely his laughter-loving humour that occasioned Essper's company to be acceptable to his friend the intendant. Easily as Master Rodolph

was tickled by a jest, and remarkable as was his quickness in detecting the point of a very evident joke, the facetious qualities of Essper George were not the only causes which gained our hero's valet a welcome reception at all times in the steward's hall. Cæsar loved to be surrounded by *sleek* men; the intendant of the grand-marshal by *short* ones. Five feet five inches, exactly Master Rodolph's own height, was, according to the worthy steward's theory of the beautiful, a perfect altitude. Nevertheless, a stature somewhat beneath this model ever found favour in his sight. In short, a tall man was Master Rodolph's aversion; and it was the study of his life, that his friends and boon companions should be shorter than himself. For many years his intimate friend was the late Princess of Little Lilliput's dwarf. When their mistress died, Master Rodolph's friend, either through grief for her loss, or from water in his head, it was never decided which, "set also his foot within grim Charon's boat." Master Rodolph was in despair. There was not a full grown individual at Turriparva under six feet two; and even the young Prince Maximilian, although still much beneath the due limit, grew so apace, that, as all were perpetually observing, there was a very fair chance of his rivaling in height old Ernestus von Little Lilliput himself—the founder of the family—whose armour, still rusting in the Giant's Hall, proved that the stature of the great figures themselves was not ideal. The hospitable prince himself could not therefore welcome the presence of his preserver in his own castle with greater joy, than did Master Rodolph the presence of that preserver's valet. Essper George, he immediately determined, was a good three inches shorter than himself:—eternal friendship was the instant consequence. At first Essper, who of course could not be intuitively aware of the foible of Master Rodolph, seized every opportunity of maintaining and proving, that the good steward was much the shorter of the two; and as the knave could stand and walk on his toes the whole day, with the greatest facility, and without the least chance of detection, he found little difficulty, the first day, in making his kind host extremely miserable. But four-and-twenty hours could not elapse without Essper discovering that, which was as constantly the subject of Master Rodolph's thought and conversation, as the hitherto unseen, and unmet, and unheard of "stouter man," was of the dreams and researches of Dr. von Spittergen. Consequently, on the second day of his visit at Turriparva, Mr. Essper George sunk down to his natural height; confessed, and continually dwelt on the superiority of Master Rodolph; and was daily rewarded for the shortness of his stature, and the candour of his disposition, by the best wines and choicest dishes that Turriparva could afford.

On the day that his master dined with Dr. on Spittergen, Essper George had made a particular engagement with Mr. Intendant, to drink the health of the new grand-marshal, over a bottle of the very Burgundy, by the influence of which they had, a few weeks before, discovered his treason. Accordingly, about four hours after noon, Essper found himself in Master Rodolph's private room. He was introduced to two strangers—the first, Mr. Spiegelburg, was about five feet four inches and a half high. He was a decayed gentleman-usher, who had retired on a pension of eighty dollars per annum. Although this stipend may be considered

a very scanty one, by some who encumber the civil list of this country, nevertheless Mr. Spiegelburg contrived not only to exist without incurring debts to his tradesmen or his friends, but even to procure the reputation of being a man who lived within his income; and this, too, without the suspicion of being a niggard. The full court-suit in which he now bowed to Essper George, although the very one in which he had assisted at the entrance of the Emperor Napoleon into Reisenberg, was still not unworthy of a royal drawing-room. His shoes were the most highly polished in the city, his buckles the brightest, his linen the most pure. If the expenses of his wardrobe did not materially reduce his hard-earned pension of eighty crowns, assuredly the cost of living, naturally fond as Mr. Spiegelburg was of good cheer, was likewise no great obstacle to his saving passion. A prudently cherished friendship, of old standing, with the court-cook, insured the arrival of a welcome hamper more than once during the week at his neat lodging; and, besides this, Mr. Spiegelburg was as systematic and as schooled a diner-out, as if he had been born and bred in Brook Street. His former connexion, and present acquaintance with the court, allowed him to garnish his conversation with many details interesting to the females of the humbler bourgeoisie. With them, indeed, from his various little accomplishments, Mr. Spiegelburg was an especial favourite; and a Sunday party to the royal retreat, or the royal farm, or a Sunday promenade on the ramparts, or in the public gardens, was never thought complete without his presence. His highly-polished and obliging manners, his facetious humour, his good stories, on which he very much prided himself, and in which frequent repetition had rendered him very perfect, and above all, the dignified and rather consequential bearing which he knew well when to assume, made him as popular and considered a personage with the men, as with their wives. But the brightest moment in Mr. Spiegelburg's existence, was the apostacy of the Prince of Little Lilliput. In due time he had been introduced by the intendant of his excellency the grand-chamberlain, to the intendant of his excellency the grand-marshal; and Master Rodolph no sooner set his eyes upon him, than he internally vowed that Mr. Spiegelburg should dine at the prince's expense as long as his master continued a great officer of state, and he that master's intendant. Such was one of the guests invited to meet our friend Essper George. The other was a still more singular-looking personage.

When Essper was introduced to Mr. Lintz, a considerable time elapsed before he perceived a figure, which he considered to be a child, bowing to him without ceasing, in the corner of the room. Had Essper George been a long resident in Reisenberg, an introduction to Mr. Lintz would have been unnecessary. Indeed, that gentleman had already called upon Vivian, though hitherto, unfortunately, without succeeding in seeing him. Mr., or to use a title by which he was better known, Little Lintz, was one of those artists whose fame is indissolubly bound up with that of their native city; and who seem to value no reputation which is not liberally shared with the place of their residence. The pencil of Mr. Lintz immortalized the public buildings of Reisenberg, and the public buildings of Reisenberg supported their artist. "The grand square, the royal palace, the public gardens

and the grand hotel of the Four Nations"—these were the constant, the only subjects of Mr. Lintz's pencil. Few were the families in the city whose rooms, or whose collections, were not adorned or enriched with these accurate representations. Few were the travellers who sojourned at the hotel, who were allowed to quit its hospitable roof unaccompanied by a set of Mr. Lintz's drawings. The discreet discrimination of the artist in the selection of his subjects, of course made the landlord of the Four Nations his sworn friend and warmest patron. On quitting the house, it was as regular an affair to encourage the arts, as to fee the waiters. With this powerful patronage, Little Lintz of course flourished. Day after day passed over, only to multiply his already innumerable and favourite four views. Doubtless Little Lintz could have given a most faithful representation of every brick of the great square of Reisenberg with his eyes shut. In spite of his good fortune, and unlike most artists, Little Lintz was an extremely modest and moral personage. Not being much above four feet and a half high, Master Rodolph had, of course, immediately sunned him with the rays of his warmest patronage. Orders were showered down, and invitations sent in, with profusion and rapidity. Every member of the grand-marshal's household was obliged, as a personal favour to the intendat, to take a set of the four views. Every room in the grand-marshal's house was graced by their eternal presence; and as for the artist himself, free warren of cellar and larder was immediately granted him.

Perhaps a merrier party never met together than these four little men. Mr. Spiegelburg, who was well primed for the occasion, let off a good story before the first bottle was finished. The salute was immediately returned by Essper George. Master Rodolph presented the most ludicrous instance of ungoverned mirth; and laying down his knife and fork, vowed that they were "in truth a pair of most comical knives." Little Lintz said nothing, but he sat biting his lips, lest laughter should destroy his miniature lungs; his diminutive hands and eyes, ever and anon raised up in admiration of the wit of his companions, and his heels resting on the bar of his chair. No one, at first, was more surprised and less pleased with Essper George's humour, than Mr. Spiegelburg himself. A rival wit is the most bitterly detested of mortals; and the little old courtier, alarmed at the rapidity and point of Essper's narratives and repartees, began to think that the poacher on his manor might prove almost too strong for the game laws; and so Mr. Spiegelburg drew up in his seat, and grew dull and dignified. But a very short time elapsed ere Mr. Spiegelburg discovered that Essper George was neither envious of his reputation, nor emulous of rivaling it; and that his jokes and jollity were occasioned rather by the o'erflowings of a merry spirit, than by any dark design to supersede him in the favour of their host. No one laughed at Mr. Spiegelburg's stories with more thorough enthusiasm—no one detected the point of Mr. Spiegelburg's jests with more flattering celerity, than the man whom he had at first mistaken for an odious and a dangerous rival. Mr. Spiegelburg's present satisfaction was in proportion to his previous discontent, and he and Essper were soon on the most intimate terms.

The Burgundy in due time produced every regular effect, and the little men made noise enough for

as many Brobdnigns. First they talked very loud, then they sang very loud; then they talked all together very loud, then they sang all together very loud. Such are four of the five gradations of Burgundian inebriety!—but we have had invocations enough; it is a wine of which we know nothing in England. No man should presume to give an opinion upon Burgundy, who has not got tipsy at Dijon. In the course of half a dozen hours, one of the party experienced some inconvenient symptoms of an approach to the fifth and final gradation. Master Rodolph began to get very drowsy; the fat Chamberlin was doing its duty. In order to rouse himself from his stupor, the intendat proposed that they should amuse themselves with a little *zwicken*; but as this game was no favourite with Mr. Spiegelburg, the party finally resolved to sit down to whist.

The table was cleared, and Essper was Rodolph's partner. The intendat managed to play through the game very well, and to Mr. Spiegelburg's mortification, won it. He would probably have been equally successful in the rubber, had he remained awake; but invisible sleep at last crept over Master Rodolph's yielding senses, and although he had two by honours in his own hand, he snored. O, Burgundy! but I forgot—I will go on with my story.

No sooner had the nasal sound of Master Rodolph caught the ever-ready ear of Essper George, than that wicked knave quickly pressed his finger to his mouth, and winking to Mr. Spiegelburg and Little Lintz, immediately obtained silence,—a silence which was not disturbed by the soundless whisper in which Essper spoke to both his companions. What he was detailing or suggesting, time will reveal; his violent gesticulation, animated action, and the arch and mischievous expression of his countenance, promised much. Apparently, the other guests readily acceded to his proposition, and Essper George accordingly extinguished the two candles. As there was no fire, and the shutters were closed, the room was now in perfect darkness.

"Play!" shouted Essper George in a loud voice, and he dashed his fist upon the table.

"Play!" hallooed Mr. Spiegelburg.

"Play!" even screamed Little Lintz.

"What, what, what's the matter?" mumbled Master Rodolph, rubbing his eyes and fumbling for his cards.

"Play!" again shouted Essper George.

"Play!" again hallooed Mr. Spiegelburg.

"Play!" again screamed Little Lintz.

"Play!" said Master Rodolph, who was now pretty well awake, "Play!—play what?"

"Why, a diamond if you have got one," said Essper George. "Can't you see? Are you blind? Hasn't Mr. Spiegelburg led a diamond?"

"A diamond!" said Master Rodolph.

"Yes, a diamond to be sure; why what's the matter with you? I thought you played the last trick very queerly."

"I can't see," said Master Rodolph, in a very doleful voice.

"Come, come!" said Essper; "let us have no joking. It is much too important a point in the game to warrant a jest. Play a diamond if you have one, and if not, trump!"

"You have no right to tell your partner to trump," said Mr. Spiegelburg, with mock indignation; for he had entered into the conspiracy with

readiness, as he now saw a chance, by its concoction, of saving himself from losing the rubber.

"He has a right to tell his partner any thing," said Master Rodolph, equally indignant at this interference; "but I tell you I can't see."

"Can't see!" said Essper George; "what do you mean?"

"I mean exactly what I say," said Master Rodolph, somewhat testy. "I can't see; I am not joking the least. I can't see a single pip of a single card. Have I been asleep?"

"Asleep!" said Essper George, in a tone of extreme surprise. "It's an odd thing for a man to be asleep, and play every card as regularly as you have done, and as well too. I never remember you playing so well as you have done to-night:—that finesse with the spade last trick, was quite admirable. Had you only played half as well, the night you and I sat against long Halbert and Sax the pikeman, the night, you remember, in the yellow room at Turripurva, I should not have lost a silver dollar. But what has having been asleep to do with it?" continued Essper. "Had you slept for a century, your eyes are open wide enough now. Why you stare like a pig four-and-twenty hours before salting. Speigelburg, did you ever see a man stare so in all your life! Little Lintz, did you?"

"Never!" said Speigelburg with enthusiasm; the rubber was now certainly saved.

"Never!" screamed Little Lintz.

"I have been asleep," said Master Rodolph, in a very loud, and rather angry voice; "I have been asleep—I am asleep—you are all asleep—we are all talking in our sleep—a'n't we?"

"Talking in our sleep!" said Essper George, affecting to be stifled with laughter; "Well! this is what I call carrying a joke rather too far. Come, Master Rodolph, play like a man."

"Yes, yes!" said Mr. Speigelburg; "play, play."

"Yes, yes!" said Little Lintz; "play, play."

"How can I play?" said Master Rodolph, his anger now turning into alarm.

"Why, with your hands to be sure!" said Essper George.

"Good Master Rodolph," said Mr. Speigelburg, in rather a grave tone, as if he were slightly offended; "be kind enough to remember that cards were your own proposition. I have no wish to continue playing if it be disagreeable to you; nor have I any objection, if it be your pleasure, although I have a very good hand, to throw up my cards altogether. What say you, Mr. Lintz?"

"No objection at all," said the little man; titing his lips in the dark with renewed vigour.

"Thank you, Mr. Speigelburg," said Essper George, "but I, and my partner, have a great objection to your throwing up your cards. If you are satisfied with your hand, so much the better: I am satisfied with mine. I am sure, however, your partner cannot be with his; for I see nothing but twos and threes in it. Now, do me the favour, Mr. Lintz, to hold your cards nearer to you. There is nothing I detest so much as seeing my adversary's hand. I say this, I assure you, not out of any affected admiration of fair play; but the truth is, it really puzzles me. I derive no benefit from this improper knowledge. Now, do hold your cards up: you really are a most careless player. Nearer, nearer, nearer still!"

These matter-of-fact observations and requests

of Essper George, effectually settled Master Rodolph's brain; never very acute, and now muddled with wine.

"Do you mean to say," asked he in a most tremulous and quivering voice, "Do you mean to say that you are all seeing at this very moment?"

"To be sure!" was the universal shout.

"Every one of us!" continued Essper; "why, what maggot have you got into your brain! I actually begin to believe that you are not joking after all. Cannot you really see? and yet you stare so! did you ever see a man stare so, Mr. Speigelburg? and now that I look again, the colour of your eyes is changed!"

"Is it, indeed?" asked Master Rodolph, with gasping breath.

"O! decidedly; but let us be quite sure. Little Lintz, put that candle nearer to Master Rodolph. Now I can see well; the light just falls on the pupil. Your eyes, sir, are changing as fast as the skin of a chameleon; you know they are green: your eyes, if you remember, are green, Master Rodolph."

"Yes, yes!" agreed the intendant, almost unable to articulate.

"They were green, rather," continued Essper George; "and now they are crimson; and now they are a whitish brown; and now they are as black as a first day's mourning!"

"Alack—and alack-a-day! it has come at last," exclaimed Master Rodolph in a voice of great terror. "We have blindness in our family, if I remember right; if indeed I can remember any thing at this awful moment, and my mind has not left me as well as my eyesight; we have blindness in our family. There was my uncle, Black Hunsdrich the trooper, the father of that graceless varlet who lives with his lordship of Schloss Johannisberger, whom never shall I see again. What would I now give for one glimpse at his nose! There is blindness in our family!" continued Master Rodolph, weeping very bitterly; "blindness in our family! Black Hunsdrich the trooper, the father of that graceless varlet, my good uncle Black Hunsdrich, what would he now say to see his dearly beloved nephew, the offspring of his excellent sister, my good mother, to whom he was much affected,—what would he say now, were he to see his dearly beloved nephew in this sad and pitiable condition? Weep for me, my friends!—weep and grieve! How often has my dear uncle Hunsdrich the trooper, how often has he dandled me on his knee! There is blindness in our family," continued the poor intendant. "Black Hunsdrich the trooper, my uncle, my dearly beloved uncle, kind Hunsdrich, who was much affected to me. How much I repent at this sad hour, the many wicked tricks I have played unto my dear uncle! Take example by me, dear friends! I would give my place's worth that I had not set fire to my dear uncle's pig-tail; and it sits heavy on my heart at this dark moment, the thought that in privacy and behind his back, I was wickedly accustomed to call him *Shag-face*. A kind man was Black Hunsdrich the trooper! His eyes were put out by a pike, fighting against his own party by mistake in the dark—there was always blindness in our family!"

Here Master Rodolph was so overcome by his misfortune, that he ceased to speak, and began to moan very piteously; Essper George was not less affected, and sobbed bitterly; Mr. Speigelburg

groaned; Little Lintz whimpered. Essper at length broke silence.

"I have been many trades, and learned many things in my life," said he, with a very subdued voice; "and I am not altogether ignorant of the economy of our visual nerves. I will essay, good Master Rodolph, my dear friend, my much-beloved friend. I will essay and examine, whether some remnants of a skill once not altogether inglorious, may not produce benefit unto thy good person. Dry thine eyes, my dear Mr. Spiegelburg; and thou, little Mr. Lintz, compose thyself. We cannot control fate; we are not the masters of our destiny. Terrible is this visitation; but it becomes us to conduct ourselves like men; to struggle against misfortune; and verily to do our best to counteract evil. Good Mr. Spiegelburg, do thou hold up and support the head of our much-valued friend; and thou kind and little Mr. Lintz, arrange the light, so that it fall full upon his face. (Here Essper, overpowered by grief, paused for a moment.) Well placed, Mr. Lintz! exceedingly well placed! and yet a little more to the right. Now I will examine these dear eyes. So saying, Essper, groping his way round Mr. Spiegelburg's chair, reached Master Rodolph. "There is hope," continued he, after a pause of a few minutes: "hope for our much-beloved friend. It is not a cataract, and methinks that the sight is not lost. The attack," continued Essper, in a tone of confident pomposity, "the attack is either bilious or nervous. From the colour of our friend's eyes, I at first imagined that it was a sudden rush of bile; but on examining them more minutely, I am inclined to think otherwise. Give me thy pulse, Master Rodolph! Hum! nervous, I think. Show me thy tongue, good Master Rodolph.—Hum! very nervous! Does that affect your breath?" asked Essper, as he gave the little lusty intendant a stout thrust in the paunch. "Does that affect thy breath, beloved friend?"

"In truth," answered Master Rodolph, but with great difficulty, for he gasped for breath from the effects of the punch; "in truth it very much affects me."

"Hum! decidedly nervous!" said Essper George; "and a little on the lungs—the nerves of the lungs slightly touched: indeed your whole nervous system is disarranged. Fear not, my good friend, I perfectly understand your case. We will soon cure you. The first thing to be done, is to apply a lotion of a simple, but very peculiar nature,—the secret was taught me by a Portuguese—and then I must bind your eyes up."

Essper now dipped his handkerchief in water, and then bandaged Master Rodolph's eyes with it very tightly. When he had decidedly ascertained that the intendant's sight was completely suppressed, he sought his way to the door with becoming caution, and soon re-entered the room with a lamp. The extinguished candles were immediately re-lit. Master Rodolph continued the whole time moaning without ceasing. "Alack-a-day—and alack, that it should come to this! O! Burgundy is a vile wine! Often have I said to myself that I would never dry another bottle of Burgundy. Why have I deserted, like an ungrateful traitor, my own country liquors! Alack-a-day, and alack! the whole house will now go to ruin! Tall Halbert will always be back in his accounts; and as for that rascally Vienna bottle-merchant, he will ever be cheating me in the exchanges. Much faith have I

in thee, good Essper—truly much faith. Thy skill is great, and also thy kindness, good Mr. Spiegelburg;—and thou too, my little friend; never more shall I see thy pleasing views of this fair town!"

"Now, Mr. Spiegelburg," said Essper, "and thou also, kind Mr. Lintz, assist me in moving away the table, and in placing our dearly beloved and much-afflicted friend in the centre of the room; so that we may all of us have a fair opportunity of witnessing the progress or alteration of his disorder, the shifting of the symptoms, and indeed the general appearance of the case."

They accordingly placed Master Rodolph, who was seated in his large easy chair, in the very centre of the room.

"How feel you now, dear friend?" asked Essper George.

"In truth, very low in spirits, but confiding much in thy skill, good Essper. Hast thou hope, I pray thee, tell me, or recommendest thou that I should send for some learned professor of this city? Methinks in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom!"

"Yes! and in the multitude of fees there is ruin. I tell thee, much-loved Master Rodolph, that I undertake thy cure—fear not—and thy purse shall suffer as little as thy body. But I must find in thee a ready, satisfied, tractable, and confiding patient. The propriety of my directions must not be questioned, and my instructions must be strictly obeyed."

"In truth, thou hast only to command, good Essper, but might I not part with this bandage? Methinks thy lotion, simple as thou dost profess it to be, has already produced very marvellous effects; and I already feel my sight, as it were, struggling through the folds of this linen cincture."

"Take off that bandage," said Essper, "and you are stone blind for life!"

"Alack-a-day!" exclaimed Master Rodolph; "how awful! In truth, there is blindness in our family. Black Hunsdrich, the trooper—"

"Silence!" said the physician; "I must seal your mouth for the present."

"Alack-a-day!" said Master Rodolph; "in truth, without conversation, life appears to me like a prince without a steward!"

"Hush! hush!" again exclaimed Essper; "your attack, good Rodolph, is decidedly nervous, and your cure must be effected by causing an instantaneous reaction of your whole system." Here Essper whispered to Mr. Spiegelburg, who immediately quitted the room. "You are perhaps not aware," continued Essper, "of the intimate connexion which exists in the human frame, between the pupils of the eyes and the calves of the legs?"

"Alack-a-day!" exclaimed the simple intendant.

"Silence! silence! you must listen, not answer: now," continued he, "the attack in your eyes, good Rodolph, has been occasioned by a sort of cramp in your legs; and, before any of my remedies can produce an effect upon you, a prior effect must be produced by yourself upon the dormant nerves of the calves of your legs. This must be produced also by manual friction before a large fire." This fire was now being lighted by Mr. Lintz, under Essper's directions.

"Alack-a-day!" again burst forth Master Rodolph.

"Silence! silence!"

"I tell you, good Essper, I cannot be silent; I must speak, if I be blind for it my whole life. I rub the calves of my legs! I tell you it would be an easier task for me to rub the grand-duke's or Madame Carolina's. I rub the calves of my legs! Why, my dear Essper, I cannot even reach them. It was only last Wednesday, that walking through the Great Square, I saw his excellency approaching me, when my shoe-string was most unluckily untied. There was no idle boy near to help me, and from the greatness of the exertion, I sank down upon a step. Much fear I that my good prince credited that I had smelt the wine cup before dinner. In truth, I think I must again betake myself to buckles. I rub my calves, indeed! Impossible, my dear Essper!"

"Choose, then, between a little temporary inconvenience and eternal blindness. I pledge myself to cure you, but it must be by my own remedies. Implicit obedience on your part is the condition of your cure: decide at once!"

"If then it must be so," said Master Rodolph, in a very doleful voice; "if then it must be so, I must even obey thee. Pray for me, my good friends, I am much afflicted. Awful is this visitation—and great this fatigue!"

In truth the fatigue was great. Imagine an unwieldy being like Master Rodolph, stooping down before a blazing fire, and rubbing his calves with unceasing rapidity; Essper George standing over him, and preventing him, by constant threats and ever ready admonitions, from flagging in the slightest degree from his indispensable exertions. Poor Master Rodolph! how he puffed, and panted, sighed, and sobbed, and groaned! what rivers of perspiration, coursed down his ample countenance! But in the midst of his agony, this faithful steward, never, for one moment, ceased deploring the anticipated peculations of tall Halbert, and the certain cheater of the Vienna merchant.

While he was in this condition, and thus active, Mr. Speigelburg returned; and it was with difficulty that the little man could suppress his laughter, when he witnessed his simple host performing this singular ceremony, and making these unusual and almost impossible exertions. Nor was he assisted in his painful struggle to stifle his indecent mirth, by his eyes lighting on Little Lintz, who was blowing the fire with unparalled vigour, and raising his eyes to heaven with increasing wonder at Essper George, who stood opposite Master Rodolph, lolling out his great red tongue at him, winking his eyes, twisting his nose, and distorting his countenance into the most original grimaces. Mr. Speigelburg brought some cigars, and a large jar of hot water. The cigars were immediately lighted, and one placed in each side of Master Rodolph's mouth; tobacco, according to Essper, being a fine stimulant. Little Lintz was set to trim them, and every five minutes he shook off the gray ashes. Master Rodolph was never allowed for a moment to cease exciting the dormant nerves of the calves of his legs. The clock struck eleven.

"All the symptoms, I am happy to say," observed Essper, "are good. I have no hesitation in declaring that it is my firm conviction, that our much-valued friend will be reinstated in the possession of one of the greatest blessings of life. Before midnight, I calculate, if he be wise enough to obey all my directions, that he will find his sight restored."

"I shall die first," said Master Rodolph, in a very faint voice; "I feel sinking every moment; adieu, my dear friends! Little did I think this jovial afternoon, that it would end in this. Adieu!"

"We cannot think of quitting you, dearest Master Rodolph!" said Essper. "Do not despair; exert yourself, I beseech you; and never cease from exciting the dormant nerves of your calves, until it strike twelve o'clock. The reaction will then have taken place; but mind you rub low good Rodolph: reach well down; you cannot rub too low. I stake my reputation upon your cure. Think of this, and do not despair. Shave that cigar, and mend the fire, Little Lintz; and now good Mr. Speigelburg, it is time for the last remedy, and then, my good friends, the most profound silence. Not a word from either of you; you must not even answer a single question."

Mr. Speigelburg wanted no fresh instructions, and a stream of warm water was poured down the nape of poor Master Rodolph's neck, with the continuity of a cataract, so that the good steward at last fairly thought that he was born to be drowned. When the great jar was emptied, the confederates sat down to boston; the patient, the whole time, continuing his exertions, though almost exhausted, and having no idea that he was not unceasingly watched by his gifted physician and faithful nurses.

At length Essper rose, and again felt Master Rodolph's pulse. "The important moment is at hand, my dear friend," said he; "and I rejoice to say that the symptoms could not be better. Your pulse has recovered, your nerves are rebraced. There!" he cried, jerking off the bandage.

Master Rodolph gave a loud shout, and in spite of his previous exertions, and without speaking a syllable, jumped upon his legs, and began dancing and hallooing with the most ungoverned enthusiasm. He would have stood upon his head, had not Essper George prevented him: but the interference of his physician called him a little to himself, and he embraced his preserver without mercy. Truly that affectionate hug of Master Rodolph, revenged all his previous suffering! The good intendant was fairly beside himself. He gave Mr. Speigelburg such a joyous slap on his back, that the court suit suffered more in that one moment, than it had for years; and as for Little Lintz, he insisted upon putting him in the empty jar. The dwarf ran round the room for his life; and would decidedly have been potted, had it not been for the stout interference of Mr. Speigelburg. The little man ended by dancing in a circle, hand-in-hand: no one kicked his heels about with greater spirit than Master Rodolph, and supper was immediately ordered to celebrate his miraculous recovery.

CHAPTER VIII.

VIVIAN quitted the Von Spittergens with regret, and with the promise of a speedy return. He would gladly indeed have lengthened his stay at the present moment, but a fête which was to be given this evening by his excellency the grand-marshal, rendered his return necessary.

After dining with the doctor and his interesting daughter, Vivian mounted Max, and took care not

to return to the city by a cross-road. He met Emilius von Aslingen in his ride through the gardens. As that distinguished personage at present patronised the English nation, and astounded the Reisenberg natives by driving an English mail, riding English horses, and ruling English grooms, he condescended to be exceedingly polite to our hero, whom he had publicly declared at the soirée of the preceding night, to be "a very bearable being." Such a character from such a man, raised Vivian even more in the estimation of the Reisenberg world, than his flattering reception by the grand-duke, and his cordial greeting by Madame Carolina.

"Shall you be at his excellency the grand-marshal's to-night?" asked Vivian.

"Who is he?" inquired Mr. Emilius von Aslingen; "ah! that is the new man—the man who was mediatised, is not it?"

"The Prince of Little Lilliput, I mean."

"Yes!" drawled out Mr. von Aslingen; "a barbarian who lived in a castle in a wood. I shall go if I have courage enough; but they say his servants wear skins, and he has got a tail. Good morning to you! I believe he is your friend."

The ball-room was splendidly illuminated. Vivian never recollected witnessing a more brilliant scene. The whole of the royal family was present, and did honour to their new officer of state. His royal highness was all smiles, and his consort all diamonds. Stars and uniforms, ribands and orders abounded. All the diplomatic characters wore the different state dresses of their respective courts. Emilius von Aslingen having given out in the morning, that he should appear as a captain in the Royal Guards, all the young lords and fops of fashion were consequently ultra militaires. They were not a little annoyed when, late in the evening, their model lounged in, wearing a rich scarlet uniform of a knight of Malta; of which newly-revived order, Von Aslingen, who had served half a campaign against the Turks, was a member.

The royal family had arrived only a few minutes: dancing had not yet commenced. Vivian was at the top of the room, honoured by the notice of Madame Carolina, who complained of his yesterday's absence from the palace. Suddenly the universal hum and buzz, which are always sounding in a crowded room, were stilled; and all present, arrested in their conversation and pursuits, stood with their heads turned towards the great door. Thither also Vivian looked, and wonder-struck, beheld—Mr. Beckendorff. His singular appearance, for, with the exception of his cavalry boots, he presented the same figure as when he first came forward to receive the Prince of Little Lilliput and Vivian on the lawn, immediately attracted universal attention: but in this crowded room, there were a few who, either from actual experience, or accurate information, were not ignorant that this personage was the prime minister. The report spread like wildfire. Even the etiquette of a German ball-room, honoured as it was by the presence of the court, was no restraint to the curiosity and wonder of all present. Yes! even Emilius von Aslingen raised his glass to his eye, and then,—shrugging his shoulders,—his eyes to heaven! But great as was Vivian's astonishment, it was not only occasioned by this unexpected appearance of his former host. Mr. Beckendorff was not alone: a female was leaning on

his left arm. A quick glance in a moment convinced Vivian, that she was not the original of the mysterious picture. The companion of Beckendorff was very young. Her full voluptuous growth gave you, for a moment, the impression that she was somewhat low in stature; but it was only for a moment, for the lady was by no means short. Her beauty it is impossible to describe. It was of a kind that baffles all phrases, nor have I a single simile at command, to make it more clear, or more confused. Her luxurious form, her blonde complexion, her silken hair, would have all become the languishing sultana; but then her eyes,—they banished all idea of the seraglio, and were the most decidedly European, though the most brilliant, that ever glanced: eagles might have proved their young at them. To a countenance which otherwise would have been calm, and perhaps pensive, they gave an expression of extreme vivacity and unusual animation, and perhaps of restlessness and arrogance—it might have been courage. The lady was dressed in the costume of a chanoinesse of a *convent des dames nobles*; an institution to which Protestant and Catholic ladies are alike admitted. The orange-coloured cordon of her canonry, was slung gracefully over her plain black silk dress, and a diamond cross hung below her waist.

Mr. Beckendorff and his fair companion were instantly welcomed by the grand-marshal; and Arnelm, and half a dozen chamberlains, all in new uniforms and extremely agitated, did their utmost, by their exertions, in clearing the way, to prevent the prime minister of Reisenberg from paying his respects to his sovereign. At length, however, Mr. Beckendorff reached the top of the room, and presented the young lady to his royal highness, and also to Madame Carolina. Vivian had retired on their approach, and now found himself among a set of young officers—idolaters of Von Aslingen, and of white hats lined with crimson. "Who can she be?" was the universal question. Though all by the query acknowledged their ignorance, yet it is singular that, at the same time, every one was prepared with a response to it. Such are the sources of accurate information!

"And that is Beckendorff, is it?" exclaimed the young Count of Eberstein: "and his daughter of course! Well! there is nothing like being a plebeian and a prime minister! I suppose Beckendorff will bring an anonymous friend to court next."

"She cannot be his daughter," said Bernstorff. "To be a chanoinesse of that order, remember she must be noble."

"Then she must be his niece," answered the young Count of Eberstein. "I think I do remember some confused story about a sister of Beckendorff, who ran away with some Wirtemberg baron. What was that story, Gernsbach?"

"No, it was not his sister," said the Baron of Gernsbach; "it was his aunt, I think."

"Beckendorff's aunt, what an idea! as if he ever had an aunt! Men of his calibre make themselves out of mud. They have no relations. Well, never mind: there was some story, I am sure, about some woman or other. Depend upon it, that this girl is the child of that woman; whether she be aunt, niece, or daughter. I shall go and tell every one that I know the whole business; this girl is the daughter of some woman or other. —So

saying, away walked the young Count of Eberstein, to disseminate in all directions the important conclusion to which his logical head had allowed him to arrive.

"Von Weinbren," said the Baron of Gernsbach, "how can you account for this mysterious appearance of the premier?"

"O! when men are on the decline, they do desperate things. I suppose it is to please the renegade."

"Hush! there's the Englishman behind you."

"On dit, another child of Beckendorff."

"O no!—secret mission."

"Ah! indeed."

"Here comes Von Aslingen! Well, great Emilus! how solve you this mystery?"

"What mystery! Is there one?"

"I allude to this wonderful appearance of Beckendorff."

"Beckendorff! what a name! who is he?"

"Nonsense! the premier."

"Well!"

"You have seen him of course; he is here. Have you just come in?"

"Beckendorff here!" said Von Aslingen, in a tone of affected horror; "I did not know that the fellow was to be visited. It is all over with Reisenberg. I shall go to Vienna to-morrow."

But hark! the sprightly music calls to the dance: and first the stately Polonaise, an easy gradation between walking and dancing. To the surprise of the whole room, and the indignation of many of the high nobles, the Crown-prince of Reisenberg led off the Polonaise with the unknown fair one. Such an attention to Beckendorff was a distressing proof of present power and favour. The Polonaise is a dignified promenade, with which German balls invariably commence. The cavaliers, with an air of studied grace, offer their right hands to their fair partners; and the whole party, in a long file, accurately follow the leading couple through all their scientific evolutions, as they wind through every part of the room. Waltzes in sets speedily followed the Polonaise; and the unknown, who was now an object of universal attention, danced with Count von Sohnspeer—another of Beckendorff's numerous progeny, if the reader remember. How scurvily are poor single gentlemen, who live alone, treated by the candid tongues of their fellow-creatures! The commander-in-chief of the Reisenberg troops was certainly a partner of a very different complexion to the young lady's previous one. The crown-prince had undertaken his duty with reluctance, and had performed it without grace: not a single word had he exchanged with his partner during the promenade; and his genuine listlessness was even more offensive than affected apathy. Von Sohnspeer, on the contrary, danced in the true Vienna style, and whirled like a dervish. All our good English prejudices against the soft, the swimming, the sentimental, melting, undulating, dangerous waltz, would quickly disappear, if we only executed the dreaded manœuvres in the true Austrian style. As for myself, far from trembling for any of my daughters, although I particularly pride myself upon my character as a father, far from trembling for any of my daughters while joining in the whirling waltz, I should as soon expect them to get sentimental in a swing.

Vivian did not choose to presume upon his late acquaintance with Mr. Beckendorff, as it had not

been sought by that gentleman, and he consequently did not pay his respects to the minister. Mr. Beckendorff continued at the top of the room, standing between the state chairs of his royal highness and Madame Carolina, and occasionally addressing an observation to his sovereign and answering one of the lady's. Had Mr. Beckendorff been in the habit of attending balls nightly, he could not have exhibited more perfect nonchalance. There he stood, with his arms crossed behind him, his chin resting on his breast, and his raised eyes glancing!

"My dear prince," said Vivian to the grand-marshal, "you are just the person I wanted to speak to. How came you to invite Beckendorff—and how came he to accept the invitation?"

"My dear friend," said his highness, shrugging his shoulders, "wonders will never cease. I never invited him; I should just as soon have thought of inviting old Schoss Johannisberger."

"Were not you aware, then, of his intention?"

"Not the least! you should rather say *attention*; for I assure you, I consider it a most particular one. It is quite astonishing, my dear friend, how I mistook that man's character. He really is one of the most gentlemanly, polite, and excellent persons I know: no more mad than you are! And as for his power being on the decline, we know the non-sense of that!"

"Better than most persons, I suspect. Sievers, of course is not here?"

"No! you have heard about him, I suppose."

"Heard!—heard what?"

"Not heard! well—he told me yesterday, and said he was going to call upon you directly, to let you know."

"Know what?"

"He is a very sensible man, Sievers; and I am very glad at last that he is likely to succeed in the world. All men have their little imprudences, and he was a little too hot once. What of that?—He has come to his senses—so have I; and I hope you will never lose yours."

"But pray, my dear prince, tell me what has happened to Sievers."

"He is going to Vienna immediately, and will be very useful there, I have no doubt. He has got a very good place, and I am sure he will do his duty. They cannot have an abler man."

"Vienna! well—that is the last city in the world in which I should expect to find Mr. Sievers. What place can he have?—and what services can he perform there?"

"Many! he is to be the editor of the Austrian Observer, and censor of the Austrian press. I thought he would do well at last. All men have their imprudent day. I had. I cannot stop now—I must go and speak to the Countess von S—."

As Vivian was doubting whether he should mourn or laugh, at this singular termination of Mr. Sievers' career, his arm was suddenly seized, and on turning round, he found it was by Mr. Beckendorff.

"There is another very strong argument, sir," said the minister, without any of the usual phrases of recognition; "there is another very strong argument against your doctrine of destiny." And then Mr. Beckendorff, taking Vivian by the arm, began walking up and down part of the saloon with him; and, in a few minutes, quite forgetting

the scene of the discussion, he was involved in the deepest metaphysics. This incident created another great sensation, and whispers of "secret mission—secretary of state—decidedly a son," &c. &c. were in an instant afloat in all parts of the room.

The approach of his royal highness extricated Vivian from an argument, which was as profound as it was interminable; and as Mr. Beckendorff retired with the grand-duke into a recess in the ball-room, Vivian was requested by Van Neuwied to attend his excellency the grand-marshal.

"My dear friend," said the prince, "I saw you talking with a certain person; now, is he not what you call a proper man,—gentlemanly, polite, and exceedingly attentive? I did not say any thing to you when I passed you before; but to tell you the truth now, I was a little annoyed that he had not spoken to you. I knew you were as proud as Lucifer, and would not salute him yourself; and between ourselves, I had no great wish you should; for, not to conceal it, he did not even mention your name. But the reason of this, is now quite evident, and you must confess he is remarkably attentive. You know, if you remember, we thought that incognito was a little affected—rather annoying, if you recollect. I remember in the green lane, you gave him a gentle cut about it: you have not forgot you told me, perhaps! It was very kind of you, very spirited, and I dare say, did good. Well!—what I was going to say about that, is this,—I dare say now, after all," continued his excellency, with a very knowing look, "a certain person had very good reasons for that: not that he ever told them to me, nor that I have the slightest idea of them; but when a person is really so exceedingly polite and attentive, I always think he would never do any thing disagreeable without a cause,—and it was exceedingly disagreeable, if you remember, my dear friend. I never knew to whom he was speaking. Von Philipson indeed! hah! hah! hah! when one does remember certain things in one's life—hah! hah! hah! eh, Grey?—you remember that cucumber? and Owlface, eh! hah! hah! hah! and Madame Clara, eh! Well! we did not think, the day we were floundering down that turf road, that it would end in this. Grand-marshal! rather a more brilliant scene than the Giants' Hall at Turripurva, I think, eh?—hah! hah! hah! But all men have their imprudent days; the best way is to forget them. There was poor Sievers; who ever did more imprudent things than he? and now it is very likely he will do very well in the world, eh! Well! there is no end to talking so. What I want of you, my dear fellow, is this. There is that girl who came with Beckendorff: who the deuce she is, I don't know:—let us hope the best! We must pay her every attention. I dare say she is his daughter. You have not forgotten the portrait, I dare say. Well! we all were gay once, you know, Grey. All men have their imprudent day;—why should not Beckendorff!—speaks rather in his favour, I think. Well, this girl, you know;—his royal highness very kindly made the crown-prince walk the Polonaise with her—very kind of him, and very proper. What attention can be too great for the daughter or friend of such a man!—a man who, in two words, may be said to have made Reisenberg. For what was Reisenberg before Beckendorff? Ah! what! Perhaps we were happier then, after all:

and then there was no royal highness to bow to; no person to be condescending, except ourselves. But never mind! we'll forget. After all, this lite has its charms. What a brilliant scene! but I ramble so—this girl—every attention should be paid her, of course. The crown-prince was so kind as to walk the Polonaise with her;—and Von Sohnspeer—he is a brute, to be sure; but then he is a field-marshal. I did not know, till to-day, that in public processions the grand-marshal takes precedence of the field-marshal! That is, I walk before Von Sohnspeer: and what is more just?—precisely as it should be. Ah! I never shall come to the point—this girl—every attention should be paid her; and I think, considering what has taken place between Beckendorff and yourself, and the very polite, and marked, and flattering, and particularly attentive manner in which he recognised you,—I think, that after all this, and considering every thing, the etiquette is for you, my dear Grey, particularly as you are a foreigner, and my personal friend—indeed my most particular friend, for in fact I owe every thing to you—my life, and more than my life.—I think, I repeat, considering all this, that the least you can do, is to ask her to dance with you; and I, as the host, will introduce you. I am sorry, my dear friend," continued his excellency, with a look of great regret, "to introduce you to —; but we will not speak about it. We have no right to complain of Mr. Beckendorff. No person could possibly behave to us in a manner more polite, and gentlemanly, and attentive."

After an introductory speech, in his excellency's happiest manner, and in which a eulogium of Vivian, and a compliment to the fair unknown, got almost as completely entangled as the origin of slavery and the history of the feudal system, in his more celebrated harangue, Vivian found himself waltzing with the anonymous beauty. The grand-marshal, during the process of introduction, had given the young lady every opportunity of declaring her name; but every opportunity was thrown away. "She must be incog.," whispered his excellency: "*Miss von Philipson*, I suppose!"

Vivian was extremely desirous of discovering the nature of the relationship or connection between Beckendorff and his partner. The rapid waltz allowed no pause for conversation; but, after the dance, Vivian seated himself at her side, with the determination of not very quickly deserting it. The lady did not even allow him the satisfaction of commencing the conversation; for no sooner was she seated, than she begged to know who the person was with whom she had previously waltzed. The history of Count von Sohnspeer exceedingly amused her; and no sooner had Vivian finished his anecdote, than the lady said, "Ah! I see you are an amusing person. Now tell me the history of everybody in the room."

"Really," said Vivian, "I fear I shall forfeit my reputation of being amusing very speedily; for I am almost as great a stranger at this court as you appear to be yourself! Count von Sohnspeer is too celebrated a personage at Reisenberg, to have allowed even me to be long ignorant of his history and, as for the rest, as far as I can judge, they are most of them as obscure as myself, and not nearly as interesting as you are!"

"Are you an Englishman?" asked the lady
"I am."

"I supposed so, both from your travelling and your appearance: I think the English countenance is very peculiar."

"Indeed! we do not flatter ourselves so at home."

"Yes! it is peculiar," said the lady, in a tone which seemed to imply that contradiction was unusual; "and I think that you are all handsome! I admire the English, which in this part of the world is singular; in the south, you know, we are generally *françaisé*."

"I am well aware of that," said Vivian. "There, for instance," pointing to a very pompous-looking personage, who at that moment strutted by; "there, for instance, is the most *françaisé* person in all Reisenberg! that is our grand-chamberlain. He considers himself a most felicitous copy of Louis the Fourteenth! He allows nothing in his opinions and phrases but what is orthodox. As it generally happens in such cases, his orthodoxy is rather obsolete!"

"Who is that Knight of Malta?" asked the lady.

"The most powerful individual in the room," answered Vivian.

"Who can he be?" asked the lady with eagerness.

"Behold him, and tremble!" rejoined Vivian: "for with him it rests to decide, whether you are civilized or a savage; whether you are to be abhorred or admired; idolized or despised. Nay, do not be alarmed! there are a few heretics even in Reisenberg, who, like myself, value from conviction, and not from fashion; and who will be ever ready, in case of a Von Aslingen anathema, to evince our admiration where it is due."

The lady pleaded fatigue, as an excuse for not again dancing; and Vivian, of course, did not quit her side. Her lively remarks, piquant observations, and very singular questions, highly amused him; and he was equally flattered by the evident gratification which his conversation afforded her. It was chiefly of the principal members of the court that she spoke: she was delighted with Vivian's glowing character of Madame Carolina, whom she had this evening seen for the first time. Who this unknown could be, was a question which often occurred to him; and the singularity of a man like Beckerdorff, suddenly breaking through his habits, and outraging the whole system of his existence, to please a daughter, or niece, or female cousin, did not fail to strike him.

"I have the honour of being acquainted with Mr. Beckerdorff," said Vivian. This was the first time that the minister's name had been mentioned.

"I perceived you talking with him," was the answer.

"You are staying, I suppose, at Mr. Beckerdorff's?"

"Not at present."

"You have, of course, been at his retreat—delightful place!"

"Very elegant!"

"Are you an ornithologist?" asked Vivian, smiling.

"Not at all scientific; but I, of course, can now tell a lory from a Java sparrow—and a bulfinch from a canary. The first day I was there, I never shall forget the surprise I experienced, when, after the noon meal being finished, the aviary door was opened. After that I always let the creatures out

myself; and one day I opened all the cages at once. If you could but have witnessed the scene! I am sure *you* would have been quite delighted with it. As for poor Mr. Beckerdorff, I thought even he would have gone out of his mind; and when I brought in the white peacock, he actually left the room in despair. Pray how do you like Madame Clara, and Owlface, too? Which do you think the most beautiful? I am no great favourite with the old lady. Indeed, it was very kind of Mr. Beckerdorff to bear with every thing as he did: I am sure he is not much used to lady visitors."

"I trust that your visit to him will not be very short!"

"My stay at Reisenberg will not be very long," said the young lady, with rather a grave countenance. "Have you been here any time?"

"About a fortnight: it was a mere chance my coming at all. I was going on straight to Vienna."

"To Vienna! indeed! Well, I am glad you did not miss Reisenberg: you must not quit it now. You know that this is not the Vienna season?"

"I am aware of it; but I am such a restless person, that I never regulate my movements by those of other people."

"But surely you find Reisenberg very agreeable?"

"Very much so; but I am a confirmed wanderer."

"Why are you?" asked the lady, with great naïveté.

Vivian looked grave; and the lady, as if she were sensible of having unintentionally occasioned him a painful recollection, again expressed a wish that he should not immediately quit the court, and trusted that circumstances would not prevent him acceding to her desire.

"It does not even depend upon circumstances," said Vivian; "the whim of the moment is my only principle of action, and therefore I may be off to-night, or be here a month hence."

"O! pray stay then," said his companion eagerly; "I expect you to stay now. If you could only have an idea what a relief conversing with you is, after having been dragged by the crown-prince, and whirled by that Von Sohnpeer! Heigho! I could almost sigh at the very remembrance of that doleful Polonaise."

The lady ended with a faint laugh, a sentence which apparently had been commenced in no light vein. She did not cease speaking, but continued to request Vivian to remain at Reisenberg at least as long as herself. Her frequent requests were perfectly unnecessary, for the promise had been pledged at the first hint of her wish; but this was not the only time during the evening, that Vivian had remarked, that his interesting companion occasionally talked without apparently being sensible that she was conversing.

The young Count of Eberstein, who, to use his own phrase, was "sadly involved," and consequently very desirous of being appointed a forest councillor, thought that he should secure his appointment by condescending to notice the person whom he delicately styled, "the minister's female relative." To his great mortification and surprise, the honour was declined; and "the female relative," being unwilling to dance again, but perhaps feeling it necessary to break off her conversation

with her late partner, it having already lasted a most unusual time, highly gratified his excellency the grand-marshal by declaring that she would dance with Prince Maximilian. "This, to say the least, was very attentive of Miss von Philipson."

Little Max, who had just tact enough to discover, that to be the partner of the fair incognita was the place of honour of the evening, now considered himself by much the most important personage in the room. In fact, he was only second to Emilius von Aslingen. The evident contest which was ever taking place between his natural feelings as a boy, and his acquired habits as a courtier, made him a very amusing companion. He talked of the gardens and the opera, in a style not unworthy of the young Count of Eberstein. He thought that Madame Carolina was as charming as usual to-night; but, on the contrary, that the Countess von S—— was looking rather ill—and this put him in mind of her ladyship's new equipage; and then, à propos equipages, to what did his companion think of the new fashion of the Hungarian harness? His lively and kind companion encouraged the boy's tattle; and emboldened by her good-nature, he soon forgot his artificial speeches, and was quickly rattling on about Turriparva, and his horses, and his dogs, and his park, and his guns, and his grooms. Soon after the waltz, the lady, taking the arm of the young prince, walked up to Mr. Beckendorff. He received her with very great attention, and led her to Madame Carolina, who rose, seated Mr. Beckendorff's "female relative" by her side, and evidently said something extremely agreeable.

Mr. Beckendorff had been speaking to Von Sohnspeer, who was now again dancing; and the minister was standing by himself, in his usual attitude, and quite abstracted. Young Maximilian, who seemed to be very much struck by the minister's appearance, continued, after losing his partner, to eye Mr. Beckendorff with a very scrutinizing glance. By degrees he drew nearer and nearer to the object of his examination, sometimes staring at him with intensesness, and occasionally casting his eyes to the ground as if he thought he was observed. At length he had come up quite close to the premier, and waiting for an instant until he had caught his eye, he made a most courteous bow, and said in a very agitated voice, as if he already repented his rash venture, "I think, sir, that you have dropped the pin out of this part of your dress."

Here the young prince pointed with a shaking finger to the part of the breast in Mr. Beckendorff's costume where the small piece of flannel waistcoat invariably made its appearance.

"You think so, sir, do you?" said the Prime Minister of Reisenberg. "Pray, at what o'clock do you go to bed?"

If you have ever seen a barking dog, reached by the dexterous lash of some worried equestrian, suddenly slink away; his annoying yell instantaneously silenced, and his complacent grin of ludicrous importance changed into a doleful look of unexpected discomfiture, you may form some idea of the shuffling rapidity with which the young Prince Maximilian disappeared from the presence of Mr. Beckendorff; and the countenance of actual alarm with which he soon sought refuge in another part of the room. In the fright of the moment, the natural feelings of the child all returned; and like all frightened children, he sought a friend—he ran to Vivian.

"I know something!" said the boy

"What?"

"I'll tell you a secret: you must not say a word though—upon your honour?"

"O, certainly!"

"Put your ear down lower: anybody looking?"

"No, no!"

"Sure nobody can hear?"

"Certainly not!"

"Then I'll tell you what: lean down a little lower—sure nobody is listening?—I—I—I don't like that Mr. Beckendorff!"

CHAPTER IX.

VIVIAN had promised Madame Carolina a second English lesson on the day after the grand-marshal's fête. The great progress which the lady had made, and the great talent which the gentleman had evinced during the first, had rendered madame the most enthusiastic of pupils, and Vivian, in her estimation, the ablest of instructors. Madame Carolina's passion was patronage. To discover concealed merit, to encourage neglected genius, to reveal the mysteries of the world to a novice in mankind; or in short, to make herself very agreeable to any one whom she fancied to be very interesting; was the great business, and the great delight of her existence. No sooner had her eyes lighted on Vivian Grey, than she determined to patronise. His country, his appearance, the romantic manner in which he had become connected with the court, all pleased her lively imagination. She was intuitively acquainted with his whole history, and in an instant he was the hero of a romance, of which the presence of the principal character compensated, we may suppose, for the somewhat indefinite details. His taste, and literary acquirements, completed the spell by which Madame Carolina was willingly enchanted. A low Dutch professor, whose luminous genius rendered unnecessary the ceremony of shaving; and a dumb dwarf, in whose interesting appearance was forgotten its perfect idiotism; a prosy improvisatore, and a South American savage were all superseded on the appearance of Vivian Grey.

As Madame Carolina was, in fact, a very delightful woman, our hero had no objection to humour her harmless foibles; and not contented with making notes in an interleaved copy of her Charlemagne, he even promised to read Haroun Al Raschid in manuscript. The consequence of his courtesy, and the reward of his taste, was unbounded favour. Apartments in the palace were offered him and declined; and when Madame Carolina had become acquainted with sufficient of his real history, to know that, on his part, neither wish nor necessity existed to return immediately to his own country, she tempted him to remain at Reisenberg by an offer of a place at court; and doubtless, had he been willing, Vivian might in time have become a lord chamberlain, or even a field-marshal.

On entering the room, the morning in question, he found Madame Carolina writing. At the end of the apartment, a lady ceased, on his appearance, humming an air to which she was dancing, and at the same time imitating castanets. Madame re-

ceived Vivian with expressions of the greatest delight, saying also, in a very peculiar and confidential manner, that she was just sealing up a package for him, the preface of Haroun: and then she introduced him to "the baroness!" Vivian turned and bowed: the lady who was lately dancing came forward. It was his unknown partner of the preceding night. "The baroness" extended her hand to Vivian, and unaffectedly expressed her great pleasure at seeing him again. Vivian trusted that she was not fatigued by the fête, and asked after Mr. Beckendorff. Madame Carolina was busily engaged at the moment in duly securing the precious preface. The baroness said that Mr. Beckendorff had returned home, but that Madame Carolina had kindly insisted upon her staying at the palace. She was not the least wearied. Last night had been one of the most agreeable she had ever spent, at least she supposed she ought to say so: for if she had experienced a tedious or a mournful feeling for a moment, it was hardly for what was then passing, so much for—

"Pray, Mr. Grey," said Madame Carolina, interrupting them, "have you heard about our new ballet?"

"No."

"I do not think you have ever been to our opera. To-morrow is opera night, and you must not be again away. We pride ourselves here very much upon our opera."

"We estimate it even in England," said Vivian, "as possessing perhaps the most perfect orchestra now organized."

"The orchestra is very perfect. His royal highness is such an excellent musician, and he has spared no trouble nor expense in forming it: he has always superintended it himself. But I confess, I admire our ballet department still more. I expect you to be delighted with it. You will perhaps be gratified to know, that the subject of our new splendid ballet, which is to be produced to-morrow, is from a great work of your illustrious poet—my Lord Byron."

"From which of his works?"

"The Corsair. Ah! what a sublime work!—what passion!—what energy!—what knowledge of feminine feeling!—what contrast of character!—what sentiments!—what situations!—O! I wish this was opera night—Gulnare! O! my favourite character—beautiful! beautiful! beautiful! How do you think they will dress her?"

"Are you an admirer of our Byron?" asked Vivian of the baroness.

"I think he is a very handsome man. I once saw him at the carnival at Venice."

"But his works—his grand works! ma chère petite," said Madame Carolina, in her sweetest tone; "you have read his works?"

"Not a line," answered the baroness, with great naïveté; "I never saw them."

"O! pauvre enfant!" said Madame Carolina; "I will employ you then while you are here."

"I never read," said the baroness; "I cannot bear it. I like poetry and romances, but I like somebody to read to me."

"Very just!" said Madame Carolina: "we can judge with greater accuracy of the merit of a composition, when it reaches our mind merely through the medium of the human voice. The soul is an essence,—invisible and indivisible. In this respect the voice of man resembles the principle of his ex-

istence: since few will deny, though there are some materialists who will deny every thing, that the human voice is both impalpable and audible only in one place at the same time. Hence, I ask, is it illogical to infer its indivisibility? The soul and the voice, then, are similar in two great attributes; there is a secret harmony in their spiritual construction. In the earliest ages of mankind a beautiful tradition was afloat, that the soul and the voice were one and the same. We may perhaps recognize in this fanciful belief, the effect of the fascinating and imaginative philosophy of the East; that mysterious portion of the globe," continued Madame Carolina with renewed energy, "from which we should frankly confess that we derive every thing: for the South is but the pupil of the East, through the mediation of Egypt. Of this opinion," said Madame with increased fervour, "I have no doubt: of this opinion," continued the lady with additional enthusiasm, "I have boldly avowed myself a votary in a dissertation appended to the second volume of Haroun: for this opinion I would die at the stake! O, lovely East! Why was I not oriental! Land where the voice of the nightingale is never mute! Land of the cedar and the citron, the turtle and the myrtle—of ever-blooming flowers, and ever-shining skies! Illustrious East! Cradle of philosophy! O, my dearest baroness, why do not you feel as I do! From the East we obtain every thing!"

"Indeed!" said the baroness, with great simplicity; "I thought we only got Cachemere shawls."

"This puzzling answer was only noticed by Vivian: for the truth is, Madame Carolina was one of those individuals who never attended to any person's answer. Always thinking of herself, she only asked questions that herself might supply the responses. And now having made, as she flattered herself, a very splendid display to her favourite critic, she began to consider what had given rise to her oration. Lord Byron and the ballet again occurred to her; and as the baroness, at least, was not unwilling to listen, and as she herself had no manuscript of her own which she particularly wished to be perused, she proposed that Vivian should read to them part of the Corsair, and in the original tongue. Madame Carolina opened the volume at the first prison scene between Gulnare and Conrad. It was her favourite. Vivian read with care and feeling. Madame was in raptures, and the baroness, although she did not understand a single syllable, seemed almost equally delighted. At length Vivian came to this passage—

"My love stern Seyd's! O—no—no—not my love!
Yet much this heart, that strives no more, once gave
To meet his passions—but it would not be.
I felt—I feel—love dwells with—the free—
I am a slave, a favour'd slave at best,
To share his splendour, and seem very blest!
Oh! must my soul the question undergo,
Oh—'Dost thou love?' and burn to answer 'No!'
O! hard it is that fondness to sustain,
And struggle not to feel averse in vain;
But harder still the heart's recoil to bear
And hide from one—perhaps another there;—
He takes the hand I give not nor withhold—
It's pass no check'd—nor quicken'd—calmly cold
And when resign'd, it drops a lifeless weight
From one I never loved enough to hate.
No warmth in these lips return'd by his arrest,
And child's remembrance shudders o'er the rest.
Yes—had I ever proved that passion's zeal,
The change to hatred were at least to feel:
But still—he goes unnoted—returns unthought—
And if when present—absent from my thought,
Or when reflection comes, and come it must—
I fear that henceforth 'twill but bring disgust,
I am his slave—but, in despite of pride,
'Twere worse than bondage to become his bride."

"O! how superb!" said madame, in a voice of enthusiasm; "how true! what passion! what energy! what sentiment! what knowledge of feminine feeling! Read it again, I pray; it is my favourite passage."

"What is this passage about?" asked the baroness with great anxiety; "tell me!"

"I have a French translation, *ma mignonne*," said madame; "you shall have it afterwards."

"No! I detest reading;" said the young lady, with a very imperious air; "translate it to me at once."

"You are rather a self-willed, petted, little beauty!" thought Vivian; "but your eyes are so brilliant that nothing must be refused you!" and so he did translate it.

On its conclusion, madame was again in raptures. The baroness was not less affected, but she said nothing. She appeared extremely agitated; she changed colour—raised her beautiful eyes with an expression of great sorrow—looked at Vivian very earnestly, and then walked to the other room. In a few moments she returned to her seat.

"I wish you would tell me the story," she said, with great earnestness.

"I have a French translation, *ma belle*!" said Madame Carolina; "at present I wish to trouble Mr. Grey with a few questions." Madame Carolina led Vivian into a recess.

"I am sorry we are troubled with this sweet little savage; but I think she has talent, though evidently quite uneducated. We must do what we can for her. Her total ignorance of all breeding is amusing, but then I think she has a natural elegance. We shall soon polish her. His royal highness is so anxious that every attention should be paid to her. Beckendorff, you know, is a man of the greatest genius. [Madame Carolina had lowered her tone about the minister since the Prince of Little Lilliput's apostasy.] The country is greatly indebted to him. This, between ourselves, is his daughter. At least I have no doubt of it. Beckendorff was once married—to a lady of great rank—died early—beautiful woman—very interesting! His royal highness had a great regard for her. The premier, in his bereavement, turned humorist, and has brought up this lovely girl in the oddest possible manner—nobody knows where. Now, that he finds it necessary to bring her forward, he, of course, is quite at a loss. His royal highness has applied to me. There was a little coldness before, between the minister and myself. It is now quite removed. I must do what I can for her. I think she must marry Von Sohnspeer, who is no more Beckendorff's son than you are—or young Eberstein—or young Bernstorff—or young Gernsbach. We must do something for her. I offered her last night to Emilus von Aslingen; but he said, that unfortunately he was just importing a savage or two of his own from the Brazils, and consequently was not in want or her."

A chamberlain now entered, to announce the speedy arrival of his royal highness. The baroness, without ceremony, expressed her great regret that he was coming, as now she should not hear the wished-for story. Madame Carolina reproved her, and the reproof was endured rather than submitted to.

His royal highness entered, and was accompanied by the crown prince. He greeted the young lady with great kindness; and even the crown prince,

inspired by his father's unusual warmth, made a shuffling kind of bow and a stuttering kind of speech. Vivian was about to retire on the entrance of the grand-duke; but Madame Carolina prevented him, and his royal highness turning round, very graciously seconded her desire, and added that Mr. Grey was the very gentleman with whom he was desirous of meeting.

"I am anxious," said he to Vivian, in rather a low tone, "to make Reisenberg agreeable to Mr. Beckendorff's fair friend. As you are one of the few who are honoured by his intimacy, and are familiar with some of our state secrets," added the grand-duke with a smile; "I am sure it will give you pleasure to assist me in the execution of my wishes."

His royal highness proposed that the ladies should ride; and he himself, with the crown prince and Mr. Grey, would attend them. Madame Carolina expressed her willingness: but the baroness, like all forward girls, unused to the world, suddenly grew at the same time both timid and disobliging. She looked sullen and discontented, and coolly said that she did not feel in the humour to ride for, at least, these two hours. To Vivian's surprise, even the grand-duke humoured her fancy, and declared that he should then be happy to attend them after the court-dinner. Until that time Vivian was amused by madame; and the grand-duke exclusively devoted himself to the baroness. His royal highness was in his happiest mood; and his winning manners and elegant conversation, soon chased away the cloud which for a moment had settled on the young lady's fair brow.

CHAPTER X.

THE Grand-duke of Reisenberg was an enthusiastic lover of music, and his people were consequently music mad. The whole city were fiddling day and night, or blowing trumpets, oboes, and bassoons. Sunday, however, was the most harmonious day in the week. The opera amused the court and the wealthiest bourgeoisie; and few private houses could not boast their family concert, or small party of performers. In the *guingettes*, or tea-gardens, of which there were many in the suburbs of the city, bearing the euphonious, romantic, and fashionable titles of Tivoli, Arcadia, and Vauxhall, a strong and amateur orchestra was never wanting. Strolling through the city on a Sunday afternoon many a pleasing picture of innocent domestic enjoyment might be observed.

In the arbour of a garden a very stout man, with a fair, broad, good-natured, solid German face, may be seen perspiring under the scientific exertion of the French horn; himself wisely dis-embarrassed of the needless encumbrance of his pea-green coat and showy waistcoat, which lay neatly folded by his side; while his large and sleepy blue eyes actually gleam with enthusiasm. His daughter, a soft and delicate girl, touches the light guitar; catching the notes of the music from the opened opera, which is placed before the father on a massy music stand. Her voice joins in melody with her mother; who, like all German mothers, seems only her daughter's self, subdued by an additional twenty years. The bow of one violin,

is handled with the air of a master, by an elder brother; while a younger one, a university student, grows sentimental over the flute. The same instrument is also played by a tall and tender-looking young man in black, who stands behind the parents next to the daughter, and occasionally looks off his music-book to gaze on his young mistress' eyes. He is a clerk in a public office; and on the next Michaelmas day, if he succeed, as he hopes, in gaining a small addition to his salary, he will be still more entitled to join in the Sunday family concert. Such is one of the numerous groups, the sight of which must assuredly give pleasure to every man who delights in seeing his fellow creatures refreshed after their weekly labours by such calm and rational enjoyment. I would gladly linger among such scenes, which to me have afforded, at many an hour, the most pleasing emotions; and moreover, the humours of a guinguette are not unworthy of our attention: but I must introduce the reader to a more important party, and be consoled for leaving a scene where I fain would loiter, by flattering myself that my attention is required to more interesting topics.

The court chapel and the court dinner are over. We are in the opera-house of Reisenberg; and, of course, rise as the royal party enters. The house, which is of a moderate size—perhaps of the same dimensions as our small theatres—was fitted up with great splendour; I hardly know whether I should say, with great taste; for, although not merely the scenery, but indeed every part of the house, was painted by eminent artists, the style of the ornaments was rather patriotic than tasteful. The house had been built immediately after the war, at a period when Reisenberg, flushed with the success of its thirty thousand men, imagined itself to be a great military nation. Trophies, standards, cannon, eagles, consequently appeared in every corner of the opera-house; and quite superseded lyres, and timbrels, and tragic daggers, and comic masks. The royal box was constructed in the form of a tent, and held nearly fifty persons. It was exactly in the centre of the house, its floor over the back of the pit, and its roof reaching to the top of the second circle: its crimson hangings were restrained by ropes of gold, and the whole was surmounted by a large and radiant crown. The house was, of course, merely lighted by a chandelier from the centre.

The opera for the evening was Rossini's *Otello*. As soon as the grand-duke entered, the overture commenced; his royal highness coming forward to the front of the box, and himself directing the musicians; keeping time earnestly with his right hand, in which was a very long black opera-glass. This he occasionally used, but merely to look at the orchestra; not, assuredly, to detect a negligent or inefficient performer; for in the schooled orchestra of Reisenberg, it would have been impossible even for the eagle-eye of his royal highness, assisted as it was by his long black opera-glass, or for his fine ear, matured as it was by the most complete study, to discover there either inattention or feebleness. The house was perfectly silent; for when the monarch directs the orchestra, the world goes to the opera to listen. Perfect silence at Reisenberg, then, was etiquette and the fashion; and being etiquette and the fashion, was thought no hardship; for at our own opera-house, or at the Académie at Paris, or the Pergola, or La Scala, or

San Carlo, we do not buzz, and chatter, and rattle, and look as if to listen to the performance were rank heresy, either because music is disagreeable, or to buzz, chatter, and rattle, the reverse; but, in truth, merely because there, to listen to the performer is not etiquette and the fashion; and to buzz, chatter, and rattle, is. Emilius von Aslingen was accustomed to say, that at Reisenberg he went to the chapel in the morning to talk, and to the opera in the evening to pray. Between the acts of the opera, however, the ballet was performed; and then everybody might talk, and laugh, and remark, as much as they chose.

The opera, I have said, was *Otello*. The grand-duke prided himself as much upon the accuracy of his scenery, and dresses, and decorations, as upon the exquisite skill of his performers. In truth, an opera at Reisenberg was a spectacle which could not fail to be interesting to a man of taste. When the curtain drew up, the first scene presented a view of old Brabantio's house. It was accurately copied from one of the sumptuous structures of Scamozzi, or Sansovino, or Palladio, which adorn the Grand Canal of Venice. In the distance rose the domes of St. Mark, and the lofty Campanile. Vivian could not fail to be delighted at this beautiful work of art, for such indeed it should be styled. He was more surprised, however, but not less pleased, on the entrance of Othello himself. In England we are accustomed to deck this adventurous Moor in the costume of his native country—but is this correct? The Grand-duke of Reisenberg thought not. Othello was an adventurer; at an early age he entered, as many foreigners did, into the service of Venice. In that service he rose to the highest dignities—became general of their armies and of their fleets; and, finally, the viceroy of their favourite kingdom. Is it natural to suppose, that such a man should have retained, during his successful career, the manner and dress of his original country? Ought we not rather to admit, that had he done so, his career would, in fact, not have been successful? In all probability he imitated to affectation the manners of the country which he had adopted. It is not probable that in such, or in any age, the turbaned Moor would have been treated with great deference by the common Christian soldier of Venice—or, indeed, that the scandal of a heathen leading the armies of one of the most powerful of European states, would have been tolerated for an instant by indignant Christendom. If Shylock even, the Jew merchant, confined to his quarter, and herding with his own sect, were banished on the Rialto—in what spirit would the Venetians have witnessed their doge and nobles, whom they ranked above kings, holding equal converse, and loading with the most splendid honours of the republic, a follower of Mahound? Such were the sentiments of the Grand-duke of Reisenberg on this subject, a subject interesting to Englishmen; and, I confess, I think that they are worthy of attention. In accordance with his opinions, the actor who performed Othello, appeared in the full dress of a Venetian magnifico of the middle ages; a fit companion for Cornaro, or Grimani, or Barberigo, or Foscari.

The first act of the opera was finished. The baroness expressed to Vivian her great delight at its being over; as she was extremely desirous of learning the story of the ballet, which she had not

yet been able to acquire. His translation of yesterday had greatly interested her. Vivian shortly gave her the outline of the story of Conrad. She listened with great attention, but made no remark.

The ballet at Reisenberg was not merely a vehicle for the display of dancing. It professed by gesture and action, aided by music, to influence the minds of the spectators not less than the regular drama. Of this exhibition dancing was a casual ornament, as it is of life. It took place therefore only on fitting occasions, and grew out, in a natural manner, from some event in the history represented. For instance, suppose the story of Othello the subject of the ballet. The dancing, in all probability, would be introduced at a grand entertainment, given in celebration of the Moor's arrival at Cyprus. All this would be in character. Our feelings would not be outraged by a husband chattering forward to murder his wife; or by seeing the pillow pressed over the innocent Desdemona by the impulse of a pirouette. In most cases, therefore, the chief performers in this species of spectacle are not even dancers. This, however, may not always be the case. If Diana be the heroine, poetical probability will not be offended by the goddess joining in the chaste dance with her huntress nymphs; and were the Baiadere of Göthe made the subject of a ballet, the Indian dancing girl would naturally be the heroine both of the drama and poem. I know, myself, no performance more affecting than the serious pantomime of a master. In some of the most interesting situations, it is in fact more natural than the oral drama—logically, it is more perfect. For the soliloquy is actually *thought* before us; and the magic of the representation not destroyed by the sound of the human voice, at a moment when we all know man never speaks.

The curtain again rises. Sounds of revelry and triumph are heard from the Pirate Isle. They celebrate recent success. Various groups, accurately attired in the costume of the Greek islands, are seated on the rocky fore-ground. On the left rises Medora's tower, on a craggy steep; and on the right gleams the blue Ægean. A procession of women enters. It heralds the presence of Conrad and Medora: they honour the festivity of their rude subjects. The pirates and the women join in the national dance; and afterwards, eight warriors, completely armed, move in a warlike measure, keeping time to the music with their bucklers and clattering sabres. Suddenly the dance ceases—a sail is in sight. The nearest pirates rush to the strand, and assist the disembarkation of their welcome comrades. The commander of the vessel comes forward with an agitated step and gloomy countenance. He kneels to Conrad, and delivers him a scroll, which the chieftain reads with suppressed agitation. In a moment the faithful Juan is at his side—the contents of the scroll revealed—the dance broken up—and preparations made to sail in an hour's time to the city of the pasha. The stage is cleared, and Conrad and Medora are alone. The mysterious leader is wrapped in the deepest abstraction. He stands with folded arms, and eyes fixed on the yellow sand. A gentle pressure on his arm calls him back to recollection: he starts, and turns to the intruder with a gloomy brow. He sees Medora—and his frown sinks into a sad smile. "And must we part again? this hour? this very hour? It cannot be!" She

clings to him with agony, and kneels to him with adoration. No hope! ho hope! a quick return promised with an air of foreboding fate. His stern arm encircles her waist. He chases the heavy tear from her fair cheek, and while he bids her be glad in his absence with her handmaids, peals the sad thunder of the signal-gun. She throws herself upon him. The frantic quickness of her motion strikingly contrasts with the former stuper of her appearance. She will not part. Her face is buried in his breast—her long fair hair floats over his shoulders. He is almost unnerved; but at this moment the ship sails on: the crew and their afflicted wives enter: the page brings to Lord Conrad his cloak, his carbine, and his bugle. He tears himself from her embrace, and without daring to look behind him, bounds over the rocks, and is in the ship. The vessel moves—the wives of the pirates continue on the beach, waving their scarfs to their desolate husbands. In the fore-ground, Medora, motionless, stands rooted to the strand—and might have inspired Phidias with a personification of despair.

In a hall of unparalleled splendour, stern Seyd reclines on innumerable pillows, placed on a carpet of golden cloth. His bearded chiefs are ranged around. The rooms are brilliantly illuminated with large coloured lamps; and an opening at the further end of the apartments exhibits a portion of the shining city, and the glittering galleys. Gulnare, covered with a silver veil, which reaches even to her feet, is ushered into the presence of the pasha. Even the haughty Seyd rises to honour his beautiful favourite. He draws the precious veil from her blushing features, and places her on his right hand. The dancing-girls now appear; and then are introduced the principal artists. Now takes place the scientific part of the ballet; and here might Bias, or Noblet, or Ronzi Vestris, or her graceful husband, or the classical Albert, or the bounding Paul, vault without stint, and attitudinize without restraint; and not the least impair the effect of the tragic tale. The dervise, of course, appears; the galleys, of course, are fired; and Seyd, of course, retreats. A change in the scenery gives us the blazing harem—the rescue of its inmates—the deliverance of Gulnare—the capture of Conrad.

It is the prison-scene. On a mat, covered with irons, lies the forlorn Conrad. The flitting flame of a solitary and ill-fed lamp, hardly reveals the heavy bars of the huge grate that forms the entrance to its cell. For some minutes nothing stirs. The mind of the spectator is allowed to become fully aware of the hopeless misery of the hero. His career is ended—secure is his dungeon—trusty his guards—overpowering his chains. To-morrow he wakes to be impaled. A gentle noise, so gentle that the spectator almost deems it unintentional, is now heard. A white figure appears behind the dusky gate:—is it a guard, or a torturer? The gate softly opens, and a female comes forward. Gulnare was represented by a young girl, with the body of a Peri, and the soul of a poetess. The harem queen advances with an agitated step:—she holds in her left hand a lamp, and in the girdle of her light dress is a dagger. She reaches, with a soundless step, the captive. He is asleep.—Ay! he sleeps, while thousands are weeping his ravage or his ruin; and she, in restlessness, is wandering here! A thousand thoughts are seen coursing over her flushed brow,—she looks to the audience, and

her dark eye asks why this corsair is so dear to her! She turns again, and raises the lamp with her long white arm, that the light may fall on the captive's countenance. She gazes, without moving, on the sleeper—touches the dagger with a slow and tremulous hand, and starts from the contact with terror. She again touches it;—it is drawn from her vest—it falls to the ground. He wakes—he stares with wonder:—he sees a female not less fair than Medora. Confused, she tells him her station: she tells him that her pity is as certain as his doom. He avows his readiness to die;—he appears undaunted—he thinks of Medora—he buries his face in his hands. She grows pale, as he avows he loves—another. She cannot conceal her own passion. He, wondering, confesses that he supposed her love was his enemy's—was Seyd's. Gulnare shudders with horror at the name: she draws herself up to her full stature—she smiles in bitterness:—

“ My love stern Seyd's! ah! no, no, not my love!”

The acting was perfect. The enthusiastic house burst out into unusual shouts of admiration. Madame Carolina applauded with her little finger on her fan. The grand-duke himself gave the signal of applause. Vivian never felt before that words were useless. His hand was violently pressed. He turned round:—it was the baroness. She was leaning back in her chair; and though she did her utmost to conceal her agitated countenance, a tear coursed down her cheek, big as the miserable Medora's!

CHAPTER XI.

On the evening of the opera, arrived at court part of the suite of the young archduchess, the betrothed of the Crown-prince of Reisenberg. These consisted of an old gray-headed general, who had taught her imperial highness the manual exercise; and her tutor and confessor, an ancient and toothless bishop. Their youthful mistress was to follow them in a few days; and this arrival of such a distinguished portion of her suite, was the signal for the commencement of a long series of sumptuous festivities. After interchanging a number of compliments, and a few snuff-boxes, the new guests were invited by his royal highness to attend a review, which was to take place the next morning, of five thousand troops and fifty generals.

The Reisenberg army was the best appointed in Europe. Never were men seen with breasts more plumply padded, mustaches better trained, or gaiters more spotless. The grand-duke himself was a military genius, and had invented a new cut for the collars of the cavalry. His royal highness was particularly desirous of astonishing the old gray-headed governor of his future daughter by the skillful evolutions and imposing appearance of his legions. The affair was to be of the most refined nature; and the whole was to be concluded by a mock battle, in which the spectators were to be treated by a display of the most exquisite evolutions, and complicated movements, which human beings ever yet invented to destroy others, or to escape destruction. Field-marshal Count von Sohnspeer, the commander-in-chief of all the forces of

his Royal Highness the Grand-duke of Reisenberg, condescended, at the particular request of his sovereign, to conduct the whole affair himself.

At first it was rather difficult to distinguish between the army and the staff; for Darius, in the straits of Issus, was not more sumptuously and numerously attended, than Count von Sohnspeer. Wherever he moved, he was followed by a train of waving plumes and radiant epaulets, and foaming chargers, and shining steel. In fact he looked like a large military comet. Had the fate of Reisenberg depended on the result of the day, the field-marshal, and his generals, and aid-de-camps, and orderlies, could not have looked more agitated or more in earnest. Von Sohnspeer had not less than four horses in the field, on every one of which he seemed to appear in the space of five minutes. Now he was dashing along the line of the lancers on a black charger, and now round the column of the cuirassiers on a white one. He exhorted the tirailleurs on a chestnut, and added fresh courage to the ardour of the artillery on a bay.

It was a splendid day. The bands of the respective regiments played the most triumphant tunes, as each marched on the field. The gradual arrival of the troops was very picturesque. Distant music was heard, and a corps of infantry soon made its appearance. A light bugle sounded, and a body of tirailleurs issued from the shade of a neighbouring wood. The kettle-drums and clarions heralded the presence of a troop of cavalry; and an advanced guard of light horse, told that the artillery were about to follow. The arms and standards of the troops shone in the sun; military music sounded in all parts of the field; unceasing was the bellow of the martial drum and the blast of the blood-stirring trumpet. Clouds of dust, ever and anon excited in the distance, denoted the arrival of a regiment of cavalry. Even now one approach— it is the red lancers. How gracefully their colonel, the young Count of Eberstein, bounds on his barb! Has Theseus turned Centaur? His spur and bridle seem rather the emblems of sovereignty than the instruments of government; he neither chastises nor directs. The rider moves without motion, and the horse judges without guidance. It would seem that the man had borrowed the beast's body, and the beast the man's mind. His regiment has formed upon the field, their stout lances erected like a young and leafless grove: but although now in line, it is with difficulty that they can subject the spirit of their warlike steeds. The trumpet has caught the ear of the horses; they stand with open nostrils, already breathing war, ere they can see an enemy; and now dashing up one leg, and now the other, they seem to complain of Nature that she has made them of any thing earthly.

The troops have all arrived; there is an unusual bustle in the field. Von Sohnspeer is again changing his horse, giving directions while he is mounting to at least a dozen aid-de-camps. Orderlies are scampering over every part of the field. Another flag, quite new, and of immense size is unfurled by the field-marshal's pavilion. A signal gun! the music in the whole field is hushed; a short silence of agitating suspense—another gun—and another! All the bands of all the regiments burst forth at the same moment into the national air: the court dash into the field!

Madame Carolina, the baroness, the Countess

Von S—, and some other ladies wore habits of the uniform of the Royal Guards. Both madame and the baroness were perfect horsewomen; and the excited spirits of Mr. Beckendorf's female relative, both during her ride, and her dashing run over the field, amidst the firing of cannon, and the crash of drums and trumpets, very strikingly contrasted with her agitation and depression of the preceding night.

"Your excellency loves the tented field, I think!" said Vivian; who was at her side.

"I love war! it is a diversion fit for kings!" was the answer. "How fine the breast-plates and helmets of those cuirassiers glisten in the sun!" continued the lady. "Do you see Von Sohnspeer? I wonder if the crown prince be with him?"

"I think he is."

"Indeed! ah! can he interest himself in any thing? He seemed Apathy itself at the opera last night. I never saw him smile, or move, and have scarcely heard his voice: but if he love war, if he be a soldier, if he be thinking of other things than a pantomime and a ball, 'tis well!—very well for his country! Perhaps he is a hero?"

At this moment the crown prince, who was of Von Sohnspeer's staff, slowly rode up to the royal party.

"Rodolph!" said the grand-duke; "do you head your regiment to-day?"

"No," was the muttered answer.

The grand-duke moved his horse to his son, and spoke to him in a low tone; evidently very earnestly. Apparently he was expostulating with him: but the effect of the royal exhortation was only to render the prince's brow more gloomy, and the expression of his withered features more sullen and more sad. The baroness watched the father and son as they were conversing, with the most intense attention. When the crown prince, in violation of his father's wishes, fell into the party, and allowed his regiment to be headed by the lieutenant-colonel, the young lady raised her lustrous eyes to heaven, with that same beautiful expression of sorrow or resignation, which had so much interested Vivian on the morning that he had translated to her the moving passage in the Corsair.

But the field is nearly cleared, and the mimic war has commenced. On the right appears a large body of cavalry, consisting of cuirassiers and dragoons. A van-guard of light cavalry and lancers, under the command of the Count of Eberstein, is ordered out, from this body, to harass the enemy: a strong body of infantry, supposed to be advancing. Several squadrons of light horse immediately spring forward; they form themselves into line, they wheel into column, and endeavour, by well directed manœuvres, to outflank the strong wing of the advancing enemy. After succeeding in executing all that was committed to them, and after having skirmished in the van of their own army, so as to give time for all necessary dispositions of the line of battle, the van-guard suddenly retreats between the brigades of the cavalry of the line; the prepared battery of cannon is unmasked; and a tremendous concentric fire opened on the line of the advancing foe. Taking advantage of the confusion created by this unexpected salute of his artillery, Von Sohnspeer, who commands the cavalry, gives the word "Charge!"

The whole body of cavalry immediately charge in masses—the extended line of the enemy is as immediately broken. But the infantry, who are commanded by one of the royal relatives and visitors, the Prince of Pike and Powdren, dexterously form into squares, and commence a masterly retreat in square battalions. At length, they take up a more favourable position than the former one. They are again galled by the artillery, who have proportionately advanced, and again charged by the cavalry in their huge masses. And now the squares of infantry partially give away. They admit the cavalry, but the exulting horse find, to their dismay, that the enemy are not routed, but that there are yet inner squares formed at salient angles. The cavalry for a moment retire, but it is only to give opportunity to their artillery to rake the obstinate foes. The execution of the battery is fearful. Headed by their commander, the whole body of cuirassiers and dragoons again charge with renewed energy and concentrated force. The infantry are thrown into the greatest confusion, and commence a rout, increased and rendered irremediable by the lancers and hussars, the former van-guard; who now, seizing on the favourable moment, again rush forward, increasing the effect of the charge of the whole army, overtaking the fugitives with their lancers, and securing the prisoners.

The victorious Von Sohnspeer, followed by his staff, now galloped up to receive the congratulations of his sovereign.

"Where are your prisoners, field-marshal?" asked his royal highness, with a flattering smile.

"What is the ransom of our unfortunate guest?" asked Madame Carolina.

"I hope we shall have another affair," said the baroness, with a flushed face and glowing eyes.

But the commander-in-chief must not tarry to bandy compliments. He is again wanted in the field. The whole troops have formed in line. Some most scientific evolutions are now executed. With them I will not weary the reader, nor dilate on the comparative advantages of forming en crémaillière and en échiquier; nor upon the duties of tirailleurs, nor upon concentric fires and eccentric movements, nor upon deploying, nor upon enfilading, nor upon oblique points, nor upon échellons. The day finished by the whole of the troops again forming a line, and passing in order before the commander-in-chief, to give him an opportunity of observing their discipline and inspecting their equipments.

The review being finished, Count von Sohnspeer and his staff joined the royal party; and after walking their horses round the field, they proceeded to his pavilion, where refreshments were prepared for them. The field-marshal, flattered by the interest which the young baroness had taken in the business of the day, and the acquaintance she evidently possessed of the more obvious details of military tactics, was inclined to be particularly courteous to her, but the object of his admiration did not encourage attentions, by which half the ladies of the court would have thought themselves as highly honoured as by those of the grand-duke himself;—so powerful a person was the field-marshal, and so little inclined by temper to cultivate the graces of the fair sex!

"In the tent keep by my side," said the baroness to Vivian. "Although I am fond of heroes, Von

Sohnspeer is not to my taste. I know not why I flatter you so by my notice, for I suppose like all Englishmen, you are not a soldier! I thought so.—Never mind! you ride well enough for a field-marshal. I really think I could give you a commission without much sticking of my conscience. No, no! I should like you nearer me. I have a good mind to make you my master of the horse, that is to say, when I am entitled to have one.”

As Vivian acknowledged the young baroness' compliment by becoming emotion, and vowed that any office near her person would be the consummation of all his wishes, his eye caught the lady's: she blushed deeply, looked down upon her horse's neck, and then turned away her head.

Von Sohnspcer's pavilion excellently became the successful leader of the army of Reisenberg. Trophies taken from all sides decked its interior. The black eagle of Austria formed part of its roof, and the brazen eagle of Gaul supported part of the side. The gray-headed general looked rather grim when he saw a flag belonging to a troop, which perhaps he had himself once commanded. He vented his indignation to the toothless bishop, who crossed his breast with his fingers, covered with diamonds, and preached temperance and moderation in inarticulate sounds.

During the collation, the conversation was principally military. Madame Carolina, who was entirely ignorant of the subject of discourse, enchanted all the officers present by appearing to be the most interested person in the tent. Nothing could exceed the elegance of her eulogium of “petit guerre.” The old gray general talked much about “the good old times,” by which he meant the thirty years of plunder, bloodshed, and destruction, which were occasioned by the French revolution. He gloated on the recollections of horror, which he feared would never occur again. The Archduke Charles and Prince Schwartzenburg were the gods of his idolatry; and Nadasti's husars and Wurmscr's dragoons, the inferior divinities of his bloody heaven. One evolution of the morning, a discovery made by Von Sohnspcer himself, in the deploying of cavalry, created a great sensation; and it was settled that it would have been of great use to Dessaix and Clairfayt in the Netherlands affair of some eight-and-twenty years ago; and was not equalled even by Seidlitz's cavalry in the affair with the Russians at Zornsdorff. In short, every “affair” of any character during the late war, was fought over again in the tent of Field-marshal von Sohnspcer. At length from the Archduke Charles, and Prince Schwartzenburg, the old gray-headed general got to Polybius and Monsieur Folard; and the grand-duke now thinking that the “affair” was taking too serious a turn, broke up the party. Madame Carolina and most of the ladies used their carriages on their return. They were nearly fifteen miles from the city; but the baroness, in spite of the most earnest solicitations, would remount her charger. Her singularity attracted the attention of Emilius von Aslingen, who immediately joined her party. As a captain in the Royal Guards, he had performed his part in the day's horrors; and the baroness immediately complimented him upon his exertions and his victory.

“It was an excellent affair!” said the lady: “I should like a mock battle every day during peace.”

“A mock battle!” said Emilius von Aslingen, with a stare of great astonishment; “has there been a battle to-day? My memory, I fear, is failing me; but now that your excellency has recalled it to my mind, I have a very faint recollection of a slight squabble.”

They cantered home—the baroness in unusual spirits—Vivian thinking very much of his fair companion. Her character puzzled him. That she was not the lovely simpleton that Madame Carolina believed her to be, he had little doubt. Some people have great knowledge of society, and very little of mankind. Madame Carolina was one of these. She viewed her species through only one medium. That the baroness was a woman of acute feeling, Vivian could not doubt. Her conduct at the opera, which had escaped every one's attention, made this evident. That she had seen more of the world than her previous conversation had given him to believe, was equally clear by her conduct and conversation this morning. He determined to become more acquainted with her character. Her evident partiality to his company would not render the execution of his purpose difficult. At any rate, if he discovered nothing, it was something to do: it would at least amuse him.

In the evening he joined a large party at the palace. He looked immediately for the baroness. She was surrounded by all the dandies, in consequence of the flattering conduct of Emilius von Aslingen in the morning. Their attentions she treated with contempt, and ridiculed their compliments without mercy. Without obtruding himself on her notice, Vivian joined her circle, and witnessed her demolition of the young Count of Eberstein with great amusement. Emilius von Aslingen was not there; for having now made the interesting savage the fashion, she was no longer worthy his attention, and consequently deserted. The young lady soon observed Vivian; and saying, without the least embarrassment, that she was delighted to see him, she begged him to share her chaise-lounge. Her envious levée witnessed the preference with dismay; and as the object of their attention did not now notice their remarks, even by her expressed contempt, one by one fell away. Vivian and the baroness were left alone, and conversed together the whole evening. The lady displayed, on every subject, the most engaging ignorance; and requested information on obvious topics with the most artless naïveté. Vivian was convinced that her ignorance was not affected, and equally sure that it could not arise from imbecility of intellect; for while she surprised him by her crude questions, and her want of acquaintance with all those topics which generally form the staple of conversation; she equally amused him with her poignant wit, and the imperious and energetic manner in which she instantly expected satisfactory information on every possible subject.

CHAPTER XII.

ON the day after the review, a fancy-dress ball was to be given at court. It was to be an entertainment of a very particular nature. The lively genius of Madame Carolina wearied of the commonplace effect generally produced by this species

of amusement—in which usually a stray Turk, and a wandering Pole, looked scdate and singular among crowds of Spanish girls, Swiss peasants, and gentlemen in uniform—had invented something novel. Her idea was ingenious. To use her own sublime phrase, she determined that the party should represent “an age!” Great difficulty was experienced in fixing upon the century which was to be honoured. At first a poetical idea was started of having something primeval—perhaps antediluvian,—but Noah, or even Father Abraham, were thought characters hardly sufficiently romantic for a fancy-dress ball; and consequently the earliest postdiluvian ages were soon under consideration. Nimrod, or Sardanapalus, were distinguished personages, and might be well represented by the Master of the stag-hounds, or the Master of the Revels; but then the want of an interesting lady-character was a great objection. Semiramis, though not without style in her own way, was not sufficiently Parisian for Madame Carolina. New ages were proposed, and new objections started; and so the “Committee of Selection,” which consisted of Madame herself, the Countess von S—, and a few other dames of fashion, gradually slid through the four great empires. Athens was not aristocratic enough, and then the women were nothing. In spite of her admiration of the character of Aspasia, Madame Carolina somewhat doubted the possibility of persuading the ladies of the court of Reisenberg to appear in the characters of *ερασιπαι*. Rome presented great capabilities, and greater difficulties. Finding themselves, after many days’ sitting and study, still very far from coming to a decision, madame called in the aid of the grand-duke, who proposed “something national.” The proposition was plausible; but according to Madame Carolina, Germany, until her own time, had been only a land of barbarism and barbarians; and therefore, in such a country, in a national point of view, what could there be interesting! The middle ages, as they are usually styled, in spite of the Emperor Charlemagne—“that oasis in the desert of barbarism”—to use her own eloquent and original image—were her particular aversion. “The age of chivalry is past!” was as constant an exclamation of Madame Carolina, as it was of Mr. Burke. “The age of chivalry is past—and very fortunate that it is. What resources could they have had in the age of chivalry?—an age without either moral or experimental philosophy; an age in which they were equally ignorant of the doctrine of association of ideas, and of the doctrine of electricity; and when they were as devoid of a knowledge of the incalculable powers of the human mind as of the incalculable powers of steam!” Had Madame Carolina been the consort of an Italian grand-duke, selection would not be difficult; and, to inquire no farther, the court of the Medicis alone would afford them every thing they wanted. But Germany never had any character, and never produced nor had been the resort of illustrious men and interesting persons. What was to be done? The age of Frederick the Great was the only thing; and then that was so recent, and would offend the Austrians; it could not be thought of.

At last, when the “Committee of Selection,” was almost in despair, some one proposed a period, which not only would be German—not only would compliment the House of Austria,—but, what was of still greater importance, would allow of every

contemporary character of interest of every nation—the age of Charles the Fifth! The suggestion was received with enthusiastic shouts, and adopted on the spot. “The Committee of Selection” was immediately dissolved, and its members as immediately formed themselves into a “Committee of Arrangement.” Lists of all the persons of any fame, distinction, or notoriety, who had lived either in the empire of Germany, the kingdoms of Spain, Portugal, France, or England, the Italian States, the Netherlands, the Americas, and in short, in every country in the known world, were immediately formed. Von Chronicle, rewarded for his last historical novel by a riband and the title of baron, was appointed secretary to the “Committee of Costume.” All guests who received a card of invitation, were desired, on or before a certain day, to send in the title of their adopted character, and a sketch of their intended dress, that their plans might receive the sanction of the ladies of the “Committee of Arrangement,” and their dresses, the approbation of the Secretary of Costume. By this method, the chance and inconvenience of two persons selecting and appearing in the same character, were destroyed and prevented. After exciting the usual jealousies, intrigues, dissatisfaction, and ill-blood, by the influence and imperturbable temper of Madame Carolina, every thing was arranged—Emilius von Aslingen being the only person who set both the Committees of Arrangement and Costume at defiance; and treated the repeated applications of their respected secretary with the most contemptuous silence. The indignant Baron von Chronicle entreated the strong interference of the “Committee of Arrangement;” but Emilius von Aslingen was too powerful an individual to be treated by others as he treated them. Had the fancy-dress ball of the sovereign been attended by all his subjects, with the exception of this captain in his Guards, the whole affair would have been a failure; would have been dark, in spite of the glare of ten thousand lamps, and the glories of all the jewels of his state; would have been dull, although each guest were wittier than Pasquin himself; and very vulgar, although attended by lords as many quarterings as the ancient shield of his own antediluvian house! O Fashion!—I have no time for invocations. All, therefore, that the ladies of the “Committee of Arrangement” could do, was to enclose to the rebellious Von Aslingen a list of the expected characters, and a resolution passed in consequence of his contumacy; that no person, or persons, was, or were, to appear as either or any of those characters, unless he, or they, could produce a ticket, or tickets, granted by a member of the “Committee of Arrangement,” and countersigned by the secretary of “the Committee of Costume.” At the same time that these vigorous measures were resolved on, no persons spoke on Emilius von Aslingen’s rebellious conduct in terms of greater admiration than the ladies of the committee themselves. If possible, he, in consequence, became even a more influential and popular personage than before; and his conduct procured him almost the adoration of persons, who, had they dared to imitate him, would have been instantly crushed; and would have been banished society principally by the exertions of the very individual whom they had the presumption to mimic. O Fashion!—I forgot.

In the gardens of the palace was a spacious amphitheatre, cut out in green seats for the spectators

of the plays which, during the summer months, were sometimes performed there by the Court. There was a stage in the same taste, with rows of trees for side-scenes, and a great number of arbours and summer-rooms, surrounded by lofty hedges of laurel, for the actors to retire and dress in. Connected with this "rural theatre," for such was its title, were a number of labyrinths and groves, and arcaded walks in the same style. Above twelve large fountains were in the immediate vicinity of this theatre. At the end of one walk a sea-horse spouted its element through its nostrils; and in another, Neptune turned an Ocean out of a vase. Seated on a rock, Arcadia's half-goat god, the deity of silly sheep and silly poets, sent forth trickling streams through his rustic pipes; and in the centre of a green grove, an enamoured Salmacis, bathing in a pellucid basin, seemed watching for her Hermaphrodite.

It was in this rural theatre, and its fanciful con- zines, that Madame Carolina and her counsellors resolved, that their magic should, for a night, not only stop the course of time, but recall past centuries. It was certainly rather late in the year for choosing such a spot for the scene of their enchantment; but the season, as I have often had occasion to remark in the course of these volumes, was singularly fine; and indeed at the moment of which I am speaking, the nights were as warm, and as clear from mist and dew, as they are during an Italian midsummer.

But it is eight o'clock—we are already rather late. Is that a figure by Holbein, just started out of the canvass, that I am about to meet? Stand aside! It is a page of the Emperor Charles the Fifth! The Court is on its way to the theatre. The theatre and the gardens are brilliantly illuminated. The effect of the thousands of coloured lamps, in all parts of the foliage, is very beautiful. The moon is up, and a million stars! If it be not quite as light as day, it is just light enough for pleasure. You could not perhaps endorse a bill of exchange, or engross a lawyer's parchment, by this light; but then it is just the light to read a love-letter by, and do a thousand other things besides—I have a long story to tell, and so—guess them!

All hail to the emperor! I would give his costume, were it not rather too much in the style of the Von Chronicles. Reader! you have seen a portrait of Charles by Holbein: very well—what need is there of a description? No lack was there in this gay scene of massy chains and curious collars, nor cloth of gold, nor cloth of silver! No lack was there of trembling plumes, and costly hose! No lack was there of crimson velvet, and russet velvet, and tawny velvet, and purple velvet, and plunket velvet, and of scarlet cloth, and green taffeta, and cloth of silk embroidered! No lack was there of garments of estate, and of quaint chemises, nor of short crimson cloaks, covered with pearls and precious stones. No lack was there of party-coloured splendour, of purple velvet embroidered with white, and white satin dresses embroidered with black. No lack was there of splendid kofyes of damask, or kerchiefs of fine Cyprus; nor of points of Venice silver of ducat fineness, nor of garlands of friars' knots, nor of coloured satins, nor of bleeding hearts embroidered on the bravery of dolorous lovers, nor of quaint sentences of wailing gallantry. But for the details, are they not to be found in those much-neglected and much-plundered persons, the old

chroniclers? and will they not sufficiently appear in the most inventive portion of the next great historical novel?

The grand-duke looked the emperor. Our friend the grand-marshal was Francis the First; and Arnclm, and Von Neuwied, figured as the Marshal Montmorency, and the Marshal Lautrec. The old toothless bishop did justice to Clement the Seventh; and his companion, the ancient general, looked grim as Pompeo Colonna. A prince of the House of Nassau, one of the royal visitors, represented his adventurous ancestor the Prince of Orange. Von Sohnspeer was that haughty and accomplished rebel, the Constable of Bourbon. The young Baron Gernsbach was worthy of the Seraglio, as he stalked along as Solyman the Magnificent, with all the family jewels, belonging to his old dowager mother, shining in his superb turban. Our friend the Count of Eberstein personified chivalry, in the person of Bayard. The younger Bernstorff, the intimate friend of Gernsbach, attended his sumptuous sovereign as that Turkish Paul Jones, Barbarossa. An Italian prince was Andrew Doria. The grand-chamberlain, our frenchified acquaintance, and who affected a love of literature, was the Protestant Elector of Saxony. His train consisted of the principal litterateurs of Reisenberg: the Editor of the "Attack-all-Review," who originally had been a Catholic, but who had been skilfully converted some years ago, when he thought Catholicism was on the decline, was Martin Luther,—an individual whom, both in his apostasy and brutality, he much and only resembled; on the contrary, the Editor of the "Praise-all-Review," appeared as the mild and meek Melancthon. Mr. Sievers, not yet at Vienna, was Erasmus. Ariosto, Guicciardini, Ronsard, Rabelais, Machiavel, Pietro Aretino, Garcilasso de la Vega, Sannazaro, and Paracelsus, afforded names to many nameless critics. Two generals, brothers, appeared as Cortez and Pizarro. The noble director of the gallery was Albert Durer; and his deputy, Hans Holbein. The court painter, a wretched mimic of the modern French school, did justice to the character of Correggio; and an indifferent sculptor looked sublime as Michel Angelo.

Von Chronicle had persuaded the Prince of Pike and Powdren, one of his warmest admirers, to appear as Henry the Eighth of England. His highness was one of those true north German patriots who think their own country a very garden of Eden, and verily believe that original sin is to be finally put an end to, in a large sandy plain between Berlin and Hanover. The Prince of Pike and Powdren passed his whole life in patriotically sighing for the concentration of all Germany into one great nation, and in secretly trusting that if ever the consummation took place, the North would be rewarded for their condescending union, by a monopoly of all the privileges of the empire. Such a character was of course extremely desirous of figuring to-night in a style peculiarly national. The persuasions of Von Chronicle, however, prevailed, and induced his Highness of Pike and Powdren to dismiss his idea of appearing as the ancient Arminius; although it was with great regret that the prince gave up his plan of personating his favourite hero, with hair down to his middle and skins up to his chin. Nothing would content Von Chronicle, but that his kind patron should represent a crowned head: any thing else was beneath him. The patriotism of the prince disappeared

before the flattery of the novelist, like the bloom of a plum, before the breath of a boy, when he polishes the powdered fruit ere he devours it. No sooner had his highness agreed to be changed into bluff Harry, than the secret purpose of his adviser was immediately detected. No court confessor, seduced by the vision of a red hat, ever betrayed the secrets of his sovereign with greater fervour, than did Von Chronicle labour for the cardinal's costume, which was the consequence of the Prince of Pike and Powdren undertaking the English monarch. To-night, proud as was the part of the prince as regal Harry, his strut was a shamble compared with the imperious stalk of Von Chronicle as the arrogant and ambitious Wolsey. The cardinal in Rienzi was nothing to him; for to-night Wolsey had as many pages, as the other had petticoats!

But, most ungallant of scribblers! Place aux dames! Surely Madame Carolina, as the beautiful and accomplished Margaret of Navarre, might well command, even without a mandate, your homage and your admiration! The lovely queen seemed the very goddess of smiles and repartee: young Max, as her page, carried at her side a painted volume of her own poetry. The arm of the favourite sister of Francis, who it will be remembered once fascinated even the emperor, was linked in that of Caesar's natural daughter—her beautiful namesake, the bright-eyed Margaret of Austria. Conversing with these royal dames, and indeed apparently in attendance upon them, was a young gallant of very courtly bearing, and attired in a very fantastic dress. It is Clement Marot, the "Poet of Princes, and the Prince of Poets," as he was styled by his own admiring age: he offers to the critical inspection of the nimble-witted Navarre a few lines in celebration of her beauty and the night's festivity; one of those short Marotique poems once so celebrated—perhaps a page culled from those gay and airy psalms, which, with characteristic gallantry he dedicated to the "Dames of France!" Observe well the fashionable bard! Marot was a true poet, and in his day not merely read by queens and honoured by courtiers: observe him, I say, well; for the character is supported by one who is a great favourite with myself, and I trust also with you, sweet reader,—our Vivian Grey. It was with great difficulty that Madame Carolina had found a character for her favourite, for the lists were all filled before his arrival at Reisenberg. She at first wished him to appear as some celebrated Englishman of the time, but no character of sufficient importance could be discovered. All our countrymen in contact or connexion with the Emperor Charles were churchmen and civilians; and Sir Nicholas Carew and the other fops of the reign of Henry the Eighth, who, after their visit to Paris, were even more ridiculously francisé than the grand-chamberlain of Reisenberg himself, were not, after mature deliberation, considered entitled to the honour of being ranked in Madame Carolina's age of Charles the Fifth.

But who is this, surrounded by her ladies, and her chamberlains, and her secretaries! Four pages in dresses of cloth of gold, and each the son of a prince of the French blood support her train; a crown encircles locks, gray, as much from thought as from time; but which requires no show of royalty to prove that they belong to a mother of princes:—that ample forehead, aquiline nose, and the keen glance of her piercing eye, denote the

queen, as much as the regality of her gait, and her numerous and splendid train. The young Queen of Navarre hastens to proffer her duty to the mother of Francis, the celebrated Louise of Savoy; and exquisitely did the young and lovely Countess of S—— personate the most celebrated of female diplomatists.

I have forgotten one character: the repeated commands of his father, and the constant entreaties of Madame Carolina, had at length prevailed upon the crown prince to shuffle himself into a fancy dress. No sooner had he gratified them by his hard-wrung consent, than Baron von Chronicle called upon him with drawings of the costume of the Prince of Asturias, afterwards Philip the Second of Spain. If I for a moment forgot so important a personage as the future grand-duke, it must have been because he supported his character so ably, that no one for an instant believed that it was an assumed one:—standing near the side scenes of the amphitheatre, with his gloomy brow, sad eye, protruding under lip, and arms hanging straight by his sides—he looked a bigot without hope, and a tyrant without purpose.

The first hour is over, and the guests are all assembled. As yet, they content themselves with promenading round the amphitheatre; for before they can think of dance or stroll, each of them must be duly acquainted with the other's dress. Certainly it was a most splendid scene. The Queen of Navarre has now been presented to the emperor; and leaning on his arm, they head the promenade. The emperor had given the hand of Margaret of Austria to his legitimate son; but the crown prince, though he continued in silence by the side of the young baroness, soon resigned a hand which did not struggle to retain his. Clement Marot was about to fall back into a less conspicuous part of the procession; but the grand-duke witnessing the regret of his loved consort, condescendingly said, "We cannot afford to lose our poet;" and so Vivian found himself walking behind Madame Carolina, and on the left side of the young baroness. Louise of Savoy followed with her son, the King of France; most of the ladies of the court, and a crowd of officers, among them Montmorency and De Lantrec, after their majesties. The King of England moves by; his state unnoticed in the superior magnificence of Wolsey. Pompeo Colonna apologizes to Pope Clement for having besieged his Holiness in the Castle of St. Angelo. The Elector of Saxony and the Prince of Orange follow. Solyman the Magnificent is attended by his admiral and Bayard's pure spirit almost quivers at the whispered treason of the Constable of Bourbon. Luther and Melancthon, Erasmus and Rabelais, Cortez and Pizarro, Correggio and Michel Angelo, and a long train of dames and dons of all nations, succeed;—so long that the amphitheatre cannot hold them:—and the procession, that all may walk over the stage, makes a short progress through an adjoining summer-room.

Just as the emperor and the fair queen are in the middle of the stage, a wounded warrior, with a face pale as an eclipsed moon; a helmet, on which is painted the sign of his sacred order; a black mantle thrown over his left shoulder, but not concealing his armour; a sword in his right hand, and an outstretched crucifix in his left;—rushes on the scene. The procession suddenly halts—all recognise Emilius von Aslingen! and Madame Carolina

blushes through her rouge, when she perceives that so celebrated, "so interesting a character" as Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, has not been included in the all-comprehensive lists of her committee.

CHAPTER XIII.

HENRY of England led the Polonoise with Louise of Savoy; Margaret of Austria would not join it: waltzing quickly followed. The emperor seldom left the side of the Queen of Navarre, and often conversed with her majesty's poet. The Prince of Asturias hovered for a moment round his father's daughter, as if he were summoning resolution to ask her to waltz. Once indeed, he opened his mouth. Could it have been to speak? but the young Margaret gave no encouragement to his unusual exertion; and Philip of Asturias looking, if possible, more sad and sombre than beofre, skulked away. The crown prince left the gardens, and now a smile lit up every face except that of the young baroness. The gracious grand-duke, unwilling to see a gloomy countenance anywhere to-night, turned to Vivian, who was speaking to Madame Carolina, and said, "Gentle poet, would that thou hadst some chanson or courtly compliment, to chase the cloud which hovers on the brow of our much-loved daughter of Austria! Your popularity, sir," continued the grand-duke, dropping his mock-heroic vein, and speaking in a much lower tone: "your popularity, sir, among the ladies of the court, cannot be increased by any panegyric of ours; nor are we insensible, believe us, to the assiduity and skill with which you have complied with our wishes, in making our court agreeable to the relative of a man, to whom we owe so much as Mr. Beckendorf. We are informed, Mr. Grey," continued his royal highness, "that you have no intention of very speedily returning to your country; we wish that we could count you among our peculiar attendants. If you have an objection to live in our palace, without performing your quota of duty to the state, we shall have no difficulty in finding you an office, and clothing you in our official costume. Think of this!" So saying, with a gracious smile, his royal highness, leading Madame Carolina, commenced a walk round the gardens.

The young baroness did not follow them. Solyman the Magnificent, and Bayard the irreproachable, and Barbarossa the pirate, and Bourbon the rebel, immediately surrounded her. Few persons were higher ton than the Turkish emperor and his admiral—few persons talked more agreeable nonsense than the knight, sans peur et sans reproche—no person was more important than the warlike constable; but their attention, their amusement, and their homage, were to-night thrown away on the object of their observance. The baroness listened to them without interest, and answered them with brevity. She did not even condescend, as she had done before, to enter into a war of words to mortify their vanity or exercise their wit. She treated them neither with contempt nor courtesy. If no smile welcomed their remarks, at least her silence was not scornful, and the most shallow-headed prater that fluttered around her, felt that he

was received with dignity and not with disdain. Awed by her conduct, not one of them dared to be flippant, and every one of them soon became dull. The ornaments of the court of Reisenberg, the arbiters of ton and the lords of taste, stared with astonishment at each other, when they found, to their mutual surprise, that at one moment, in such a select party, universal silence pervaded. In this state of affairs, every one felt that his dignity required his speedy disappearance from the lady's presence. The Orientals taking advantage of Bourbon's returning once more to the charge, with an often unanswered remark, coolly walked away: the chevalier made an adroit and honourable retreat, by joining a passing party; and the constable was the only one, who, being left in solitude and silence, was finally obliged to make a formal bow, and retire discomfited, from the side of the only woman with whom he had ever condescended to fall in love. Leaning against the trunk of a tree at some little distance, Vivian Grey watched the formation and dissolution of the young baroness' levee, with the liveliest interest. His eyes met the lady's, as she raised them from the ground, on Von Sohnspeer quitting her. She immediately beckoned to Vivian, but without her usual smile. He was directly at her side, but she did not speak. At last he said, "I think this is a most brilliant scene!"

"You think so—do you?" answered the lady, in a tone and manner which almost made Vivian believe for a moment, that his friend Mr. Beckendorf was at his side.

"Decidedly his daughter!" thought he.

"You do not seem in your usual spirits to-night?" said Vivian.

"I hardly know what my usual spirits are," said the lady; in a manner which would have made Vivian imagine that his presence was as disagreeable to her as that of Count von Sohnspeer, had not the lady herself invited his company.

"I suppose the scene is very brilliant," continued the baroness, after a few moment's silence. "At least all here seem to think so,—except two persons."

"And who are they?" asked Vivian.

"Myself, and—the crown prince. I am almost sorry that I did not dance with him. There seems a wonderful similarity in our dispositions."

"You are pleased to be severe to-night!"

"And who shall complain when the first person I satirize is myself?"

"It is most considerate in you," said Vivian, "to undertake such an office; for it is one which you, yourself, are alone capable of fulfilling. The only person that can ever satirize your excellency is yourself; and I think even then, that in spite of your candour, your self-examination must please us with a self-panegyric."

"Nay, a truce to your compliments; at least, let me hear better things from you. I cannot any longer endure the glare of these lamps and dresses; your arm! Let us walk for a few minutes in the more retired and cooler parts of the gardens."

The baroness and Vivian left the amphitheatre, by a different path to that by which the grand-duke and Madame Carolina had quitted it. They found the walks quite solitary; for the royal party, which was very small, contained the only persons who had yet left the stage.

Vivian and his companion strolled about for some time, conversing on subjects of casual interest.

The baroness, though no longer absent, either in her manner or her conversation, was not in her accustomed spirits; and Vivian, while he flattered himself that he was more entertaining than usual, felt to his mortification, that the lady was not entertained.

"I am afraid you find it very dull here," said he: "shall we return?"

"O, no; do not let us return! We have so short a time to be together, that we must not allow even one hour to be dull."

As Vivian was about to reply, he heard the joyous voice of young Maximilian; it sounded very near; the royal party were approaching. The baroness expressed her earnest desire to avoid it; and as to advance or retreat, in these labyrinthine walks, was almost equally hazardous, they retired into one of those green recesses which I have before mentioned; indeed, it was the very evergreen grove, in the centre of which the Nymph of the Fountain watched for her loved Carian youth. A shower of moonlight fell on the marble statue, and showed the nymph in an attitude of consummate skill: her modesty struggling with her desire, and herself crouching in her hitherto pure waters, while her anxious ear listens for the bounding step of the regardless huntsman.

"The air is cooler here," said the baroness, "or the sound of the falling water is peculiarly refreshing to my senses. They have passed; I rejoice that we did not return; I do not think that I could have remained among those lamps another moment. How singular, actually to view with aversion a scene which appears to enchant all!"

"A scene which I should have thought would have been particularly charming to you," said Vivian: "you are dispirited to-night?"

"Am I?" said the baroness. "I ought not to be; not to be more dispirited than I ever am. To-night I expected pleasure; nothing has happened which I did not expect, and every thing which I did. And yet I am sad! Do you think that happiness can ever be sad? I think it must be so. But whether I am sorrowful, or happy, I can hardly tell; for it is only within these few days that I have known either grief or joy."

"It must be counted an eventful period in your existence, which reckons in its brief hours a first acquaintance with such passions?" said Vivian, with a searching eye and an inquiring voice.

"Yes; an eventful period—certainly an eventful period," answered the baroness; with a thoughtful air and in measured words.

"I cannot bear to see a cloud upon that brow?" said Vivian. "Have you forgotten how much was to be done to-night? How eagerly you looked forward to its arrival! How bitterly we were to regret the termination of the mimic empire?"

"I have forgotten nothing: would that I had! I will not look grave. I will be gay; and yet when I remember how soon other mockery, besides this splendid pageant, must be terminated, why should I look gay?—why may I not weep?"

"Nay, if we are to moralize on worldly felicity, I fear, that instead of inspiring you, which is my wish, I shall prove but a too congenial companion; but such a theme is not for you."

"And why should it be for one, who though he lecture me with such gravity and gracefulness, can scarcely be entitled to play the part of Mentor by the weight of years?" said the baroness with a

smile; "for one, who, I trust—who, I should think, as little served, and was as little inured to sorrow as myself!"

"To find that you have cause to grieve," said Vivian; "and to learn from you, at the same time your opinion of my own lot, prove what I have too often had the sad opportunity of observing; that the face of man is scarcely more genuine and less deceitful, than these masquerade dresses which we now wear."

"But you are not unhappy?" asked the baroness with a quick voice.

"Not now," said Vivian.

His companion seated herself on the marble balustrade which surrounded the fountain: she did not immediately speak again, and Vivian was silent, for he was watching her motionless countenance as her large brilliant eyes gazed with earnestness on the falling water sparkling in the moonlight. Surely it was not the mysterious portrait at Beekendorff's that he beheld! How came he not to remark this likeness before!

She turned—she seized his hand—she pressed it with warmth.

"O friend! too lately found; why have we met to part?"

"To part, dearest!" said he, in a low and rapid voice; "to part! and why should we part?—why—"

"O! ask not, ask not; your question is agony." She tried to withdraw her hand, he pressed it with renewed energy, it remained in his,—she turned away her head, and both were silent.

"O! lady," said Vivian, as he knelt at her side; "why are we not happy?"

His arm is round her waist—gently he bends his head—their speaking eyes meet, and their trembling lips cling into a kiss!

A seal of love, and purity, and faith!—and the chaste moon need not have blushed as she lit up the countenances of the lovers.

"O! lady, why are we not happy?"

"We are, we are: is not this happiness—is not this joy—is not this bliss? Bliss," she continued, in a low, broken voice, "to which I have no right, no title. O! quit, quit my hand! Happiness is not for me!" She extricated herself from his arm, and sprang upon her feet. Alarm, rather than affection, was visible on her agitated features. It seemed to cost her a great effort to collect her scattered senses; the effort was made with pain, but with success.

"Forgive me, forgive me," she said in a hurried and indistinct tone; "forgive me! I would speak, but cannot,—not now at least; we have been long away, too long; our absence will be remarked to-night; to-night we must give up to the gratification of others, but I will speak. For yours, for my own sake, let us—let us go! You know that we are to be very gay to-night, and gay we will be. Who shall prevent us? At least the present hour is our own; and when the future ones must be so sad, why, why trifle with this!"

CHAPTER XIV.

The reader is not to suppose that Vivian Grey thought of the young baroness, merely in the rapid scenes which I have sketched. There were

few moments in the day in which her image did not occupy his thoughts, and which indeed, he did not spend in her presence. From the first, her character had interested him. His accidental, but extraordinary acquaintance with Beckendorff made him view any individual connected with that singular man, with a far more curious feeling than could influence the young nobles of the court, who were ignorant of the minister's personal character. There was an evident mystery about the character and situation of the baroness, which well accorded with the eccentric and romantic career of the prime minister of Reisenberg. Of the precise nature of her connexion with Beckendorff, Vivian was wholly ignorant. The world spoke of her as his daughter, and the affirmation of Madame Carolina confirmed the world's report. Her name was still unknown to him; and although, during the few moments that they had enjoyed an opportunity of conversing together alone, Vivian had made every exertion, of which good breeding, impelled by curiosity, is capable, and had devised many little artifices, with which a schooled address is well acquainted, to obtain it, his exertions had hitherto been perfectly unsuccessful. If there were a mystery, the young lady was competent to preserve it; and with all her naïveté, her interesting ignorance of the world, and her evidently uncontrolled spirit, no hasty word ever fell from her cautious lips, which threw any light on the objects of his inquiry. Though impetuous, she was never indiscreet, and often displayed a caution which was little in accordance with her youth and temper. The last night had witnessed the only moment in which her passions seemed for a time to have struggled with, and to have overcome, her judgment; but it was only for a moment. That display of overpowering feeling had cost Vivian a sleepless night; and he is at this instant pacing up and down the chamber of his hotel, thinking of that which he had imagined could exercise his thought no more.

She was beautiful—she loved him;—she was unhappy! To be loved by any woman is flattering to the feelings of every man, no matter how deeply he may have quaffed the bitter goblet of worldly knowledge. The praise of a fool is incense to the wisest of us; and though we believe ourselves broken-hearted, it still delights us to find that we are loved. The memory of Violet Fane was still as fresh, as sweet, to the mind of Vivian Grey, as when he pressed her blushing cheek, for the first and only time. To love again—really to love as he had done—he once thought was impossible; he thought so still. The character of the baroness, as I have said, had interested him from the first. Her ignorance of mankind, and her perfect acquaintance with the most polished forms of society; her extreme beauty, her mysterious rank, her proud spirit and impetuous feelings; her occasional pensiveness, her extreme waywardness,—had astonished, perplexed, and enchanted him. But he had never felt in love. It never, for a moment, had entered into his mind, that his lonely bosom could again be a fit resting-place, for one so lovely, so young. Scared at the misery which had always followed in his track, he would have shuddered ere he again asked a human being to share his sad and blighted fortunes. The partiality of the baroness for his society, without flattering his vanity, or giving rise to thoughts more serious than how he could most

completely enchant for her the passing hour, had certainly made the time passed in her presence, the least gloomy which he had lately experienced. At the same moment that he left the saloon of the palace, he had supposed that his image quitted her remembrance; and if she had again welcomed him with cheerfulness and cordiality, he had felt that his reception was owing to not being, perhaps, quite as frivolous as the Count of Eberstein, and being rather more amusing than the Baron of Gernsbach.

It was therefore with the greatest astonishment that, last night, he had found that he was loved—loved too, by this beautiful and haughty girl, who had treated the advances of the most distinguished nobles with ill-concealed scorn; and who had so presumed upon her dubious relationship to the bourgeois minister, that nothing but her own surpassing loveliness, and her parent's all-engrossing influence, could have excused or authorized her conduct.

Vivian had yielded to the magic of the moment, and had returned the love, apparently no sooner proffered than withdrawn. Had he left the gardens of the palace the baroness's plighted lover, he might perhaps have deplored his rash engagement; and the sacred image of his first and hallowed love might have risen up in judgment against his violated affection—but how had he and the interesting stranger parted? He was rejected, even while his affection was returned; and while her flattering voice told him that he alone could make her happy, she had mournfully declared that happiness could not be hers. How was this? Could she be another's? Her agitation at the opera, often the object of his thought, quickly occurred to him. It must be so. Ah! another's! and who this rival?—this proud possessor of a heart which could not beat for him! Madame Carolina's declaration that the baroness must be married off, was at this moment remembered: her marked observation, that Von Sohnspeer was no son of Beckendorff's, not forgotten. The field-marshal too was the valued friend of the minister; and it did not fail to occur to Vivian that it was not Von Sohnspeer's fault, that his attendance on the baroness was not as constant as his own. Indeed, the unusual gallantry of the commander-in-chief had been the subject of many a joke among the young lords of the court; and the reception of his addresses by their unmerciful object, not unobserved or unspared. But as for poor Von Sohnspeer, what could be expected, as Emilius von Aslingen observed, "from a man whose softest compliment was as long, loud, and obscure, as a birth-day's salute!"

No sooner was the affair clear to Vivian—no sooner was he convinced that a powerful obstacle existed to the love or union of himself and the baroness, than he began to ask, what right the interests of third persons had to interfere between the mutual affection of any individuals. He thought of her in the moonlit garden, struggling with her pure and natural passion. He thought of her exceeding beauty—her exceeding love. He beheld this rare and lovely creature in the embrace of Von Sohnspeer. He turned from the picture in disgust and indignation. She was his—nature had decreed it. She should be the bride of no other man. Sooner than yield her up, he would beard Beckendorff himself in his own retreat, and run

every hazard, and meet every danger, which the ardent imagination of a lover could conceive. Was he madly to reject the happiness which providence, or destiny, or chance had at length offered him? If the romance of boyhood could never be realized, at least with this engaging being for his companion, he might pass through his remaining years in calmness and in peace. His trials were perhaps over. Alas! this is the last delusion of unhappy men!

Vivian called at the palace, but the fatigues of the preceding night prevented either of the ladies from being visible. In the evening, he joined a very small and select circle. The party, indeed, only consisted of the grand-duke, madame, their visitors, and the usual attendants, himself, and Von Sohnspeer. The quiet of the little circle did not more strikingly contrast with the noise, and glare, and splendour of the last night, than did Vivian's subdued reception by the baroness, with her agitated demeanour in the garden. She was cordial but calm. He found it quite impossible to gain even one moment's private conversation with her. Madame Carolina monopolized his attention, as much to favour the views of the field-marshal, as to discuss the comparative merits of Pope, as a moralist and a poet; and Vivian had the mortification of observing his odious rival, whom he now thoroughly detested, discharge, without ceasing, his royal salutes in the impatient ear of Beckendorff's lovely daughter.

Towards the conclusion of the evening, a chamberlain entered the room, and whispered his mission to the baroness. She immediately rose and quitted the apartment. As the party was breaking up, she again entered. Her countenance was very agitated. Madame Carolina was being overwhelmed with the compliments of the grand-marshal, and Vivian seized the opportunity of reaching the baroness. After a few very hurried sentences she dropped her glove. Vivian gave it her. So many persons were round them, that it was impossible to converse except on the most common topics. The glove was again dropped.

"I see," said the baroness, with a very meaning look, "that you are but a recreant knight, or else you would not part with a lady's glove so easily."

Vivian gave a rapid glance round the room. No one was observing him, and the glove was immediately in his pocket. He hurried home, rushed up the staircase of the hotel, ordered lights, locked the door, and with a sensation of indescribable anxiety, tore the precious glove out of his pocket; seized, opened, and read the enclosed and following note. It was written in pencil, in a very hurried hand, and some of the words were repeated.

"I leave the court to-night. He is here himself. No art can postpone my departure. Much, much, I wish to say to you; to say—to say—to you. He is to have an interview with the grand-duke to-morrow morning. Dare you come to his place in his absence? You know the private road. He goes by the high-road, and calls in his way on a forest counsellor: I forget his name, but it is the white house by the barrier—you know it. Watch him to-morrow morning; about nine or ten I should think—here, here;—and then for heaven's sake let me see you. Dare every thing! Fail not—fail not! Mind, by the private road—

by the private road:—beware the other! You know the ground. God bless you!

"SIBYLLA."

CHAPTER XV.

VIVIAN read the note over a thousand times. He could not retire to rest. He called Essper George, and gave him all necessary directions for the morning. About three o'clock Vivian lay down on a sofa, and slept for a few short hours. He started often in his short and feverish slumber. His dreams were unceasing and inexplicable. At first Von Sohnspeer was their natural hero; but soon the scene shifted. Vivian was at Em—walking under the well-remembered lime trees, and with the baroness. Suddenly, although it was mid-day, the sun became very large, blood-red, and fell out of the heavens—his companion screamed—a man rushed forward with a drawn sword. It was the idiot Crown Prince of Reisenberg. Vivian tried to oppose him, but without success. The infuriate ruffian sheathed his weapon in the heart of the baroness. Vivian shrieked, and fell upon her body—and to his horror, found himself embracing the cold corpse of Violet Fane!

Vivian and Essper mounted their horses about seven o'clock. At eight, they had reached a small inn near the forest counsellor's house, where Vivian was to remain until Essper had watched the entrance of the minister. It was a very few minutes past nine when Essper returned, with the joyful intelligence that Owlface and his master had been seen to enter the court-yard. Vivian immediately mounted Max, and telling Essper to keep a sharp watch, he set spurs to his horse.

"Now, Max, my good steed, each minute is golden—serve thy master well!" He patted the horse's neck—the animal's erected ears proved how well it understood its master's wishes; and taking advantage of the loose bridle, which was confidently allowed it, the horse sprang, rather than galloped to the minister's residence. Nearly an hour, however, was lost in gaining the private road, for Vivian, after the caution in the baroness's letter, did not dare the high-road.

He is galloping up the winding rural lane, where he met Beckendorff on the second morning of his visit. He has reached the little gate, and following the example of the grand-duke, ties Max at the entrance. He dashes over the meadows, not following the path, but crossing straight through the long and dewy grass—he leaps over the light iron railing—he is rushing up the walk—he takes a rapid glance, in passing, at the little summer-house—the blue passion-flower is still blooming—the house is in sight—a white handkerchief is waving from the drawing-room window! He sees it—fresh wings are added to his course—he dashes through a bed of flowers, frightens the white peacock, darts through the library-window, is in the drawing-room!

The baroness was there; pale and agitated, she stood beneath the mysterious picture, with one arm leaning on the old carved mantelpiece. Overcome by her emotions, she did not move forward to meet him as he entered; but Vivian observed neither her constraint nor her agitation.

"Sibylla! dearest Sibylla! say you are mine!"

He caught her in his arms. She struggled not to disengage herself, but as he dropped upon one knee, she suffered him gently to draw her down upon the other. Her head sank upon her arm, which rested upon his shoulder. Overpowered, she sobbed convulsively. He endeavoured to calm her, but her agitation increased; and many, many minutes elapsed, ere she seemed to be even sensible of his presence. At length she became more calm, and apparently making a struggle to compose herself, she raised her head.

"Are you better, dearest?" asked Vivian, with a voice of the greatest anxiety.

"Much! much! quite, quite well! Let us walk for a moment about the room!"

As Vivian was just raising her from his knee, he was suddenly seized by the throat with a strong grasp. He turned round—it was Mr. Beckendorff, with a face deadly white, his full eyes darting from their sockets like a hungry snake's, and the famous Italian dagger in his right hand.

"Villain!" said he, in the low voice of fatal passion. "Villain! is this your destiny?"

Vivian's first thoughts were for the baroness; and turning his head from Beckendorff, he looked with the eye of anxious love to his companion. But, instead of fainting—instead of being overwhelmed by this terrible interruption, she seemed, on the contrary, to have suddenly regained her natural spirit and self-possession. The blood had returned to her hitherto pale cheek, and the fire to an eye before dull with weeping. She extricated herself immediately from Vivian's encircling arm; and by so doing, enabled him to spring upon his legs, and to have struggled, if it had been necessary, more equally with the powerful grasp of his assailant.

"Stand off, sir!" said the baroness, with an air of inexpressible dignity, and a voice which even at this crisis seemed to anticipate that it would be obeyed. "Stand off, sir! stand off, I command you!"

Beckendorff, for one moment, was motionless: he then gave her a look of the most piercing earnestness, threw Vivian, rather than released him, from his hold, and flung the dagger, with a bitter smile, into the corner of the room. "Well, madam!" said he, in a choking voice, "you are obeyed!"

"Mr. Grey," continued the baroness, "I regret that this outrage should have been experienced by you, because you have dared to serve me. My presence should have preserved you from this contumely; but what are we to expect from those who pride themselves upon being the sons of slaves! You shall hear further from me." So saying, the lady bowing to Vivian, and sweeping by the minister, with a glance of indescribable disdain, quitted the apartment. As she was on the point of leaving the room, Vivian was standing against the wall, with a pale face and folded arms—Beckendorff with his back to the window, his eyes fixed on the ground—and Vivian to his astonishment perceived, what escaped the minister's notice, that while the lady bade him adieu with one hand, she made rapid signs with the other to some unknown person in the garden.

Mr. Beckendorff and Vivian were left alone, and the latter was the first to break silence.

"Mr. Beckendorff," said he, in a calm voice, "considering the circumstances under which you

have found me in your house this morning, I should have known how to excuse, and to forget, any irritable expressions which a moment of ungovernable passion might have inspired. I should have passed them over unnoticed. But your unjustifiable behaviour has exceeded that line of demarcation, which sympathy with human feelings allows even men of honour to recognise. You have disgraced both me and yourself by giving me a blow. It is, as that lady well styled it, an outrage—an outrage which the blood of any other man but yourself could only obliterate from my memory; but while I am inclined to be indulgent to your exalted station and your peculiar character, I at the same time expect, and now wait for an apology."

"An apology!" said Beckendorff, now beginning to stamp up and down the room; "an apology! Shall it be made to you, sir, or the archdutchess?"

"The archdutchess!" said Vivian; "good God! what can you mean? Did I hear you right?"

"I said, the archdutchess," answered Beckendorff with firmness; "a princess of the house of Austria, and the pledged wife of his royal highness the Crown Prince of Reisenberg. Perhaps you may now think that other persons have to apologize!"

"Mr. Beckendorff," said Vivian, "I am overwhelmed; I declare, upon my honour—"

"Stop, sir! you have said too much already—"

"But, Mr. Beckendorff, surely you will allow me to explain—"

"Sir! there is no need of explanation. I know every thing—more than you do yourself. You can have nothing to explain to me; and I presume you are now fully aware of the impossibility of again speaking to her. It is at present within an hour of noon. Before sunset you must be twenty miles from the court—so far you will be attended. Do not answer me—you know my power. A remonstrance only, and I write to Vienna; your progress shall be stopped throughout the south of Europe. For her sake, this business will be hushed up. An important and secret mission will be the accredited reason of your leaving Reisenberg. This will be confirmed by your official attendant, who will be an envoy's courier. Farewell!"

As Mr. Beckendorff quitted the room, his confidential servant, the messenger to Turriparva, entered; and with the most respectful bow, informed Vivian that the horses were ready. In about three hours time, Vivian Grey, followed by the government messenger, stopped at his hotel. The landlord and waiters bowed with increased obsequiousness on seeing him so attended; and in a few minutes Reisenberg was ringing with the news, that his appointment to the under-secretaryship of state was now "a settled thing."

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE landlord of the Grand Hotel of the Four Nations at Reisenberg was somewhat consoled for the sudden departure of his distinguished customer, by selling the plenipotentiary a travelling carriage,

lately taken for a doubtful bill from a gambling Russian general, at one hundred per cent. profit. In this convenient vehicle, in the course of a couple of hours after his arrival in the city, was Mr. Vivian Grey borne through the Gate of the Allies. Essper George, who had reached the hotel about half an hour after his master, followed behind the carriage on his hack, leading Max. The courier cleared the road before, and expedited the arrival of the Special Envoy of the Grand-duke of Reisenberg at the point of his destination, by ordering the horses, clearing the barriers, and paying the postillions in advance. Vivian had never travelled before with such style and speed.

Our hero covered himself up with his cloak, and drew his travelling cap over his eyes, though it was one of the hottest days of this singularly hot autumn; but the very light of heaven was hateful to him. Perfectly overwhelmed with his last crushing misfortune, he was unable even to moralize:—to reflect, or to regret, or even to remember. Entranced in a reverie, the only figure that occurred to his mind was the young archduchess, and the only sounds that dwelt on his ear, were the words of Beckendorff: but neither to the person of the first, nor to the voice of the second, did he annex any definite idea.

After nearly three hours travelling, which to Vivian seemed both an age and a minute, he was roused from his stupor by the door of his calèche being opened. He shook himself as a man does who has wakened from a benumbing and heavy sleep, although his eyes were the whole time wide open. The disturbing intruder was his courier; who, bowing, with his hat in his hand, informed his excellency that he was now twenty miles from Reisenberg, and that the last postillions had done their duty so exceedingly well, that he trusted his excellency would instruct his servant to give them double the tariff. Here he regretted that he was under the necessity of quitting his excellency, and he begged to present his excellency with his passport. "It is made out for Vienna," continued the messenger. "A private pass, sir, of the prime minister, and will entitle you to the greatest consideration." The messenger receiving a low bow for his answer and reward, took his leave.

The carriage was soon again advancing rapidly to the next post-house; when, after they had proceeded about half a mile, Essper George calling loudly from behind, the drivers suddenly stopped. Just as Vivian, to whose tortured mind the rapid movement of the carriage was some relief—for it produced an excitement which prevented thought—was about to inquire the cause of this stoppage, Essper George rode up to the calèche.

"Kind sir!" said he, with a very peculiar look, "I have a packet for you."

"A packet! from whom? speak! give it me!"

"Hush! hush! hush! softly, softly, good master. Here I am about to commit rank treason for your sake; and a hasty word is the only reward of my rashness."

"Nay, nay, good Essper, try me not now!"

"I will not, I will not, kind sir; but the truth is, I could not give you the packet while that double-faced knave was with us, or even while he was in sight. 'In good truth,' as Master Rodolph was wont to say—ah! when shall I see his sleekness again!"

"But of this packet!"

"'Fair and softly, fair and softly,' good sir! as Hunsdrich the porter said, when I would have drunk the mulled wine, while he was on the cold staircase—"

"Essper! do you mean to enrage me?"

"By St. Hubert! as that worthy gentleman, the grand-marshal, was in the habit of swearing, I—"

"This is too much—what are the idle sayings of these people to me?"

"Nay, nay, kind sir, they do but show that each of us has his own way of telling a story; and that he who would hear a tale, must let the teller's breath come out of his own nostrils."

"Well, Essper, speak on! Stranger things have happened to me than to be reproved by my own servant."

"Nay, my kind master, say not a bitter word to me, because you have slipped out of a scrape with your head on your shoulders. The packet is from Mr. Beckendorff's daughter."

"Ah! why did not you give it to me before?"

"Why do I give it you now? Because I'm a fool—that's why. What! you wanted it when that double-faced scoundrel was watching every eyelash of yours, as it moved from the breath of a fly!—a fellow who can see as well at the back of his head, as from his face. I should like to poke out his front eyes, to put him on an equality with the rest of mankind. He it was who let the old gentleman know of your visit this morning, and I shrewdly suspect that he has been nearer your limbs of late than you have imagined. Every dog has his day, and the oldest pig must look for his knife! The devil was once cheated on Sunday, and I have been too sharp for puss in boots and his mousetrap! Prowling about the forrest counselor's house, I saw your new servant, sir, gallop in, and his old master soon gallop out; I was off as quick as they but was obliged to leave my horse within two miles of the house, and then trust to my legs. I crept through the shrubs like a land tortoise; but, of course, too late to warn you. However, I was in for the death, and making signs to the young lady, who directly saw that I was a friend,—bless her! she is as quick as a partridge,—I left you to settle it with papa, and after all, did that which I suppose your highness intended to do yourself—made my way into the young lady's—bed-chamber."

"Hold your tongue, you rascal! and give me the packet."

"There it is, sir, and now we will go on; but we must stay an hour at the next post, if your honour pleases not to sleep there; for both Max and my own hack have had a sharp day's work."

Vivian tore open the packet. It contained a long letter, written on the night of her return to Beckendorff's; she had stayed up the whole night writing. It was to have been forwarded to Vivian, in case of their not being able to meet. In the enclosure were a few hurried lines, written since the catastrophe. They were these:—"May this safely reach you! Can you ever forgive me? The enclosed, you will see, was intended for you, in case of our not meeting. It anticipated sorrow: yet what were its anticipations to our reality?"

The archduchess's letter was evidently written under the influence of the most agitated feelings. I omit it; because, as the mystery of her character is now explained, a great portion of her communi-

caution would be irrelevant to our tale. She spoke of her exalted station as a woman—that station which so many women envy—in a spirit of the most agonizing bitterness. A royal princess is only the most flattered of state victims. She is a political sacrifice, by which enraged governments are appeased, wavering allies conciliated, and ancient amities confirmed. Debarred by her rank and her education from looking forward to that exchange of equal affection, which is the great end and charm of female existence; no individual finds more fatally, and feels more keenly, that pomp is not felicity, and splendour not content.

Deprived of all those sources of happiness which seem inherent in woman, the wife of the sovereign sometimes seeks in politics and in pleasure, a means of excitement which may purchase oblivion. But the political queen is a rare character; she must possess an intellect of unusual power, and her lot must be considered as an exception in the fortunes of female royalty. Even the political queen generally closes an agitated career with a broken heart. And for the unhappy votary of pleasure, who owns her cold duty to a royal husband, we must not forget, that even in the most dissipated courts, the conduct of the queen is expected to be decorous; and that the instances are not rare, where the wife of the monarch has died on the scaffold, or in the dungeon, or in exile, because she dared to be indiscreet, where all were debauched. But for the great majority of royal wives, they exist without a passion; they have nothing to hope—nothing to fear—nothing to envy—nothing to want—nothing to confide—nothing to hate—and nothing to love. Even their duties, though multitudinous, are mechanical; and while they require much attention, occasion no anxiety. Amusement is their moment of greatest emotion, and for them amusement is rare; for amusement is the result of equal companionship. Thus situated, they are doomed to become frivolous in their pursuits, and formal in their manners; and the court chaplain, or the court confessor, is the only person who can prove they have a soul, by convincing them that it will be saved.

The young archduchess had assented to the proposition of marriage with the Crown Prince of Reisenberg without opposition; as she was convinced that requesting her assent, was only a courteous form of requiring her compliance. There was nothing outrageous to her feelings in marrying a man whom she had never seen; because her education, from her tenderest years, had daily prepared her for such an event. Moreover, she was aware that, if she succeeded in escaping from the offers of the Crown Prince of Reisenberg, she would soon be under the necessity of assenting to those of some other suitor; and if proximity to her own country, accordance with its sentiments and manners, and previous connexion with her own house, were taken into consideration, a union with the family of Reisenberg was even desirable. It was to be preferred, at least, to one which brought with it a foreign husband, and a foreign clime; a strange language and strange customs. The archduchess—a girl of ardent feelings and lively mind—had not, however, agreed to become that all-commanding slave—a queen—without a stipulation. She required that she might be allowed, previous to her marriage, to visit her future court, incognita. This singular and unparalleled proposition was not easily

accessed to; but the opposition with which it was received, only tended to make the young princess more determined to be gratified in her caprice. Her imperial highness did not pretend that any end was to be obtained by this unusual procedure, and indeed she had no definite purpose in requesting it to be permitted. It was originally the mere whim of the moment, and had it not been strongly opposed, it would not have been strenuously insisted upon. As it was, the young archduchess persisted, threatened, and grew obstinate; and the gray-headed negotiators of the marriage, desirous of its speedy completion, and not having a more tractable tool ready to supply her place, at length yielded to her bold importunity. Great difficulty, however, was experienced in carrying her wishes into execution. By what means, and in what character she was to appear at court, so as not to excite suspicion or occasion discovery, were often discussed, without being resolved upon. At length it became necessary to consult Mr. Beckendorff. The upper lip of the Prime Minister of Reisenberg, curled, as the imperial minister detailed the caprice and contumacy of the princess; and treating with the greatest contempt this girlish whim, Mr. Beckendorff ridiculed those by whom it had been humoured, with no suppressed derision. The consequence of his conduct was an interview with the future grand-duchess, and the consequence of his interview, an unexpected undertaking on his part to arrange the visit according to her highness's desires.

The archduchess had not yet seen the crown-prince; but six miniatures, and a whole-length portrait had prepared her for not meeting an Adonis, or a Baron Trenck; and that was all—for never had the Correggio of the age of Charles the Fifth, better substantiated his claims to the office of court painter, than by these accurate semblances of his royal highness; in which his hump was subdued into a Grecian bend, and his lack-lustre eyes seemed beaming with tenderness and admiration. His betrothed bride stipulated with Mr. Beckendorff, that the fact of her visit should be known only to himself and the grand-duke; and before she appeared at court, she had received the personal pledge, both of himself and his royal highness, that the affair should be kept a complete secret from the crown prince.

Most probably, on her first introduction to her future husband, all the romantic plans of the young archduchess, to excite an involuntary interest in his heart, vanished—but how this may be, it is needless for us to inquire: for that same night introduced another character into her romance, for whom she was perfectly unprepared, and whose appearance totally disorganized its plot.

Her inconsiderate, her unjustifiable conduct, in tampering with that individual's happiness and affection, was what the young haughty archduchess deplored in the most energetic, the most feeling, and the most humble spirit; and anticipating, that after this painful disclosure, they would never meet again, she declared, that for his sake alone she regretted what had passed—and praying that he might be happier than herself, she supplicated to be forgiven, and forgotten.

Vivian read the archduchess's letter over, and over again; and then put it in his breast. At first he thought that he had lived to shed another tear; but he was mistaken. In a few minutes he found himself quite roused from his late overwhelming

stupor—quite light-hearted—almost gay. Remorse, or regret for the past—care, or caution for the future, seemed at the same moment to have fled from his mind. He looked up to heaven, with a wild smile—half of despair, and half of defiance. It seemed to imply, that Fate had now done her worst; and that he had at last the satisfaction of knowing himself to be the most unfortunate and unhappy being that ever existed. When a man, at the same time, believes in and sneers at his destiny, we may be sure that he considers his condition past redemption.

CHAPTER II.

THEY stopped for an hour at the next post, according to Essper's suggestion. Indeed, he proposed resting there for the night, for both men and beasts much required repose; but Vivian panted to reach Vienna, to which city two days travelling would now carry him. His passions were so roused, and his powers of reflection so annihilated, that while he had determined to act desperately, he was unable to resolve upon any thing desperate. Whether, on his arrival at the Austrian capital, he should plunge into dissipation, or into the Danube, was equally uncertain. He had some thought of joining the Greeks or Turks—no matter which—probably the latter—or perhaps of serving in the Americas. The idea of returning to England never once entered his mind: he expected to find letters from his father at Vienna, and he almost regretted it; for, in his excessive misery, it was painful to be conscious that a being still breathed, who was his friend.

It was a fine moonlight night, but the road was very mountainous; and in spite of all the encouragement of Vivian, and all the consequent exertions of the postilion, they were upwards of two hours and a half going these eight miles. To get on any farther to-night was quite impossible. Essper's horse was fairly knocked up, and even Max visibly distressed. The post-house was fortunately an inn. It was not at a village; and, as far as the travellers could learn, not near one; and its appearance did not promise very pleasing accommodation. Essper, who had scarcely tasted food for nearly eighteen hours, was not highly delighted with the prospect before them. His anxiety, however, was not merely selfish; he was as desirous that his young master should be refreshed by a good night's rest, as himself; and anticipating that he should have to exercise his skill in making a couch for Vivian in the carriage, he proceeded to cross-examine the post-master on the possibility of his accommodating them. The host was a most pious-looking personage, in a black velvet cap, with a singularly meek and charitable expression of countenance. His long black hair was very exquisitely braided; and he wore round his neck a collar of pewter medals, all which had been recently sprinkled with holy water, and blessed under the petticoat of the saintly Virgin; for the post-master had only just returned from a pilgrimage to the celebrated shrine of the Black Lady of Altotting.

"Good friend," said Essper, looking him cunningly in the face; "I fear that we must order horses on: you can hardly accommodate two?"

"Good friend!" answered the innkeeper, and he crossed himself very reverently at the same time: "it is not for man to fear, but to hope."

"If your beds were as good as your adages," said Essper George, laughing, "in good truth, as a friend of mine would say, I would sleep here to-night."

"Prithee, friend," continued the innkeeper, kissing a medal of his collar very devoutly, "what accommodation dost thou lack?"

"Why," said Essper, "in the way of accommodation, little—for two excellent beds will content us; but in the way of refreshment—by St. Hubert! as another friend of mine would swear—he would be a bold man who would engage to be as hungry before his dinner, as I shall be after my supper."

"Friend!" said the innkeeper, "Our Lady forbid that thou shouldst leave our walls to-night; for the accommodation, we have more than sufficient; and as for the refreshment—by holy mass! we had a priest tarry here last night, and he left his rosary behind; I will comfort my soul by telling my beads over the kitchen fire; and for every paternoster my wife shall give thee a rasher of kid, and for every ave a tumbler of Augsburg; which, our Lady forget me, if I did not myself purchase, but yesterday se'ennight, from the pious fathers of the convent of St. Florian!"

"I take thee at thy word, honest sir," said Essper. "By the creed! I liked thy appearance from the first: nor wilt thou find me unwilling, when my voice has taken its supper, to join thee in some pious hymn or holy canticle. And now for the beds!"

"There is the green room—the best bedroom in my house," said the innkeeper. "Holy Mary forget me! if in that same bed have not stretched their legs, more valorous generals, more holy prelates, and more distinguished counsellors of our lord the emperor, than in any bed in all Austria."

"That then for my master,—and for myself!—"

"H—u—m!" said the host, looking very earnestly in Essper's face; "I should have thought that thou wert one more anxious after dish and flaggon, than curtain and eider down!"

"By my mother! I love good cheer," said Essper earnestly; "and want it more at this moment than any knave that ever yet starved: but if thou hast not a bed to let me stretch my legs on after four-and-twenty hours' hard riding, by holy Virgin! I will have horses on to Vienna."

"Our Black Lady forbid!" said the innkeeper, with a quick voice, and with rather a dismayed look—"said I that thou shouldst *not* have a bed? St. Florian desert me! if I and my wife would not sooner sleep in the chimney-corner, than that thou shouldst miss one wink of thy slumbers!"

"In one word, have you a bed?"

"Have I a bed? Where slept, I should like to know, the Vice-principal of the convent of Molk, on the day before the last holy Ascension? The waters were out in the morning; and when will my wife forget what his reverence was pleased to say, when he took his leave!—"Good woman!" said he, "my duty calls me; but the weather is cold; and, between ourselves, I am used to great feasts; and I should have no objection, if I were privileged to stay, and to eat again of thy red cabbage and cream!"—what say you to that? Do you think we have got beds now! You shall sleep to-night, sir, like an Aulic counsellor."

This adroit introduction of the red cabbage and cream settled every thing—when men are wearied and famished, they have no inclination to be incredulous—and in a few moments Vivian was informed by his servant, that the promised accommodation was satisfactory; and having locked up the carriage, and wheeled it into a small out-house, he and Essper were ushered by their host into a room, which, as is usual in small German inns in the south, served at the same time both for kitchen and saloon. The fire was lit in a platform of brick, raised in the centre of the floor:—the sky was visible through the chimney, which, although of a great breadth below, gradually narrowed to the top. A family of wandering Bohemians, consisting of the father and mother, and three children, were seated on the platform when Vivian entered: the man was playing on a coarse wooden harp, without which the Bohemians seldom travel. The music ceased as the new guests came into the room, and the Bohemian courteously offered his place at the fire to our hero; who, however, declined disturbing the family group. A small table and a couple of chairs were placed in a corner of the room by the innkeeper's wife—a bustling, active dame—who apparently found no difficulty in laying the cloth, dusting the furniture, and cooking the supper, at the same time. At this table, Vivian and his servant seated themselves; and, in spite of his misfortunes, Vivian was soon engaged in devouring the often-supplied and savoury rashers of the good woman; nor, indeed, did her cookery discredit the panegyric of the Reverend Vice-principal of the convent of Molk.

Alike wearied in mind and in body, Vivian soon asked for his bed; which, though not exactly fit for an Aulic counsellor, as the good host perpetually avowed it to be, nevertheless afforded very decent accommodation.

The Bohemian family retired to the hay-loft; and Essper George would have followed his master's example had not the kind mistress of the house tempted him to stay behind, by the production of a new platter of rashers; indeed, he never remembered meeting with such hospitable people as the post-master and his wife. They had evidently taken a great fancy to him; and, though extremely wearied, the lively little Essper endeavoured, between his quick mouthfuls and long draughts, to reward and encourage their kindness by many a good story and sharp joke. With all these, both mine host and his wife were exceedingly amused; seldom containing their laughter, and frequently protesting, by the sanctity of various saints, that this was the pleasantest night, and Essper the pleasantest fellow, that they had ever met with.

"Eat, eat, my friend!" said his host; "by the mass! thou hast travelled far; and fill thy glass, and pledge with me our Black Lady of Altoting. By holy cross! I have hung up this week in her chapel a garland of silk roses; and have ordered to be burned before her shrine, three pounds of perfumed wax tapers! Fill again, fill again! and thou too, good mistress; a hard day's work hast thou had—a glass of wine will do thee no harm: join me with our new friend! Pledge we together the Holy Fathers of St. Flórain, my worldly patrons, and my spiritual pastors: let us pray that his reverence the sub-prior may not have his Christmas attack of gout in the stomach; and a better health to poor Father Felix! Fill again, fill again! this

Augsburg is somewhat acid; we will have a bottle of Hungary. Mistress, fetch us the bell-glasses, and here to the Reverend Vice-principal of Molk! our good friend: when will my wife forget what he said to her on the morning of the last holy Ascension? Fill again, fill again!"

Inspired by the convivial spirit of the pious and jolly post-master, Essper George soon forgot his threatened visit to his bed-room, and ate and drank, laughed and joked, as if he were again with his friend, Master Rodolph; but wearied nature at length avenged herself for this unnatural exertion; and leaning back in his chair, he was, in the course of an hour, overcome by one of those dead and heavy slumbers, the effect of the united influence of fatigue and intemperance—in short, it was like the midnight sleep of a fox-hunter.

No sooner had our pious votary of the Black Lady of Altoting observed the effect of his Hungary wine, than making a well understood sign to his wife, he took up the chair of Essper in his brawny arms; and preceded by Mrs. Post-mistress with a lantern, he left the room with his guest. Essper's hostess led and lighted the way to an out-house, which occasionally served as a remise, a stable, and a lumber-room. It had no window; and the lantern afforded the only light which exhibited its present contents. In one corner was a donkey tied up, belonging to the Bohemian; and in another a dog, belonging to the post-master. Hearing the whispered voice of his master, this otherwise brawling animal was quite silent. Under a hayrack was a large child's cradle: it was of a very remarkable size, having been made for twins; who to the great grief of the post-master and his lady, departed this life at an early, but promising age. Near it was a very low wooden sheep-tank, half filled with water, and which had been placed there for the refreshment of the dog and his feathered friends—a couple of turkeys, and a considerable number of fowls, who also at present were quietly roosting in the rack.

The pious innkeeper very gently lowered to the ground the chair on which Essper was soundly sleeping; and then, having crossed himself, he took up our friend with great tenderness and solicitude, and dexterously fitted him in the huge cradle. This little change must have been managed with great skill—like all other skill, probably acquired by practice—for overwhelming as was Essper's stupor, it nevertheless required considerable time, nicety, and trouble, to arrange him comfortably on the mouldy mattress of the deceased twins—so very fine was the fit! However, the kind-hearted host had the satisfaction of retiring from the stable, with the consciousness, that the guest, whose company had so delighted him, was enjoying an extremely sound slumber; and fearing the watchful dog might disturb him, he thought it only prudent to take Master Rouseall along with him.

About an hour past midnight, Essper George awoke. He was lying on his back, and excessively unwell; and, on trying to move, he found, to his great astonishment, that he was rocking. Every circumstance of his late adventure was perfectly obliterated from his memory; and the strange movement, united with his peculiar indisposition, left him no doubt that the dream, which was in fact the effect of his intemperance, combined with the rocking of the cradle on the slightest motion, was a melancholy reality; and that what he considered

the greatest evil of life was now his lot—in short that he was on board a ship! As is often the case when we are tipsy or nervous, Essper had been woken by the fright of falling from some immense height; and finding that his legs had no sensation, for they were quite benumbed, he concluded that he had fallen down the hatchway, that his legs were broken, and himself jammed in between some logs of wood in the hold; and so he began to cry lustily to those above, to come down to his rescue. How long he would have continued hailing the neglectful crew, it is impossible to ascertain; but, in the midst of his noisy alarm, he was seized with another attack of sickness, which soon quieted him.

“O, Essper George!” thought he, “Essper George! how came you to set foot on salt timber again? Had you not had enough of it in the Mediterranean and the Turkish seas, that you must be getting aboard this lubberly Dutch galliot! for I am sure she’s Dutch, by being so low in the water. How did I get here?—Who am I?—Am I Essper George, or am I not?—Where was I last?—How came I to fall?—O! my poor legs!—How the vessel rocks!—Sick again!—Well they may talk of a sea-life, but for my part, I never even saw the use of the sea—O, Lord! how she rolls—what a heave! I never saw the use of the sea.—Many a sad heart has it caused, and many a sick stomach has it occasioned! The boldest sailor climbs on board with a heavy soul, and leaps on land with a light spirit.—O! thou indifferent ape of earth! thy houses are of wood, and thy horses of canvass; thy roads have no landmarks, and thy highways no inns; thy hills are green without grass, and wet without showers!—and as for food, what art thou, O, bully ocean! but the stable of horse-fishes, the stall of cow-fishes, the sty of hog-fishes, and the kennel of dog-fishes!—O! commend me to a fresh water dish for meager days!—Seaweed, stewed with chalk, may be savoury stuff for a merchant; but, for my part, give me red cabbage and cream: and as for drink, a man may live in the midst of thee his whole life, and die for thirst at the end of it! Besides, thou blasphemous salt lake, where is thy religion? Where are thy churches, thou heretic? Thou wouldst be burnt by the Inquisition, were it not that thy briny water is fit for nothing but to extinguish an *Auto-de-Fé*. Ah me! would that my legs were on my body again, and that body on terra firma! I am left to perish below, while the rascally surgeon above, is joining with the purser to defraud the Guinea pigs at dice. I’ll expose him!” So saying, Essper made a desperate effort to crawl up the hold. His exertions, of course, set the cradle rocking with renewed violence; and at last, dashing with great force against the sheep-tank, that pastoral piece of furniture was overset, and part of its contents poured upon the inmate of the cradle.

“Sprung a-leak in the hold, by St. Nicholas!” bawled out Essper George. “Caulkers, a-hoy! a-hoy! Can’t you hear, you scoundrels! I can’t stone-hearted ruffians!—a-hoy! a-hoy!—I can’t cry, for the life of me! They said I should be used to the rocking after the first month; and here, by the soul of a seaman! I can’t even speak! O! the liars, the wicked liars! If the captain expect any thing from me, he is mistaken. I know what I shall do when he comes. ‘Captain! I shall say, ‘when you behave like a gentleman, you may expect to be treated as such.’”

At this moment three or four fowls, roused by the fall of the tank, and the consequent shouts of Essper, began fluttering about the rack, and at last perched upon the cradle. “The live stock got loose!” screamed Essper, in a voice of terror, in spite of a new attack of sickness; “the live stock got loose! sprung a-leak! below here! below! below! and the breeze is getting stiffer every instant! Where’s the captain? I will see him; I’m not one of the crew: I belong to the court! What court? what am I talking about! One would think that I was drunk. Court indeed! what can I mean? I must have cracked my skull when I fell like a lubber down that confounded hatchway! Court indeed! Egad! I feel as if I had been asleep, and been dreaming I was at court. Well, it’s enough to make one laugh, after all! What’s that noise? why, here’s a jackass in the hold! this is not right—some job of that villainous purser! Well, he’s found out at last! Rasher of kid indeed! What business has he to put me off with rashers of kid, and give me sour wine! This is the first voyage that I ever heard of, where a whole crew were fed for months on rashers of kid, and sour wine. O, the villain! is this what he calls doing his duty? is this—why, here are all the turkeys screaming; all the live-stock loose—below here! below! Above deck a-hoy! ye lubbers a-hoy! live-stock loose! sprung a-leak! purser’s job! purser has got a jackass—purser’s jackass—purser is a j—a—c—k—jack—jack—jack—jack—jackass!” Here our sailor, overcome by his exertions and the motion of his vessel, again fell asleep.

Presently he was awakened, not by the braying of the jackass, nor the screaming of the turkeys, nor the cackling of the chickens! but by the sound of heavy footsteps over his head. These noises were at once an additional proof that he was in the hold, and an additional stimulus to his calls to those on deck. In fact, these sounds were occasioned by the Bohemians, who always rose before break of day; and consequently, in a few minutes, the door of the stable opened, and the Bohemian, with a lantern in his hand, entered.

“Who are you?” hallooed out Essper George, greatly refreshed by his last slumber; “what do you want?” continued he; for the man astounded at hearing a human voice, at first could not reply.

“I want my jackass,” he at length said.

“You do,” said Essper, “do you? Now a’n’t you a pretty fellow? You a purser! A fellow who gives us rashers of kid a whole voyage; nothing but kid, kid, kid, every day! and here are detected keeping a jackass among the poultry! a jackass, of all animals! eating all the food of our live-stock, and we having kid every day—kid, kid, kid! Pray why didn’t you come to me before? Why didn’t you send the surgeon? Now, a’n’t you a scoundrel! Though both my legs are off, I’ll have a sling at you!”—and so saying, Essper, aided by the light of the lantern, and with infinite exertion, scrambled out of the cradle, and taking up the sheep-tank, sent it straight at the astonished Bohemian’s head. The aim was good, and the man fell; more, however, from fright than injury. Seizing his lantern, which had fallen out of his hand, Essper escaped through the stable-door, and rushed into the house. He found himself in the kitchen. The noise of his entrance roused the landlord and his wife, who had been sleeping by the fire; since, not

having a single bed besides their own, they had given that up to Vivian. The countenance of the innkeeper effectually dispelled the clouds which had been fast clearing off from Essper's intellect. Giving one wide stare, and then rubbing his eyes, the whole truth lighted upon him; and so, being in the humour for flinging, he sent the Bohemian's lantern at his landlord's head. The post-master seized the poker, and the post-mistress a fagot; and as the Bohemian, who had now recovered himself, had entered in the rear, Essper George certainly stood a fair chance of receiving a thorough drubbing: which doubtless he would have got, had not his master, roused by the suspicious noises and angry sounds which had reached his room, entered the kitchen with his pistols. The group is a good one; and I therefore will not disturb it till the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

As it was now morning, Vivian did not again retire to rest, but took advantage of the disturbance in the inn, to continue his route at an earlier hour than he had previously intended. As he was informed that he would meet with no accommodation for the next fifty or sixty miles, his projected course lying through an extremely mountainous and wild tract in the vicinity of the Lake of Gmunden, he was fain to postpone his departure, until he and his attendant had procured their breakfasts; and moreover, willingly acceded to a suggestion of the post-master, of taking with him a small basket, containing some slight refreshment for their "noon meal." Accordingly the remnants of their breakfast, a cold fowl—a relation of the live-stock which had so terribly disturbed Essper during the night—some fruit, and a bottle of thin white wine, were packed by the dapper post-mistress in a neat little basket. The horses were now put to, and nothing remained to be done, but to discharge the innkeeper's bill. The conduct of mine host and his good wife, had been so exceedingly obliging—for Vivian had not even listened to Essper's complaint, treating the whole affair as a drunken brawl—that Vivian had nearly made up his mind to wave the ceremony of having a regular bill presented to him; and feeling that the greatest charge which the post-master could make for his accommodation, could not reward him for his considerate conduct, he was on the point of making him a very handsome present, when the account was sent in. To Vivian's astonishment, he found that the charge exceeded, by about five times as much, the amount of his intended, and, as he had considered it, rather extravagant gratuity. The first item was for apartments—a saloon, and two best bed-chambers! Then came Vivian's light supper, figuring as a dinner pour un maitre; and as for Essper George's feed, it was inserted under two different heads, "servant's dinner," and "servant's supper;" the retirement of Vivian from the smoky kitchen, having been the event which distinguished the moment when the first meal had terminated, and the second commenced. More ceremonious accuracy could not have been displayed in settling the boundaries of two empires or deciding the commencement of the Sabbath. And as for wine, the thin Augsburg, though charged by the dozen, did not cost as much as the Hungary, charged by the bottle. It appeared

by the bill also, that there had been no slight breakage of bell-glasses, nor was the sheep-tank, minus a leg by the overthrow of the Bohemian, forgotten; but looked imposing under the title of "injured bed-room furniture." Vivian scarcely got as far as their breakfasts, but even their excessive price passed from his mind, when his eye lighted on the enormous item which entitled them to the basket of provisions. It would have supported the poor Bohemians for a year.

Our hero's indignation was excessive, particularly as he now felt it his duty to listen to Essper's bitter complaints. Vivian contented himself, however, with returning the account of Essper to the post-master, who took care not to be in his customer's presence; informing mine host that there was some little mistake in his demand, and requesting him to make out a new charge. But the character of the pious, loquacious, complaisant, and convivial innkeeper, seemed suddenly to have undergone a very strange revolution. He had become sullen, and silent; listened to Vivian's message with imperturbable composure, and then refused to reduce his charge one single kreutzer.

Vivian, whose calm philosophy had received rather a rude shock since his last interview with Mr. Beckendorf, and who was not therefore in the most amiable of humours, did not now conceal his indignation; nor, as far as words could make an impression, spare the late object of his intended generosity. That pious person bore his abuse like a true Christian; crossing himself at every opprobrious epithet that was heaped upon him, with great reverence, and kissing a holy medal of his blessed necklace whenever his guests threatened vengeance and anticipated redress. But no word escaped the whole time from the mouth of the spiritual protégé of the Holy Fathers of St. Florian: pale and pig-headed, he bore all with that stubborn silence, which proved him no novice in such scenes; and not even our Black Lady of Alotting was called upon to interfere in his favour, or to forgive, or forget, his innocent imposition. But his mild, and active, and obliging wife amply compensated, by her reception of our hero's complaints, for the rather uncourteous conduct of her husband. With arms a-kimbo, and flashing eyes, the vixen poured forth a volley of abuse both of Vivian and his servant, which seemed to astonish even her experienced husband. To leave the house without satisfying the full demand was impossible; for the demand, being post-master, could of course prevent the progress of his victim. In this state of affairs, irritated and defied, Vivian threatened to apply to the judge of the district. His threat bore with it no terrors; and imagining that the post-master reckoned that his guest was merely blustering, Vivian determined to carry the business through; and asked of a few idle persons who were standing around, which of them would show him the way to the judge of the district.

"I will myself attend your highness," said the innkeeper, with a bow of insolent politeness.

Vivian, however, did not choose to rely upon the post-master's faith; and so, attended by a young peasant, and followed at a few yards' distance by their host, he and Essper proceeded to find the judge of the district. The judge lived at a small village two miles up the country; but even this did not daunt our hero, who, in spite of the meek and constant smile of his host, bade his guide lead on,

Half an hour brought them to the hamlet. They proceeded down the only street which it contained, until they came to a rather large, but most dilapidated house, which their guide informed them was the residence of the judge. The great front gates being evidently unused, they rang the rusty bell at a small white door at the side of the mansion; and in a short time it was opened by a hard-working Austrian wench, who stared very much at the demand, as if she were but little accustomed to the admission of suitors. She bade them follow her down the court. Passing a heavy casement window, thickly overshadowed by a vine, she opened a door into a small and gloomy room, and the party were ushered into the solemn presence of the district judge. His worship was seated at a table, on which a few very ancient and dusty papers attempted to produce a show of business. He was earnestly engaged with his chocolate, and wore a crimson velvet cap, with a broad fur border, and a very imposing tassel. I need not describe his appearance very minutely—his worship being an individual whom we have had the honour of meeting with before; he being no less a personage than that dignified, economical, convivial, and most ill-treated judge from the Danube, whose unlucky adventure about the bottle of Rudesheimer was detailed in an early chapter of these volumes; and who it will be recollected was, at that time, if more good-humouredly, scarcely more courteously, treated by one of the present complainants, Essper George, than by his brutal boon companions—the University students.

"Pray, gentlemen, be seated: take a chair, sir!" said his worship as he raised himself on his elbows, staring in Vivian's face.—"H—u—u—m!" growled the fat judge, as he perceived the innkeeper standing on the threshold.—"Come in there, and shut the door. Well, gentlemen what is your pleasure?"

Vivian very temperately and briefly detailed the occasion of his visit. The judge listened in profound silence; his pouting lips and contracted brow making it difficult to ascertain whether he were thoughtful or sulky. The innkeeper did not attempt to interrupt the complainant during his statement, at least not by speech; but kept up a perpetual commentary on the various charges, by repeatedly crossing himself, sighing, and lifting up his hands and eyes, as much as to say, "What liars men are!" and then humbly throwing out his arms, and bending his head, he seemed to forgive their mendacity, and at the same time, trust that Heaven would imitate his example. While this scene was acting, Essper George got wound up to such a pitch of frenzy, between the injustice which he considered his master was doing to their case, the hypocritical gesticulations of the defendant, and the restraint laid upon his perpetual interference by Vivian, and the looks of the judge; that he could only be compared to a wild cat in a cage, hissing, spitting, threatening with his pawing hands, and setting up his back, as if he were about to spring upon his adversary and throttle him.

"Now!" said the judge sternly to the post-master, "what have you to say? How can you answer to yourself for treating a foreign gentleman in this manner?"

"St. Florian be my help!" said mine host with downcast eyes, "I am confounded: this worthy gentleman has most unaccountably deceived himself. Our Lady be my guide, while I speak the

truth! Late last night this noble traveller and his worthy attendant arrived at our poor dwelling. I was busying myself to get horses for his carriage, when the gentleman complained of so much illness and fatigue, that his servant entreated me to strive to give him accommodation for the night. Indeed, poor gentlemen! it is no wonder they were fatigued; for the young man himself, as he will bear witness for me," said the speaker, pointing to Essper "declared, that for four-and-twenty hours he had scarcely been off his horse; and had not, in that time, tasted food!"

"Yes! that was when you promised me the bed which the Vice-principal of Molk slept in," said Essper, stamping with such violence, that the old judge started with fright, and dropped his spoon! His worship looked angrily round, and Vivian again commanded Essper to be silent.

"Go on with your story," said the judge to the defendant.

"Hear me speak, your worship," said Essper; "he'll never have done. When once a man begins lying, he'll tell the truth on Tuesday se'ennight. The whole affair is this—"

"This person must be kept silent," said the judge. "You go on," continued he, pointing to the innkeeper, who was crossing himself most devoutly.

"The Mother of Mercy forgive me!" said the innkeeper, "if I have said aught unconsciously to hurt the feelings of any fellow-christian. If the tale told me were untrue, is it my fault that I gave it credit? My wife and I, pitying their sad condition, determined to exert ourselves for their relief. Our house, by the blessing of St. Florian, was filled. A respectable Bohemian family, who, from the treatment they have invariably received, consider our house their home, had taken up their lodgings with us for the night. Of a verity, we had no beds remaining, except the one in which I and my wife repose ourselves after our hard day's labour; and another which was made on purpose for, and scarcely ever used by any persons, except our two dear and lamented children!"

"A mouldy cradle!" bawled Essper George.

"Our two lovely children slept together in it!" said the innkeeper, with a softened voice and a starting tear.

"A crib, I suppose?" said the judge.

"Verily a large sized crib! Excuse this emotion," said mine host, swallowing a sob; "it is a subject on which I unwillingly dwell."

In this manner were nearly two hours occupied; the pious post-master calmly and charitably explaining his conduct, defending himself against every count of the indictment, and never once giving way to an irritable expression, although constantly interrupted and abused by Essper George; whose rage and mortification, at the complexion which the history of his ill-treatment was assuming before the judge, exceeded all bounds.

"Gentlemen!" said the judge, when the innkeeper had finished, "it appears to me that this poor man's case has been a little misunderstood by you. In the first place, it seems, that far from desiring you to stay under his roof, your lodging there must have put him to very serious inconvenience. I find that his wife, who had been hard worked the whole day, and was, moreover, far from being in strong health, was obliged to give

up her bed for the accommodation of her unexpected guest; and what more could your servant desire, than the bed in which their own children were accustomed to repose? As to the charge for your meals, and wine, and the basket of provisions, you are little aware at how much cost and labour we, who live among these mountains, procure even the commonest provisions, now rendered doubly scarce by the excessive heat and drought of the season. (Here the judge poured out another cup of chocolate.) Remember, also, that this is not a large city, and that we are obliged to provide at the beginning of the week for the wants of the remainder. You have probably, therefore, deprived this poor family of their sustenance for six days to come. Consider, also, that it was not necessary for the post-master to put himself to the expense of living in so large a house, and that it was entirely for the accommodation of respectable families travelling from Bohemia and Bavaria, and other places, that he has incurred the cost of maintaining this establishment! It is only fair, therefore, that you should properly remunerate him for the conveniences which, in such a country, you could hardly have expected to find, and for the extraordinary risk incurred by this hazardous investment of his capital. Respecting the treatment of which you complain, from his wife, I put it to your own feelings, as a gentleman, whether great allowance should not be made in a case where such exertions and sacrifices may have produced a slight degree of irritability and discomposure—the natural result of female delicacy and overpowering fatigue. For her husband, the present defendant, I should feel I was not discharging my duty, if I did not declare that this is the first time I have heard word of complaint against him by man, woman, or child; and if I were called upon to pick out the most civil, obliging, conscientious, liberal, charitable, unassuming, and thoroughly honest, and truly pious man, within my district, it is this worthy person whom I now see before me: and whose demand I feel it incumbent upon me to insist shall this moment be satisfied. My clerk is not in the way just now, but his fee you may leave upon the table: it is twenty per cent. upon the amount of the disputed sum. There is also one dollar due for the warrant; which, though not issued in the present instance, must be accounted for to government.”

Vivian threw down the sum in disgust, without deigning to reply; but Essper George was not so dignified. His rage was ludicrously excessive.

“I knew it would end so! You would not let me speak. Don't pay, sir—don't pay! The fat rascal is the worst of the two; and whenever I prosecute a person for stealing clothes off a naked man, or a beard from a child's elbow, I'll bring them before you, and they shall be found guilty!”

“Fellow!” said the magistrate, “do you know who I am?”

“Know you?” screamed Essper, with a malicious laugh: “know you? The very sight of you does my heart good. How did that Rudesheimer at Coblenz agree with you? I think you got a glass when the bottle was empty! O you old cheat! this is not the first time that you have wanted to make honest travellers pay for what they did not order! shame! shame!”

“You loose-tongued rascal!” said the agonized and choking magistrate, as he shuffled back his

chair, and threw his cup of chocolate at Essper's head. The knave, however, skilfully avoided it, and ran down the court after his master. His agility baffled the exertions of the gouty judge, who, thinking he was fairly rid of his tormentor, determined to forget his mortification in his per centage. He had just reseated himself in his easy chair, and was spinning the dollar on his thumb, revelling in his speculation, when Essper poked his head in at the opened casement.

“I forgot one thing!” said he, in an exulting whisper: “pray—how is your—grandfather?”

CHAPTER IV.

THIS unsuccessful appeal to justice cost Vivian almost as many golden hours as it had golden sovereigns. At length, however, his carriage drove off. His host neither showed pique at his opposition, nor triumph at his defeat: he was just as pious and polite as on the evening of their arrival, and crossed himself, and bowed to his departing guest, with emulative fervour. His wife, however, standing in the window, testified her exultation by clapping her hands and laughing as the carriage went off.

The postilion drove so well, that Essper had difficulty in keeping up with the horses; particularly as, when he had found himself safely mounted, he had lagged behind a few minutes to vent his spleen against the innkeeper's wife.

“May St. Florian confound me, madam!” said Essper, addressing himself to the lady in the window, “if ever I beheld so ugly a witch as yourself! Pious friend! thy chaplet of roses was ill bestowed, and thou needest not have travelled so far to light thy wax tapers at the shrine of the Black Lady at Altötting; for, by the beauty of holiness! an image of ebony is mother of pearl to that soot-face whom thou callest thy wife. Fare thee well! thou couple of saintly sinners; and may the next traveller who tarries in thy den of thieves, qualify thee for canonization by thy wife's admiring pastor, the cabbage-eating Vice-principal of Molk.”

The postilion blew his horn with unusual spirit, to announce the arrival of a traveller of consequence, at the next post-house; and Vivian had the mortification of being whirled up to the gateway of a large and well-appointed inn, situated in the high street of a smart-looking little town. The consciousness that he had been seduced into staying at the miserable place where he had passed the night, under the pretence that there was no better accommodation within fifty miles, the sight of his costly basket of broken victuals, and the recollection of the expense of time and money which he had incurred through his credulity, were not calculated to render his mood the most amiable. The postilion, perhaps observing a cloud upon his brow, and anticipating that he might suffer for his master's villany, bowed very low when he came up to the door of the carriage to be paid, and trusted most respectfully that his drink-money would not be diminished for any thing that had happened. “I was very sorry, sir,” continued he, “for what took place with my master; but I could do nothing, sir: I could not drive you without an order. I am sorry to say, it is nothing particularly new, sir. It wasn't much use your troubling your

self to go to the judge, for he always sides with master. Master married his sister, sir!"

While Vivian was speaking to the postilion, he heard the sound of a hammer behind the carriage; and, on looking round, perceived a man busily employed in working at one of the springs. This fellow was one of those officious smiths, who, on the Continent, regularly commence, without permission or necessity, their operations upon every carriage which drives up to the post-house. Vivian, convinced that his calèche did not, or ought not, to require the exercise of this artist's talents, after much trouble and some high talking, prevented him from proceeding. The man, however, tendered a demand for services which ought to have been performed, or ought to have been required. It was always the custom, he said, in that town, to have carriages examined and repaired; and if his highness's did not require his attention, it was not his fault. He was ready to repair the carriage—it ought to have been broken. Vivian, of course, refused to satisfy the fellow's insolent demand; and begged to assure him, that he was not one of those English lords, whom, evidently, the considerate smith was in the habit of practising upon. The man retired grumbling, with a most gloomy face.

On they went again, but not quite as comfortably as before: either the road was much worse, or the smith had been right in supposing that something was displaced. In the course of an hour Vivian was obliged to desire the postilion to drive carefully; and before the end of another, they had to ford a rivulet, running between two high banks. The scenery just here was particularly lovely, and Vivian's attention was so engrossed by it, that he did not observe the danger which he was about to incur.

As this scene is important to the narrative, I shall describe it with great accuracy, and I hope that it will be understood.

On the left of the road, a high range of rocky mountains abruptly descended into an open, but broken country; and on the other side of the road was occasionally bounded by low undulating hills, partially covered with dwarf woods, not high enough to obstruct the view of the distant horizon. Rocky knolls jutted out near the base of the mountains; and on the top of one of them, overlooked by a gigantic gray peak, stood an ancient and still inhabited feudal castle. Round the base of this insulated rock, a rustic village peeped above the encircling nut-woods—its rising smoke softening the hard features of the naked crag. On the side of the village nearest to Vivian, a bold sheet of water discharged itself in three separate falls, between the ravine of a wooded mountain; and flowing round the village as a fine broad river, expanded, before it reached the foundation of the castled rock, into a long and deep lake, which was also fed by numerous streams, the gulleys only of which were now visible down the steep sides of the mountains—their springs having been long dried up.

Vivian's view was interrupted by his sudden descent into the bed of the rivulet, one of the numerous branches of the mountain torrent, and by a crash which as immediately ensued. Through the unpaid assistance of the rejected smith, the spring of his carriage was broken, and various loosened nuts jolted out. The carriage of course fell over, but Vivian sustained no injury; and while Essper George rode forward to the village for assistance, his master helped the postilion to extricate the

horses and secure them on the opposite bank. They had done all that was in their power some time before Essper returned; and Vivian, who had seated himself on some tangled beech roots, was prevented growing impatient by contemplating the enchanting scenery. The postilion, on the contrary, who had travelled this road every day of his life, and who found no gratification in gazing upon rocks, woods, and waterfalls, lit his pipe, and occasionally talked to his horses. So essential an attribute of the beautiful is novelty! Essper at length made his appearance, attended by five or six peasants, all dressed in holiday costume, with some fanciful decorations; their broad hats wreathed with wild flowers, their short brown jackets covered with buttons and fringe, and various-coloured ribands streaming from their knees.

"Well, sir! the grandson is born the day the grandfather dies! a cloudy morning has often a bright sunset! and though we are now sticking in a ditch, by the aid of St. Florian, we may be soon feasting in a castle! Come, come, my merry men, I did not bring you here to show your ribands—the sooner you help us out of this scrape, the sooner you will be again dancing with the pretty maidens on the green! Lend a hand! lend a hand! What's your name?" asked Essper, of a sturdy red-haired lad; "Wolf? if it is not, it ought to be; and so, Mr. Wolf, put your shoulder to this fore-wheel, and you two go to the off-wheel, and Master Robert, as I think they call you, help me here! Now, all lift together—Ho-i-g-h! ho-i-g-h! sharp there, behind! once more—ho-i-g-h! pull—pull—pull!—there! gently, gently, that's it!"

The calèche appeared to be so much shattered, that they only ventured to put in one horse; and Vivian, leaving his carriage in charge of Essper and the postilion, mounted Max, and rode to the village, attended by the peasants. He learned from them, on the way, that they were celebrating the marriage of the daughter of their lord; who, having been informed of the accident, had commanded them to go immediately to the gentleman's assistance, and then conduct him to the castle. Vivian immediately made some excuse for not accepting their master's hospitable invitation, and requested to be shown to the nearest inn. He learned, to his dismay, that the village did not boast a single one; the existence of such an establishment not being permitted by their lord, who, however, was always most happy to entertain any stranger at his castle. As his calèche was decidedly too much injured to proceed farther that day, Vivian had evidently, from the account of these persons, no alternative; and therefore allowed himself to be introduced according to their instructions.

They crossed the river over a light stone bridge of three arches, the key-stone of the centre one being decorated with a very splendidly sculptured shield.

"This bridge appears to be very recently built," said Vivian to one of his conductors.

"It was opened, sir, for the first time, yesterday, to admit the bridegroom of my young lady, and the foundation-stone of it was laid on the day she was born."

"I see that your good lord was determined that it should be a solid structure."

"Why, sir, it was necessary that the foundation should be strong, because three succeeding winters it was washed away by the rush of that mountain

torrent.—Turn this way, if you please, sir, through the village.”

Vivian was much struck with the appearance of the little settlement as he rode through it. It did not consist of more than fifty houses, but they were all detached, and each beautifully embowered in trees. The end of the village came upon a large rising-green, leading up to the only accessible side of the castle. It presented a most animated scene, being covered with various groups, all intent upon different rustic amusements. An immense pole, the stem of a gigantic fir-tree, was fixed nearly in the centre of the green, and crowned with a chaplet—the reward of the most active young man of the village, whose agility might enable him to display his gallantry, by presenting it to his mistress; she being allowed to wear it during the remainder of the sports. The middle-aged men were proving their strength by raising weights; while the elders of the village joined in the calmer and more scientific diversion of skittles, which, in Austria, are played with bowls and pins of very great size. Others were dancing; others sitting under tents, chattering or taking refreshments. Some were walking in pairs, anticipating the speedy celebration of a wedding-day—happier to them, if less gay to others. Even the tenderest infants, on this festive day, seemed conscious of some unusual cause of excitement; and many an urchin, throwing himself forward in a vain attempt to catch an elder brother or a laughing sister, tried the strength of his leading-strings, and rolled over, crowing, in the soft grass.

At the end of the green a splendid tent was erected, with a large white bridal-flag waving from its top, embroidered in gold, with a true-lover's knot. From this pavilion came forth, to welcome the strangers, the lord of the village. He was an extremely tall, but very thin bending figure, with a florid benevolent countenance, and a great quantity of long white hair. This venerable person cordially offered his hand to Vivian, regretted his accident, but expressed much pleasure that he had come to partake of their happiness. “Yesterday,” continued he, “was my daughter's wedding-day, and both myself and our humble friends are endeavouring to forget, in this festive scene, our approaching loss and separation. If you had come yesterday, you would have assisted at the opening of my new bridge. Pray, what do you think of it? But I will show it to you myself, which I assure you will give me great pleasure; at present, let me introduce you to my family, who will be quite delighted to see you. It is a pity that you have missed the regatta; my daughter is just going to reward the successful candidate: you see the boats upon the lake; the one with the white and purple streamer was the conqueror. You will have the pleasure, too, of seeing my son-in-law: I am sure you will like him—he quite enjoys our sports. We shall have a fête champêtre to-morrow, and a dance on the green to-night.”

The old gentleman paused for want of breath, and having stood a moment to recover himself, he introduced his new guest to the inmates of the tent: first, his maiden sister, a softened fac-simile of himself; behind her stood his beautiful and blushing daughter, the youthful bride, wearing on her head a coronal of white roses, and supported by three bride's-maids, the only relief to whose snowy dresses were large bouquets on their left side. The

bridegroom was at first shaded by the curtain; but, as he came forward, Vivian started when he recognised his Heidelberg friend, Eugene von Konigstein!

Their mutual delight and astonishment were so great, that for an instant neither of them could speak; but when the old man learned from his son-in-law, that the stranger was his most valued and intimate friend, and one to whom he was under the greatest personal obligations, he absolutely declared that he would have the wedding—to witness which appeared to him the height of human felicity—solemnized over again. The bride blushed, the bride's-maids tittered; the joy was universal.

“My dear sister!” said the old lord, bawling very loud in her ear; “very likely your deafness prevented you understanding that this gentleman is Eugene's particular friend. Poor dear!” continued he, lowering his tone; “it is a great misfortune to be so very deaf!”

“I dare say you will soon perceive, sir,” said the old lady to Vivian, while his lordship was speaking, “that my dear brother is debarr'd, in a great degree, from enjoying your society, by his unfortunate deafness: he scarcely ever hears even what I say to him; though he has been accustomed to my voice so many years. Poor creature, it is a great denial to him!”

It was quite curious to observe how perfectly unconscious were this excellent pair of their own infirmity, though quite alive to each other's.

Vivian inquired after the baron. He learned from Eugene that he had quitted Europe about a month ago, having sailed as minister to one of the new American states. “My uncle,” continued the young man, “was neither well, nor in spirits before his departure: I cannot understand why he plagues himself so about politics; however, I trust he will like his new appointment; you found him, I am sure, a most delightful companion!”

“Come! you two young gentlemen,” said the father-in-law, “put off your chat till the evening. The business of the day stops; for I see the procession coming forward to receive the regatta prize. Now, my dear! where is the scarf?—You know what to say? Remember, I particularly wish to do honour to the victor! The sight of all these happy faces makes me feel quite young again. I declare I think I shall live a hundred years!”

The procession advanced. First came a band of young children strewing flowers; then followed four stout boys carrying a large purple and white banner. The victor, proudly preceding the other candidates, strutted forward, with his hat on one side, a light scull decorated with purple and white ribands in his right hand, and his left arm round his wife's waist. The wife, a beautiful young woman, to whom were clinging two fat flaxen-headed children, was the most interesting figure in the procession. Her tight dark boddice set off her round full figure, and her short red petticoat displayed her springy foot and ankle. Her neatly braided and plaited hair was partly concealed by a silk cap, covered with gold-spangled gauze, flattened rather at the top, and finished at the back of the head with a large bow. This costly head-gear, the highest fashion of her class, was presented to the wearer by the bride, and was destined to be kept for festivals. After the victor and his wife, came six girls and six boys, at the side of whom walked a very bustling

personage in black, who seemed extremely interested about the decorum of the procession. A long train of villagers succeeded.

"Well!" said the old lord to Vivian, "this must be a very gratifying sight to you! how fortunate that your carriage broke down just at my castle! I think my dear girl is acquitting herself admirably. Ah! Eugene is a happy fellow; and I have no doubt that she will be happy too. The young sailor receives his honours very properly: they are as nice a family as I know. Observe, they are moving off now to make way for the pretty girls and boys! That person in black is our abbé—as benevolent, worthy a creature as ever lived! and very clever too: you'll see in a minute. Now they are going to give us a little bridal chorus, after the old fashion; and it is all the abbé's doing. I understand that there is an elegant allusion to my new bridge in it, which I think will please you. Who ever thought that bridge would be opened for my girl's wedding? Well! I am glad that it was not finished before. But we must be silent! You will notice that part about the bridge; it is in the fifth verse, I am told; beginning with something about Hymen, and ending with something about roses."

By this time the procession had formed a semicircle before the tent; the abbé standing in the middle, with a paper in his hand, and dividing the two bands of choristers. He gave a signal with his cane, and the girls commenced:—

Chorus of Maidens.

Hours fly! it is Morn: she has left the bed of Love: she follows him with a strained eye, when his figure is no longer seen: she leans her head upon her arm. She is faithful to him, as the lake to the mountain!

Chorus of Youths.

Hours fly! it is Noon: fierce is the restless sun! While he labours, he thinks of her! while he controls others, he will obey her! A strong man subdued by love, is like a vineyard silvered by the moon!

Chorus of Youths and Maidens.

Hours fly! it is Eve: the soft star lights him to his home! she meets him as his shadow falls on the threshold! she smiles, and their child, stretching forth its tender hands from its mother's bosom, struggles to lip "Father!"

Chorus of Maidens.

Years glide! it is Youth: they sit within a secret bower. Purity is in her raptured eyes—Faith in his warm embrace. He must fly! He kisses his farewell: the fresh tears are on her cheek! He has gathered a lily with the dew upon its leaves!

Chorus of Youths.

Years glide! it is Manhood. He is in the fierce camp: he is in the deceitful court. He must mingle sometimes with others, that he may be always with her! In the false world, she is to him like a green olive among rocks!

Chorus of Youths and Maidens.

Years glide! it is Old Age. They sit beneath a branching elm. As the moon rises on the sunset green, their children dance before them! Her

hand is in his; they look upon their children, and then upon each other!

"The fellow has some fancy," said the old lord, "but given, I think, to conceits. I did not exactly catch the passage about the bridge, but I have no doubt it was all right."

Vivian was now invited to the pavilion, where refreshments were prepared. Here our hero was introduced to many other guests, relations of the family, who were on a visit at the castle, and who had been on the lake at the moment of his arrival.

"This gentleman," said the old lord, pointing to Vivian, "is my son's most particular friend, and I am quite sure that you are all delighted to see him. He arrived here quite accidentally—his carriage having fortunately broken down in passing one of the streams. All those rivulets should have bridges built over them! A single arch would do:—one bold single arch; of the same masonry as my new bridge, with a very large key-stone, and the buttresses of the arch rounded, so that the water should play against them—no angles to be eaten, and torn, and crumbled away. A fine bridge, with the arches well proportioned, and the key-stones bold, and the buttresses well rounded, is one of the grandest and most inspiring sights I know. I could look at my new bridge forever. I often ask myself, 'Now how can such a piece of masonry ever be destroyed?' It seems quite impossible; does not it? We all know—experience teaches us all—that every thing has an end; and yet, whenever I look at that bridge, I often think that it can only end when all things end. I will take you over it myself, Mr. Grey: it is not fair, because you came a day too late, that you should miss the finest sight of all. If you had only been here yesterday, I am sure you would have said it was the happiest day in your life!"

The old gentleman proceeded to give Vivian a long description of the ceremony. He was terribly disappointed, and equally annoyed, when he found that our hero could not be present at the festivities of the morrow. At first my lord was singularly deaf; he could not conceive the bare idea of the possibility of any person wishing to leave him at the present moment; but when his guest assured, and finally, by frequent repetition, made him understand, that nothing but the most peremptory business could command, under such circumstances, his presence at Vienna; the old gentleman, a great stickler for duty, and a great respecter of public business, which he had persuaded himself could alone prevail upon Vivian to make such a sacrifice, kindly commiserated his situation; and consoled him by saying, that he thought he was the most unlucky fellow with whom he ever had the pleasure of being acquainted. "To come just one day after the bridge! and then to go off just the morning before the fête champêtre! It is very hard for you! I quite pity you; don't you, my dear sister?" bawled he to the old lady. "But what is the use of speaking to her, poor dear! it is a great misfortune to be so very deaf! It seems to me that she gets worse every day."

"I am glad, sir," said the old lady to Vivian, seeing that she was spoken to; "I am glad that we shall have the pleasure of your company at the fête to-morrow. My dear brother!" bawled she to the old gentlemen, "you feel, I am sure, very happy that Eugene's friend has arrived so for-

lunately to participate in the pleasures of the fête. But what is the use of speaking to him! poor creature! it is a great denial to him to be so very deaf! I fear it gains on him hourly!"

In the evening they all waltzed upon the green. The large yellow moon had risen; and a more agreeable sight, than to witness two or three hundred persons so gayly occupied, and in such a scene, is not easy to imagine. How beautiful was the stern old castle, softened by the moonlight, the illumined lake, the richly silvered foliage of the woods, and the white brilliant cataract!

Vivian waltzed with the bride, little qualified as he now was to engage in the light dance! But to refuse the distinguished honour was impossible; and so, in spite of his misery, he was soon spinning on the green. The mockery, however, could not be long kept up; and pleading overwhelming fatigue, from late travelling, and gently hinting to Eugene, that from domestic circumstances the present interesting occasion could alone have justified him in the slightest degree joining in any thing which bore the appearance of lightness and revelry, he left the green.

His carriage was now being repaired by the castle smith; and by the advice and with the assistance of the old lord, he had engaged the brother of the family steward, who was a voiturier, about to set off for Vienna the next morning, to take charge of his equipage and luggage, as far as Burkesdorf, which was about ten miles from Vienna. At that place Vivian and Essper were also to arrive on the afternoon of their second day's journey. They would there meet the carriage, and get into Vienna before dusk.

As the castle was quite full of visitors, its hospitable master apologized to Vivian for lodging him for the night, at the cottage of one of his favourite tenants. Nothing could give greater pleasure to Vivian than this circumstance, nor more annoyance to the worthy old gentleman.

The cottage belonged to the victor in the regatta, who himself conducted the visiter to his dwelling. Vivian did not press Essper's leaving the revellers, so great an acquisition did he seem to their sports! Teaching them a thousand new games, and playing all manner of antics; but perhaps none of his powers surprised them more, than the extraordinary facility and freedom with which he had acquired, and used all their names. The cottager's pretty wife had gone home an hour before her husband, to put her two fair-haired children to bed, and prepare her guest's accommodation for the night. Nothing could be more romantic and lovely than the situation of the cottage. It stood just on the gentle slope of the mountain's base, not a hundred yards from the lower waterfall. It was in the middle of a patch of highly cultivated ground, which bore creditable evidence to the industry of its proprietor. Fruit trees, Turkey corn, vines, and flax, flourished in the greatest luxuriance. The dwelling itself was covered with myrtle and arbutus, and the tall lemon plant perfumed the window of the sitting-room. The casement of Vivian's chamber opened full on the foaming cataract. The distant murmur of the mighty waterfall, the gentle sighing of the trees, the soothing influence of the moonlight, and the faint sounds occasionally caught of dying revelry—the joyous exclamation of some successful candidate in the day's games, the song of some returning lover, the plash of an oar in the

lake—all combined to produce that pensive mood, in which we find ourselves involuntarily reviewing the history of our life.

As Vivian was musing over the last harassing months of his burthensome existence, he could not help feeling that there was only one person in the world on whom his memory could dwell with solace and satisfaction; and this person was Lady Madeleine Trevor!

It was true that with her he had passed some most agonizing hours; but he could not forget the angelic resignation with which her own affliction had been borne; and the soothing converse by which his had been alleviated. This train of thought was pursued till his aching mind was sunk into indefiniteness. He sat, for some little time, almost unconscious of existence, till the crying of a child, waked by its father's return, brought him back to the present scene. His thoughts naturally ran to his friend Eugene. Surely this youthful bridegroom might reckon upon happiness! Again Lady Madeleine recurred to him. Suddenly he observed a wonderful appearance in the sky. The moon was pale in the high heavens, and surrounded by luminous rings—almost as vividly tinted as the rainbow—spreading, and growing fainter, till they covered nearly half the firmament. It was a glorious, and almost unprecedented halo!

CHAPTER V.

THE sun rose red, the air was thick and hot. Anticipating that the day would be very oppressive, Vivian and Essper were on their horses' backs at an early hour. Already, however, many of the rustic revellers were about, and preparations were commencing for the fête champêtre, which this day was to close the wedding festivities. Many and sad were the looks which Essper George cast behind him, at the old castle on the lake. "No good luck can come of it!" said he to his horse; for Vivian did not encourage conversation. "O! master of mine, when wilt thou know the meaning of good quarters! To leave such a place, and at such a time! Why, Turriparva was nothing to it! The day before marriage, and the hour before death, is when a man thinks least of his purse, and most of his neighbour.—And where are we going! I slept the other night in a cradle: and, for aught I know, I may sleep this one in a coffin! I, who am now as little fit for rough riding, and rough eating, and rough sleeping, as a pet monkey with a scalded tail! O! man, man, what art thou, that the eye of a girl can make thee so pass all discretion, that thou wilt sacrifice for the whim of a moment good cheer enough to make thee last an age!"

Vivian had intended to stop and breakfast after riding about ten miles; but he had not proceeded half that way, when, from the extreme sultriness of the morning, he found it impossible to advance without refreshment. Max, also, to his rider's surprise, was much distressed; and on turning round to his servant, Vivian found Essper's hack panting, and puffing, and breaking out, as if, instead of commencing their day's work, they were near reaching their point of destination.

"Why, how now, Essper? One would think that we had been riding all night. What ails the beast?"

"In truth, sir, that which ails its rider; the poor dumb brute has more sense than some—not exactly brutes,—who have the gift of speech. Who ever heard of a horse leaving good quarters without much regretting the indiscretion; and seeing such a promising road as this before him, without much desiring to retrace his steps? Is there marvel, your highness?"

"The closeness of the air is so oppressive, that I do not wonder at even Max being distressed. Perhaps when the sun is higher, and has cleared away the vapours, it may be more endurable; as it is, I think we had better stop at once and breakfast here. This wood is as inviting as, I trust, are the contents of your basket!"

"St. Florian devour them!" said Essper, in a very pious voice, "if I agree not with your highness; and as for the basket, although we have left the land of milk and honey, by the blessing of our Black Lady! I have that within it, which would put courage in the heart of a caught mouse. Although we may not breakfast on bride-cake and beccaficos, yet is a neat's tongue better than a fox's tail; and I have ever held a bottle of Rhenish to be superior to rain-water, even though the element be filtered through a gutter. Nor, by all saints! have I forgotten a bottle of kerchen wasser, from the Black Forest; nor a keg of Dantzic brandy, a glass of which, when travelling at night, I am ever accustomed to take after my prayers; for I have always observed, that though devotion doth sufficiently warm up the soul, the body all the time is rather the colder for stooping under a tree to tell its beads."

The travellers, accordingly, led their horses a few yards into the wood, and soon met, as they had expected, with a small green glade.—It was surrounded, except at the slight opening by which they had entered it, with fine Spanish chestnut trees; which now loaded with their large brown fruit, rich and ripe, clustered in the starry foliage, afforded a retreat as beautiful to the eye, as its shade was grateful to their senses. Vivian dismounted, and stretching out his legs, leaned back against the trunk of a tree; and Essper, having fastened Max and his own horse to some branches, proceeded to display his stores. Vivian was silent, thoughtful, and scarcely tasted any thing; Essper George, on the contrary, was in unusual and even troublesome spirits: and had not his appetite necessarily produced a few pauses in his almost perpetual rattle, the patience of his master would have been fairly worn out. At length Essper had devoured the whole supply; and as Vivian not only did not encourage his remarks, but even in a peremptory manner had desired his silence, he was fain to amuse himself by trying to catch in his mouth a large brilliant fly, which every instant was dancing before him. Two individuals more singularly contrasting in their appearance than the master and the servant, could scarcely be conceived; and Vivian, lying with his back against a tree, with his legs stretched out, his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the ground: and Essper, though seated, in perpetual motion, and shifting his posture with feverish restlessness—now looking over his shoulder for the fly, then making an unsuccessful bite at it, and then wearied with his frequent failures, amusing himself with acting punch with his thumbs—altogether presented two figures, which might have been considered as not inapt personifications of the rival systems of idealism and materialism.

At length Essper became silent for the same variety; and imagining from his master's example, that there must be some sweets in meditation hitherto undiscovered by him; he imitated Vivian's posture! So perverse is human nature, that the moment Vivian was aware that Essper was perfectly silent, he began to feel an inclination to converse with him.

"Why, Essper!" said he, looking up and smiling, "this is the first time during our acquaintance, that I have ever seen thought upon your brow. What can now be puzzling your wild brain?"

"I was thinking, sir," said Essper, with a very solemn look, "that if there were a deceased field-mouse here, I would moralize on death."

"What! turned philosopher!"

"Ay! sir—it appears to me," said he, taking up a husk which lay on the turf, "that there is not a nutshell in Christendom, which may not become matter for very grave meditation!"

"Can you expound that?"

"Verily, sir, the whole philosophy of life, seems to me to consist in discovering the kernel. When you see a courtier out of favour, or a merchant out of credit—when you see a soldier without pillage, a sailor without prize-money, and a lawyer without papers—a bachelor with nephews, and an old maid with nieces—be assured the nut is not worth the cracking, and send it to the winds, as I do this husk at present."

"Why, Essper!" said Vivian, laughing, "considering that you have taken your degree so lately, you wear the doctor's cap with authority! Instead of being in your novitiate, one would think that you had been a philosopher long enough to have outlived your system."

"Bless your highness! for philosophy, I sucked it in with my mother's milk. Nature then gave me the hint, which I have ever since acted on; and I hold, that the sum of all learning, consists in milking another man's cow. So much for the recent acquisition of my philosophy! I gained it, you see, your highness, with the first wink of my eye; and though I lost a great portion of it by sea-sickness in the Mediterranean, nevertheless, since I served your highness, I have assumed my old habits; and do opine that this vain globe is but a large foot ball, to be kicked and cuffed about by moody philosophers!"

"You must have seen a great deal in your life, Master Essper," said Vivian, who was amused by his servant's quaint humour.

"Like all great travellers," said Essper, "I have seen more than I remember, and remember more than I have seen."

"Have you any objection to go to the East again?" asked Vivian. "It would require but little persuasion to lead me there."

"I would rather go to a place where the religion is easier: I wish your highness would take me to England!"

"Nay, not there with me—if with others."

"With you—or with none."

"I cannot conceive, Essper, what can induce you to tie up your fortunes with those of such a sad-looking personage as myself."

"In truth, your highness, there is no accounting for tastes. My grandmother loved a brindled cat!"

"Your grandmother, Essper! Nothing would amuse me more than to be introduced to your family."

"My family, sir, are nothing more, nor less, than what all of us must be counted—worms of five feet long—mortal angels—the world's epitome—heaps of atoms, which nature has kneaded with blood into solid flesh—little worlds of living clay—sparks of heaven—inches of earth—Nature's quintessence—moving dust—the little all—smooth-faced cherubim, in whose souls the king of stars has drawn the image of himself!"

"And how many years has breathed the worm of five feet long, that I am now speaking to?"

"Good, your highness, I was no head at calculating from a boy; but I do remember that I am two days older than one of the planets."

"How is that?"

"There was one born in the sky, sir, the day I was christened with a Turkish crescent."

"Come, Essper," said Vivian, who was rather interested by the conversation; Essper having, until this morning, skillfully avoided any discourse upon the subject of his birth or family, adroitly turning the conversation whenever it chanced to approach those subjects, and silencing inquiries, if commenced, by some ludicrous and evidently fictitious answer. "Come, Essper," said Vivian, "I feel by no means in the humour to quit this shady retreat. You and I have known each other long, and gone through much together. It is but fair that I should become better acquainted with one who, to me, is not only a faithful servant, but what is more valuable, a faithful friend—I might now almost add, my only one. What say you to whiling away a passing hour, by giving me some sketch of your curious and adventurous life. If there be any thing that you wish to conceal, pass it over; but no invention; nothing but the truth, if you please—the whole truth, if you like."

"Why, your highness, as for this odd knot of soul and body, which none but the hand of Heaven could have twined, it was first seen, I believe, near the very spot where we are now sitting; for my mother, when I saw her first, and last, lived in Bohemia. She was an Egyptian, and came herself from the Levant. I lived a week, sir, in the seraglio, when I was at Constantinople, and I saw there the brightest women of all countries; Georgians, and Circassians, and Poles; in truth, sir, nature's master-pieces; and yet, by the Gods of all nations! there was not one of them half as lovely as the lady who gave me this tongue!" Here Essper exhibited at full length, the enormous feature, which had so much enraged the one-eyed sergeant at Frankfort.

"When I first remember myself," he continued, "I was playing with some other gipsy-boys, in the midst of a forest. Here was our settlement! It was large and powerful. My mother, probably from her beauty, possessed great influence, particularly among the men; and yet, I found not among them all a father. On the contrary, every one of my companions had a man whom he revered as his parent, and who taught him to steal; but I was called by the whole tribe, 'the mother-son,' and was honest, from my first year, out of mere wilfulness; at least, if I stole any thing, it was always from our own people. Many were the quarrels I occasioned; since, presuming on my mother's love and power, I never called mischief a scrape; but acting just as my fancy took me, I left those who suffered by my conduct to apologize for my ill-behaviour. Being thus an idle, unprofitable,

impudent, and injurious member of this pure community, they determined one day to cast me out from their bosom; and in spite of my mother's exertions and entreaties, the ungrateful vipers succeeded in their purpose. As a compliment to my parent, they allowed me to tender my resignation, instead of receiving my expulsion. My dear mother gave me a donkey, a wallet, and a ducat, a great deal of advice about my future conduct, and, what was more interesting to me, much information about my birth.

"Sweet child of my womb!" said my mother, pressing me to her bosom, "be proud of thy white hands and straight nose! Thou gottest them not from me, and thou shalt take them from whence they came. Thy father is a Hungarian prince; and though I would not have parted with thee, had I thought that thou wouldst ever have prospered in our life—even if he had made thee his child of the law, and lord of his castle—still, as thou canst not tarry with us, haste thou to him! Give him this ring and this lock of hair; tell him, none have seen them but the father, the mother, and the child! He will look on them, and remember the days that are past; and thou shalt be unto him as a hope for his lusty years, and a prop for his old age!"

"My mother gave me all necessary directions, which I well remembered; and much more advice, which I directly forgot.

"Although tempted, now that I was a free man, to follow my own fancy, I still was too curious to see what kind of a person was my unknown father, to deviate either from my route or my maternal instructions; and in a fortnight's time I had reached my future principality.

"The sun sunk behind the proud castle of my princely father, as, trotting slowly along upon my humble beast, with my wallet slung at my side, I approached it through his park. A guard, consisting of twenty or thirty men in magnificent uniforms, were lounging at the portal. I—but, your highness, what is the meaning of this darkness? I always made a vow to myself, that I never would tell my history—Ah! murder! murder! what ails me?"

A large eagle fell dead at their feet.

"Protect me, master!" screamed Essper, seizing Vivian by the shoulder: "what is coming? I cannot stand—the earth seems to tremble! Is it the wind that roars and rages? or is it ten thousand cannon blowing this globe to atoms?"

"It is—it must be the wind!" said Vivian, very agitated. "We are not safe under these trees—look to the horses!"

"I will, I will," said Essper, "if I can stand. Out—out of the forest! Ah! look at Max!"

Vivian turned, and beheld his spirited horse raised on his hind legs, and dashing his fore feet against the trunk of the tree to which they had tied him. The terrified and furious creature was struggling to disengage himself, and would probably have sustained or inflicted some terrible injury, had not the wind suddenly hushed. Covered with foam, he stood panting, while Vivian patted and encouraged him. Essper's less spirited beast had, from the first, crouched upon the earth, covered with sweat, his limbs quivering, and his tongue hanging out.

"Master!" said Essper, "what shall we do? Is there any chance of getting back to the castle?"

I am sure our very lives are in danger. See that tremendous cloud! It looks like eternal night! Whither shall we go? What shall we do?"

"Make for the castle—the castle!" said Vivian, mounting.

They had just got into the road, when another terrific gust of wind nearly took them off their horses, and blinded them with the clouds of sand which it drove out of the crevices of the mountains.

They looked round on every side, and hope gave way before the scene of desolation. Immense branches were shivered from the largest trees; small ones were entirely stripped of their leaves; the long grass was bowed to the earth; the waters were whirled in eddies out of the little rivulets; birds deserting their nest to seek shelter in the crevices of the rocks, unable to stem the driving air, flapped their wings, and fell upon the earth; the frightened animals of the plain—almost suffocated by the impetuosity of the wind—sought safety, and found destruction; some of the largest trees were torn up by the roots; the sluices of the mountains were filled, and innumerable torrents rushed down the before empty gulleys. The heavens now open, and lightning and thunder contend with the horrors of the wind!

In a moment all was again hushed. Dead silence succeeded the bellow of the thunder—the roar of the wind—the rush of the waters—the moaning of the beasts—the screaming of the birds! Nothing was heard save the splash of the agitated lake, as it beat up against the black rocks which girt it in.

"Master!" again said Essper, "is this the day of doom?"

"Keep by my side, Essper; keep close; make the best of this pause; let us but reach the village!"

Scarcely had Vivian spoken, when greater darkness enveloped the trembling earth. Again the heavens were rent with lightning, which nothing could have quenched but the descending deluge. Cataracts poured down from the lowering firmament. In an instant the horses dashed around—beast and rider blinded and stifled by the gushing rain, and gasping for breath. Shelter was nowhere. The quivering beasts reared, and snorted, and sunk upon their knees. The horsemen were dismounted. With wonderful presence of mind, Vivian succeeded in hoodwinking Max, who was still furious. The other horse appeared nearly exhausted. Essper, beside himself with terror, could only hang over its neck.

Another awful calm.

"Courage, courage, Essper!" said Vivian. "We are still safe: look up, my man! the storm cannot last long thus—and, see! I am sure the clouds are breaking."

The heavy mass of vapour which had seemed to threaten the earth with instant destruction, suddenly parted. The red and lurid sun was visible, but his light and heat were quenched in the still impending waters.

"Mount! mount, Essper!" said Vivian; "this is our only chance: five minutes good speed will take us to the village."

Encouraged by his master's example, Essper once more got upon his horse; and the panting animals, relieved by the cessation of the hurricane, carried them at a fair pace towards the village, considering that their road was now impeded by the overflowing of the lake.

"Master! master!" said Essper, "cannot we get out of these waters?"

He had scarcely spoken, before a terrific burst—a noise, they knew not what—a rush, they could not understand—a vibration, which shook them on their horses—made them start back and again dismount. Every terror sunk before the appalling roar of the cataract. It seemed that the mighty mountain, unable to support its weight of waters, shook to the foundation. A lake had burst on its summit, and the cataract became a falling ocean. The source of the great deep appeared to be discharging itself over the range of mountains; the great gray peak tottered on its foundations! It shook! It fell! and buried in its ruins, the castle, the village, and the bridge!

Vivian, with starting eyes, beheld the whole washed away: instinct gave him energy to throw himself on the back of his horse—a breath—and he had leaped up the nearest hill! Essper George, in a state of distraction, was madly laughing as he climbed to the top of a high tree. His horse was carried off in the drowning waters, which had now reached the road.

"The desolation is complete!" thought Vivian. At this moment the wind again rose—the rain again descended—the heavens again opened—the lightning again flashed! An amethystine flame hung upon rocks and waters, and through the raging elements a yellow fork darted its fatal point at Essper's resting place. The tree fell! Vivian's horse, with a maddened snort, dashed down the hill: his master, senseless, clung to his neck; the frantic animal was past all government—he stood upright in the air—flung his rider—and fell dead!

Here leave we Vivian! It was my wish to have detailed, in the present portion of this work, the singular adventures which befell him in one of the most delightful of modern cities—light-hearted Vienna! But his history has expanded under my pen, and I fear that I have, even now, too much presumed upon an attention which, probably, I am not entitled to command. I am, as yet, but standing without the gate of the Garden of Romance. True it is, that as I gaze through the ivory bars of its golden portal, I would fain believe that, following my roving fancy, I might arrive at some green retreats hitherto unexplored, and loiter among some leafy bowers where none have lingered before me. But these expectations may be as vain as those dreams of our youth, over which we have all mourned. The disappointment of manhood succeeds to the delusion of youth: let us hope that the heritage of old age is not despair!

Sweet reader! I trust that neither you nor myself have any cause to repent our brief connexion: I see we part good friends—and so I press you gently by the hand!



THE YOUNG DUKE.



THE YOUNG DUKE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE is a partial distress, or universal,—and the affairs of India must really be settled; but we must also be amused. I send over my quota; for, though absent, I am a patriot; besides, I am desirous of contributing to the diffusion of useful knowledge.

I have only one observation to make, and that is quite unnecessary, because no one will attend to it; therefore I suppress it. The great mass of my readers (if I have a mass, as I hope) will attribute the shades that flit about these volumes to any substances they please. That smaller portion of society who are most competent to decide upon the subject, will instantly observe, that however I may have availed myself of a trait or an incident, and often inadvertently, the whole is ideal. To draw caricatures of our contemporaries is not a very difficult task: it requires only a small portion of talent, and a great want of courtesy.

In the absence of the author, who is abroad, the publishers think it necessary to add, that the present novel was written before the accession of his present majesty. The reader, as he peruses this volume, will see the necessity of this explanation.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS FREDERICK, DUKE OF ST. JAMES, completed his twenty-first year, an event which created as great a sensation among the aristocracy of England as the Norman conquest, or the institution of Almack's. A minority of twenty years had converted a family, always among the wealthiest of Great Britain, into one of the richest in Europe. The Duke of St. James possessed estates in the north and in the west of England, besides a whole province in Ireland. In London, there was a very handsome square and four streets all made of bricks, which brought him in yearly more cash than all the palaces of Vicenza are worth in fee-simple, with those of the grand canal of Venice to boot. As if this were not enough, he was an hereditary patron of internal navigation; and although perhaps in his two palaces, three castles, four halls, and lodges *ad libitum*, there were more fires burnt than in any other establishment in the empire, this was of no consequence, because the coals were his own. His rent-roll exhibited a sum total, very neatly written, of two

hundred thousand pounds; but this was independent of half a million in the funds, which I had nearly forgotten, and which remained from the accumulations occasioned by the unhappy death of his father.

The late Duke of St. James had one sister, who was married to the Earl of Fitz-pompey. To the great surprise of the world—to the perfect astonishment of the brother-in-law—his lordship was not appointed guardian to the infant minor. The Earl of Fitz-pompey had always been on the best possible terms with his grace; the countess had, only the year before his death, accepted from his fraternal hand a diamond necklace with the most perfect satisfaction: the Lord Viscount St. Maurice, future chief of the house of Fitz-pompey, had the honour not only of being his nephew, but his godson. Who could account, then, for an action so perfectly unaccountable! It was quite evident that his grace had no intention of dying.

The guardian, however, that he did appoint, was a Mr. Dacre, a Catholic gentleman of very ancient family and very large fortune, who had been the companion of his travels, and was his neighbour in his family county. Mr. Dacre had not been honoured with the acquaintance of Lord Fitz-pompey previous to the decease of his noble friend; and after that event, such an acquaintance would probably not have been productive of very agreeable reminiscences. For from the moment of the opening of the fatal will, the name of Dacre was wormwood to the house of St. Maurice. Lord Fitz-pompey, who, though the brother-in-law of a whig magnate, was a tory, voted against the Catholics with renewed fervour.

Shortly after the death of his friend, Mr. Dacre married a noble lady of the house of Howard, who, after having presented him with a daughter, fell ill, and became that extremely common character, a confirmed invalid. In the present day, and especially among women, one would almost suppose that health was a state of unnatural existence. The illness of his wife, and the non-possession of parliamentary duties, caused Mr. Dacre's visits to his town-mansion extremely to resemble those of an angel, and the mansion in time was let.

The young duke, with the exception of an occasional visit to his uncle, Lord Fitz-pompey, passed the early years of his life at Castle Dacre. At seven years of age he was sent to a preparatory school at Richmond, which was entirely devoted to the early culture of the nobility; and where the principal, the Reverend Dr. Coronet, was so extremely exclusive in his system, that it was reported that he had once refused the son of an Irish peer. Miss Coronet fed her imagination with the hope of meeting her father's noble pupils in after-

life, and in the mean time read fashionable novels.

The moment that the young duke was settled at Richmond, all the intrigues of the Fitz-pompey family were directed to that quarter; and as Mr. Daere was by nature the most unsuspecting of human beings, and was even extremely desirous that his ward should cultivate the friendship of his only relatives, the St. Maurice family had the gratification, as they thought, of completely deceiving him. Lady Fitz-pompey called twice a week at the Crest House, with a copious supply of pine-apples or *lombons*, and the Rev. Dr. Coronet bowed in adoration. Lady Isabella St. Maurice gave a china cup to Mrs. Coronet, and Lady Augusta a paper-cutter to Miss. The family was secured. All discipline was immediately set at defiance, and the young duke passed the greater part of the half year with his affectionate relations. His grace, charmed with the *lombons* of his aunt, and the kisses of his cousins, which were even sweeter than the sugar-plumbs; delighted with the pony of St. Maurice, which, of course, immediately became his own; and inebriated by the attentions of his uncle, who, at eight years of age, treated him, as his lordship styled it, "like a man;" contrasted this life of early excitement with what now appeared the gloom and the restraint of Castle Daere, and he soon entered into the conspiracy, which had long been hatching, with genuine enthusiasm. He wrote to his guardian and obtained an easy permission to spend his vacation with his uncle. Thus, through the united indulgence of Dr. Coronet and Mr. Daere, the Duke of St. James became a member of the family of St. Maurice.

No sooner had Lord Fitz-pompey secured the affections of the ward, than he entirely changed his system towards the guardian. He wrote to Mr. Daere, and, in a manner equally kind and dignified, courted his acquaintance. He dilated upon the extraordinary, though extremely natural, affection which Lady Fitz-pompey entertained for the only offspring of her beloved brother,—upon the happiness which the young duke enjoyed with his cousins,—upon the great and evident advantages which his grace would derive from companions of his own age, of the singular friendship which he had already formed with St. Maurice; and then, after paying Mr. Daere many compliments upon the admirable manner in which he had already fulfilled the duties of his important office, and urging the lively satisfaction that a visit from their brother's friend would confer both upon Lady Fitz-pompey and himself, he requested permission for his nephew to renew the visit in which he had been "so happy!" The duke seconded the earl's diplomatic scrawl in the most graceful round-text. The masterly intrigues of Lord Fitz-pompey, assisted by Mrs. Daere's illness, which daily increased, and which rendered the most perfect quiet indispensable, were successful, and the young duke arrived at his twelfth year without revisiting Daere. Every year, however, when Mr. Daere made a short visit to London, his ward spent a few days in his company, at the house of an old-fashioned Catholic nobelman, a visit which only afforded a dull contrast to the gay society and constant animation of his uncle's establishment.

It would seem that fate had determined to counteract the intentions of the late Duke of St. James, and to achieve those of the Earl of Fitz-pompey.

At the moment that the noble minor was about to leave Dr. Coronet for Eaton, Mrs. Daere's state was declared hopeless, except from the assistance of an Italian sky, and Mr. Daere, whose attachment to his lady was of the most romantic description, determined to leave England immediately.

It was with deep regret that he parted from his ward, whom he tenderly loved; but all considerations merged in the paramount one; and he was consoled by the reflection that he was, at least, left to the care of his nearest connexions. Mr. Daere was not unaware of the dangers to which his youthful pledge might be exposed, by the indiscriminate indulgence of his uncle; but he trusted to the impartial and inviolable system of a public school to do much; and he anticipated returning to England before his ward was old enough to form those habits which are generally so injurious to young nobles. In this hope, Mr. Daere was disappointed. Mrs. Daere lingered, and revived, and lingered for nearly eight years, now filling the mind of her husband and her daughter with unreasonable hope, now delivering them to that renewed anguish, that heart-rending grief, which the attendant upon a declining relative can alone experience; additionally agonizing, because it cannot be indulged. Mrs. Daere died, and the widower and his daughter returned to England. In the mean time, the Duke of St. James had not been idle.

CHAPTER II.

THE departure, and, at length, the total absence of Mr. Daere from England, yielded to Lord Fitz-pompey all the opportunity he had long desired. Hitherto he had contented himself with quietly sapping the influence of the guardian; now, that influence was openly assailed. All occasions were seized of depreciating the character of Mr. Daere, and open lamentations were poured forth on the strange and unhappy indiscretion of the father, who had confided the guardianship of his son, not to his natural and devoted friends, but to a harsh and repulsive stranger. Long before the young duke had completed his sixteenth year, all memory of the early kindness of his guardian, if it had ever been imprinted on his mind, was carefully obliterated from it. It was constantly impressed upon him that nothing but the exertions of his aunt and uncle had saved him from a life of stern privation and irrational restraint; and the man who had been the chosen and cherished confidant of the father was looked upon by the son as a grim tyrant from whose clutches he had escaped, and in which he determined never again to find himself. "Old Daere," as Lord Fitz-pompey described him, was a phantom enough at any time to frighten his youthful ward. The great object of the uncle was to tease and mortify the guardian into resigning his trust, and infinite were the contrivances to bring about this desirable result; but Mr. Daere was obstinate, and, although absent, contrived by corresponding with his confidential agent, to carry on and complete the system for the management of the Hauteville property, which he had so beneficially established, and so long pursued.

In quitting England, although he had appointed a fixed allowance for his noble ward, Mr. Daere

had thought proper to delegate a discretionary authority to Lord Fitz-pompey to furnish him with what might be called extraordinary necessaries. His lordship availed himself with such dexterity of this power, that his nephew appeared to be indebted for every indulgence to his uncle, who invariably accompanied every act of this description with an insinuation that he might thank Mrs. Daere's illness for the boon.

"Well, George," he would say to the young Etonian, "you shall have the boat, though I hardly know how I shall pass the account at head-quarters: and make yourself easy about Flash's bill, though I really cannot approve of such proceedings. Thank your stars you have not got to present that account to old Daere. Well, I am one of those who are always indulgent to young blood. Mr. Daere and I differ. He is your guardian, though. Every thing is in his power; but you shall never want while your uncle can help you; and so run off to Caroline; for I see you want to be with her."

The Lady Isabella and the Lady Augusta, who had so charmed Mrs. and Miss Coronet, were no longer in existence. Each had knocked down her earl. Brought up by a mother exquisitely adroit in female education, the Ladies St. Maurice had run but a brief though brilliant career. Beautiful, and possessing every accomplishment which renders beauty valuable, under the unrivalled echauponage of the countess, they had played their popular parts without a single blunder. Always in the best set, never flirting with the wrong man, and never speaking with the wrong woman, all agreed that the Ladies St. Maurice had fairly won their coronets. Their sister, Caroline, was much younger; and although she did not promise to develop as unblemished a character as themselves, she was, in default of another sister, to be the Dutchess of St. James.

Lady Caroline St. Maurice was nearly of the same age as her cousin, the young duke. They had been playfellows since his emancipation from the dungeons of Castle Daere, and every means had been adopted by her judicious parents to foster and to confirm the kind feelings which had been first engendered by being partners in the same toys, and sharing the same sports. At eight years old, the little duke was taught to call Caroline his "wife;" and as his grace grew in years, and could better appreciate the qualities of his sweet and gentle cousin, he was not disposed to retract the title. When George rejoined the courtly Coronet, Caroline invariably mingled her tears with those of her sorrowing spouse; and when the time at length arrived for his departure for Eton, Caroline knitted him a purse, and presented him with a watch-riband. At the last moment she besought her brother, who was two years older, to guard over him, and soothed the moment of final agony by a promise to correspond. Had the innocent and soft-hearted girl been acquainted with, or been able to comprehend the purposes of her crafty parents, she could not have adopted means more calculated to accomplish them. The young duke kissed her a thousand times, and loved her better than all the world.

In spite of his private house and his private tutor, his grace did not make all the progress in his classical studies which means so calculated to promote abstraction and to assist acquirement would seem to promise. The fact is, that as his mind

began to unfold itself, he found a perpetual, and a more pleasing source of study in the contemplation of himself. His early initiation in the school of Fitz-pompey had not been thrown away. He had heard much of nobility, and beauty, and riches, and fashion, and power; he had seen many individuals highly, though differently considered for the relative quantities which they possessed of these qualities; it appeared to the Duke of St. James that, among the human race, he possessed the largest quantity of them all,—he cut his private tutor, who had been appointed by Mr. Daere, remonstrated to Lord Fitz-pompey, and with such success, that he thought proper shortly after to resign his situation. Dr. Coronet begged to recommend his son, the Rev. Augustus Granville Coronet. The Duke of St. James now got on rapidly, and also found sufficient time for his boat, his tandem, and his toilet.

The Duke of St. James appeared at Christ Church. His conceit kept him alive for a few terms. It is delightful to receive the homage of two thousand young men of the best families in the country, to breakfast with twenty of them, and to cut the rest. In spite, however, of the glories of the golden tuft, and a delightful and peculiar private establishment, which he and his followers maintained in the chaste suburbs of Alma Mater, the Duke of St. James felt *ennuyé*. Consequently, one clear night, they set fire to a pyramid of caps and gowns in Peckwater. It was a silly thing for any one; it was a sad indiscretion for a duke—but it was done. Some were expelled; his grace had timely notice, and having before cut the Oxonians, now cut Oxford.

Like all young men who get into scrapes, the Duke of St. James determined to travel. The Dacres returned to England before he did. He dexterously avoided coming into contact with them in Italy. Mr. Daere had written to him several times during the first years of his absence; and although the duke's answers were short, seldom, and not very satisfactory, Mr. Daere persisted in occasionally addressing him. When, however, the duke had arrived at an age when he was at least morally responsible for his own conduct, and entirely neglected answering his guardian's letters, Mr. Daere became altogether silent.

The travelling career of the young duke may be easily conceived by those who have wasted their time, and are compensated for that silliness by being called men of the world. He gamed a little at Paris; he ate a good deal at Vienna; and he studied the fine arts in Italy. In all places his homage to the fair sex was renowned. The Parisian dutchess, the Austrian princess, and the Italian countess spoke in the most enthusiastic terms of the English nobility. At the end of three years, the Duke of St. James was of opinion that he had obtained a great knowledge of mankind. He was mistaken;—travel is not, as is imagined, the best school for that sort of science. Knowledge of mankind is a knowledge of their passions. The traveller is looked upon as a bird of passage, whose visit is short, and which the vanity of the visited wishes to make agreeable. All is show, all false, and all made up. Coterie succeeds coterie, equally smiling—the explosions take place in his absence. Even a grand passion, which teaches a man more, perhaps, than any thing else, is not very easily excited by the traveller. The women know that, sooner or later, he must disappear: and though this is the

case with all lovers, the sweet souls do not like to miss the possibility of delusion. Thus the heroines keep in the background, and the visitor, who is always in a hurry, falls into the net of the first flirtation that offers.

The Duke of St. James had, however, acquired a great knowledge—if not of mankind, at any rate of manners. He had visited all courts, and sparkled in the most brilliant circles of the Continent. He returned to his own country with a taste extremely refined, a manner most polished, and a person highly accomplished.

CHAPTER III.

A SORT of scrambling correspondence had been kept up between the young duke and his cousin Lord St. Maurice, who had for a few months been his fellow-traveller. By virtue of these epistles, notice of the movements of their interesting relative occasionally reached the circle at Fitz-pompey House, although St. Maurice was very scanty in the much-desired communications; because, like most young Englishmen, he derived singular pleasure from depriving his fellow-creatures of all that small information which every one is so desirous to obtain. The announcement, however, of the approaching arrival of the young duke was duly made. Lord Fitz-pompey wrote, and offered apartments at Fitz-pompey House. They were refused. Lord Fitz-pompey wrote again to require instructions for the preparation of Hauteville House. His letter was unanswered. Lord Fitz-pompey was quite puzzled.

“When does your cousin mean to come, Charles?—Where does your cousin mean to go, Charles?—What does your cousin mean to do, Charles?” These were the hourly queries of the noble uncle.

At length, in the middle of January, when no soul expected him, the Duke of St. James dashed into London, and rolled to Mivart's. He was attended by a French cook, an Italian valet, a German jager, and a Greek page. At this dreary season of the year, this party was perhaps the most distinguished in the metropolis.

Three years' absence, and a little knowledge of life, had somewhat changed the Duke of St. James's feelings with regard to his noble relative. He was quite embarrassed of that Panglossian philosophy which had hitherto induced him to believe that the Earl of Fitz-pompey was the best of all possible uncles. On the contrary, his grace rather doubted whether the course which his relations had pursued towards him was quite the most proper and the most prudent; and he took great credit to himself for having, with such unbounded indulgence, on the whole, deported himself with so remarkable a temperance. His grace, too, could no longer innocently delude himself with the idea, that all the attention which had been lavished upon him was solely occasioned by the impulse of consanguinity. Finally, the young duke's conscience often misgave him when he thought of Mr. Dacre. He determined, therefore, on returning to England, not to commit himself too decidedly with the Fitz-pompeys; and he had cautiously guarded himself from being entrapped into becoming their guest. At the same time, the recollection of old intimacy, the ge-

neral regard which he really felt for them all, and the sincere affection which he entertained for his cousin Caroline, would have deterred him from giving any outward signs of his altered feelings, even if other considerations had not intervened.

And other considerations did intervene. A duke, and a young duke, is a very important personage; but he must still be introduced. Even our hero might make a bad tack on his first cruise. Almost as important personages have committed the same blunder. Talk of Catholic emancipation! O! thou imperial parliament, emancipate the forlorn wretches who have gone into a bad set! Even thy omnipotence must fail there! Now the Countess of Fitz-pompey was a brilliant of the first water. Under no better auspices could the Duke of St. James bound upon the stage. No man in town could arrange his club-affairs for him with greater celerity and greater tact than the earl; and the married daughters were as much like their mother as a pair of diamond earrings are like a diamond necklace.

The duke, therefore, though he did not choose to get caged in Fitz-pompey House, sent his page, Spiridion, to the countess, on a special embassy of announcement on the evening of his arrival; and on the following morning his grace himself made his appearance at an early hour.

Lord Fitz-pompey, who was as consummate a judge of men and manners as he was an indifferent speculator on affairs, and who was almost as finished a man of the world as he was an imperfect philosopher, soon perceived that considerable changes had taken place in the ideas as well as in the exterior of his nephew. The duke, however, was extremely cordial, and greeted the family in terms almost of fondness. He shook his uncle by the hand with a fervour with which few noblemen had communicated for a considerable period; and he saluted his aunt on the cheek with a delicacy which did not disturb the rouge. He turned to his cousin.

Lady Caroline St. Maurice was indeed a right beautiful being. Her, whom the young duke had left merely a graceful and kind-hearted girl, three years had changed into a somewhat dignified, but most lovely woman. A little, perhaps of her native ease had been lost,—a little perhaps of a manner rather too artificial had supplanted that exquisite address which nature alone had prompted; but at this moment, her manner was as unstudied and as genuine as when they had gambled together in the bowers of Malthorpe. Her white and delicate arm was extended with eager elegance; her full blue eye beamed with tender affection; and the soft blush that rose on her fair cheek, exquisitely contrasted with the clusters of her dark brown hair.

The duke was struck, almost staggered. He remembered their infant loves; he recovered with ready address. He bent his head with graceful affection, and pressed her lips. He repented that he had not accepted his uncle's offer of hospitality.

CHAPTER IV.

LOD FITZ-POMPEY was a little consoled for the change which he had observed in the character of the duke, by the remembrance with which his grace had greeted Lady Caroline. Never indeed

did a process which has, through the lapse of so many ages, occasioned so much delight, produce more lively satisfaction than the kiss in question. Lord Fitz-pompey had given up his plan of managing the duke, after the family dinner which his nephew had the pleasure to join the first day of his first visit. The duke and he were alone, and his lordship availed himself of the rare opportunity with that adroitness for which he was celebrated. Nothing could be more polite, more affable, more kind, than his grace's manner; but the uncle cared little for politeness, or affability, or kindness. The crafty courtier wanted candour, and that was absent. That ingenuous openness of disposition, that frank and affectionate demeanour, for which the Duke of St. James had been so remarkable in his early youth, and with the aid of which Lord Fitz-pompey had built so many Spanish castles, had quite disappeared. Nothing could be more artificial, more conventional, more studied, than his whole deportment. In vain Fitz-pompey pumped: the empty bucket invariably reminded him of his lost labour. In vain his lordship laid his little diplomatic traps to catch a limit of the purposes, or an intimation of the inclinations of his nephew: the bait was never seized. In vain the earl affected unusual conviviality, and boundless affection; the duke sipped his claret, and admired his furniture. Nothing would do. An air of habitual calm, a look of kind condescension, and an inclination to a smile, which never burst into a beam, announced that the Duke of St. James was perfectly satisfied with existence, and conscious that he was himself, of that existence, the most distinguished ornament. In fact, he was a sublime coxcomb, one of those rare characters whose finished manner and shrewd sense combined prevent their conceit from being contemptible. After many consultations, it was determined between the aunt and uncle, that it would be most prudent to affect a total non-interference with their nephew's affairs, and, in the mean time, to trust to the goodness of Providence and the charms of Caroline.

Lady Fitz-pompey determined that the young duke should make his *début* at once, at her house. Although it was yet January, she did not despair of collecting a select band of guests—Brahmins of the highest caste. Some choice spirits were in office, like her lord, and therefore in town; others were only passing through; but no one caught a flying-fish with more dexterity than the countess. The notice was short, the whole was unstudied. It was a felicitous impromptu; and twenty guests were assembled, who were the Corinthian capitals of the temple of fashion.

There was the premier, who was invited, not because he was a minister, but because he was a hero. There was another duke not less celebrated, whose palace was a breathing shrine which sent forth the oracles of mode. True, he had ceased to be a young duke, but he might be consoled for the vanished lustre of youth by the recollection that he had enjoyed it, and by the present inspiration of an accomplished manhood. There were the Prince and the Princess Protocoli. His highness, a first rate diplomatist, unrivalled for his management of an opera; and his consort, with a countenance like Cleopatra and a tiara like a constellation, famed alike for her shawls and her snuff. There were Lord and Lady Bloomerly, who were the best friends on earth. My lord, a sportsman, but soft

withal; his talk the Jockey club, filtered through White's. My lady, a little blue and very beautiful. Their daughter, Lady Charlotte, rose by her mother's side like a tall bud by a full-blown flower. There was the Viscountess Blaze, a peeress in her own right; and her daughter, Miss Blaze Dasha-way, who, besides the glory of the future coronet, moved in all the confidence of independent thousands. There was the Marquess of Macaroni, who was at the same time a general, an ambassador, and a dandy; and who, if he had liked, could have worn twelve orders, but this day, being modest, only wore six. There, too, was the marchioness, with a stomacher stiff with brilliants, extracted from the snuff-boxes presented to her husband at a congress.

There was Lord Sunium, who was not only a peer but a poet; and his lady, a Greek, who just looked finished by Phidias. There, too, was Pocc-curante, the Epicurean and triple millionaire, who, in a political country, dared to despise politics; in the most aristocratic of kingdoms had refused nobility, and in a land which showers all its honours upon its cultivators, invested his whole fortune in the funds. He lived in a retreat like the villa of Hadrian, and maintained himself in an elevated position chiefly by his wit, and a little by his wealth. There, too, was his noble wife, thoroughbred to her fingers' tips, and beaming like the evening star, and his son, who was an M. P. and thought his father a fool. In short, our party was no common party, but a band who formed the very core of civilization,—a high court of last appeal, whose word was a fiat, whose sign was a hint, whose stare was death, and sneer—damnation!

The Graces befriend me! I have forgotten the most important personage. I will venture to observe, that it is the first time in his life that Charles Annesley has been neglected. It will do him good.

Dandy has been voted vulgar, and beau is now the word. I doubt whether the revival will stand, and as for the exploded title, though it had its faults at first, the muse of Byron has made it not only English, but classical. However, I dare say I can do without either of these words at present. Charles Annesley could hardly be called a dandy or a beau. There was nothing in his dress: though some mysterious arrangement in his costume—some rare simplicity—some curious happiness—always made it distinguished; there was nothing, however, in his dress which could account for the influence which he exercised over the manners of his contemporaries. Charles Annesley was about thirty. He had inherited from his father, a younger brother, a small estate; and though heir to a wealthy earldom, he had never abused what the world called "his prospects." Yet his establishment—his little house in May Fair—his horses—his moderate stud at Melton, were all unique, and every thing connected with him was unparalleled for its elegance, its invention, and its refinement. But his manner was his magic. His natural and subdued nonchalance, so different from the assumed non-emotion of a mere dandy; his coldness of heart, which was hereditary, not acquired; his cautious courage, and his unadulterated self-love; had permitted him to mingle much with mankind without being too deeply involved in the play of their passions, while his exquisite sense of the ridiculous quickly revealed those weaknesses to him which his delicate satire did not spare, even while it refrained from wounding. All feared, many admired, and none hated

him. He was too powerful not to dread, too dexterous not to admire, too superior to hate. Perhaps the great secret of his manner was his exquisite superciliousness; a quality which, of all, is the most difficult to manage. Even with his intimates he was never confidential, and perpetually assumed his public character with the private coterie which he loved to rule. On the whole, he was unlike any of the leading men of modern days, and rather reminded one of the fine gentlemen of our old brilliant comedy,—the Dorimants, the Bellairs, and the Mirabels.

Charles Annesley was a member of the distinguished party who were this day to decide the fate of the young duke. I am not ashamed of my hero. Let him come forward!

His grace moved towards them, tall and elegant in figure, and with that air of affable dignity which becomes a noble, and which adorns a court,—none of that affected indifference which seems to imply that nothing can compensate for the exertion of moving, and “which makes the dandy, while it mars the man.” His large and somewhat sleepy gray eye, his clear complexion, his small mouth, his aquiline nose, his transparent forehead, his rich brown hair, and the delicacy of his extremities, presented when combined a very excellent specimen of that style of beauty for which the nobility of England are remarkable. Gentle,—for he felt the importance of the tribunal,—never loud, ready, yet a little reserved, he neither courted nor shunned examination. His finished manner, his experience of society, his pretensions to taste, the gayety of his temper, and the liveliness of his imagination, gradually developed themselves with the developing hours.

The banquet was over: the Duke of St. James passed his examination with unqualified approval; and having been stamped at the mint of fashion as a sovereign of the brightest die, he was flung forth, like the rest of his golden brethren, to corrupt the society of which he was the brightest ornament.

CHAPTER V.

THE morning after the initiatory dinner, the young duke drove to Hauteville House, his family mansion, situated in his family square. His grace particularly prided himself on his knowledge of the arts; a taste for which, among other things, he intended to introduce into England. Nothing could exceed the horror with which he witnessed the exterior of his mansion, except the agony with which he paced through the interior.

“Is this a palace?” thought the young duke,—“this hospital a palace!”

He entered. The marble hall—the broad and lofty double staircase painted in fresco, were not unpromising, in spite of the dingy gilding; but with what a mixed feeling of wonder and disgust did the duke roam through clusters of those queer chambers which in England are called drawing-rooms.

“Where are the galleries,—where the symmetrical saloons,—where the lengthened suite,—where the collateral cabinets, sacred to the statue of a nymph or the mistress of a painter, in which I have been accustomed to reside? What page would condescend to lounge in this antechamber? And is this gloomy vault, that you call a dining-room, to be my hall of Apollo?—Order my carriage.”

The duke dashed away in disgust, and sent immediately for Sir Carte Blanche, the successor, in England, of Sir Christopher Wren. His grace communicated, at the same time, his misery and his grand views. Sir Carte was astonished with his grace’s knowledge, and sympathized with his grace’s feelings. He offered consolation, and promised estimates. They came in due time. Hauteville House, in the drawing of the worthy knight, might have been mistaken for the Louvre. Some adjoining mansions were, by some magical process for which Sir Carte was famous, to be cleared of their present occupiers, and the whole side of the square was, in future, to be the site of Hauteville House. The difficulty was great, but the object was greater. The expense, though the estimate made a bold attack on the half million, was a mere trifle, “*considering*.” The duke was delighted. He condescended to make a slight alteration in Sir Carte’s drawing, which Sir Carte affirmed to be a great improvement. Now it was Sir Carte’s turn to be delighted. The duke was excited by his architect’s admiration, and gave him a dissertation on Schonnbrunn.

Although Mr. Daere had been disappointed in his hope of exercising a personal influence over the education of his ward, he had been more fortunate in his plans for the management of his ward’s property. Perhaps there never was an instance of the opportunities afforded by a long minority having been used to greater advantage. The estates had been greatly increased and greatly improved; all and very heavy mortgages had been paid off, and the rents been fairly apportioned. Mr. Daere, by his constant exertions, and able dispositions, since his return to England, also made up for the neglect with which an important point had been a little treated; and at no period had the parliamentary influence of the house of Hauteville been so extensive, and so decided, and so well bottomed as when our hero became its chief.

In spite of his proverbial pride, it seemed that Mr. Daere was determined not to be offended by the conduct of his ward. The duke had not yet announced his arrival in England to his guardian; but about a month after that event, he received a letter of congratulation from Mr. Daere, who, at the same time, expressed a desire to resign a trust into his grace’s hand, which, he believed, had not been abused. The duke, who rather dreaded an interview, wrote, in return, that he intended very shortly to visit Yorkshire, when he should have the pleasure of availing himself of the kind invitation to Castle Daere; and having thus, as he thought, dexterously got rid of the old gentleman for the present, he took a ride with Caroline St. Maurice.

CHAPTER VI.

PARLIAMENT assembled, the town filled, and every moment in the day of the Duke of St. James was engrossed. Sir Carte and his tribe filled up the morning. Then there were endless visits to endless visitors; dressing, riding, chiefly with Lady Caroline; luncheons, and the bow window at White’s. Then came the evening with all its crash and glare; the banquet, the opera, and the ball.

The Duke of St. James took the oaths and his

seat. He was introduced by Lord Fitz-pompey. He heard a debate. We laugh at such a thing, especially in the upper house; but, on the whole, the affair is imposing, particularly if we take a part in it. Lord Ex-Chamberlain thought the nation going on wrong; and he made a speech full of currency and constitution. Baron Deprivyseal seconded him with great effect, brief but bitter, satirical, and sore. The Earl of Quarterday answered these, full of confidence in the nation and in himself. When the debate was getting heavy, Lord Snap jumped up to give them something light. The lords do not encourage wit, and so are obliged to put up with pertness. But Viscount Memoir was very statesman-like, and spouted a sort of universal history. Then there was Lord Ego, who vindicated his character, when nobody knew he had one, and explained his motives, because his auditors could not understand his acts. Then there was a maiden speech, so inaudible that it was doubted whether, after all, the young orator really did lose his virginity. In the end, up started the premier, who, having nothing to say, was manly, and candid, and liberal; gave credit to his adversaries, and took credit to himself, and then the motion was withdrawn.

While all this was going on, some made a note, some made a bet; some consulted a book, some their ease; some yawned, a few slept: yet, on the whole, there was an air about the assembly which can be witnessed in no other in Europe. Even the most indifferent looked as if he would come forward, if the occasion should demand him; and the most imbecile, as if he could serve his country, if it required him. When a man raises his eyes from his bench, and sees his ancestor in the tapestry, he begins to understand the pride of blood.

The young duke had not experienced many weeks of his career before he began to sicken of living in a hotel. Hitherto he had not reaped any of the fruits of the termination of his minority. He was a *cavalier seul*, highly considered, truly, but yet a mere member of society. He had been this for years. This was not the existence to enjoy which he had hurried to England. He aspired to be society itself. In a word, his tastes were of the most magnificent description, and he sighed to be surrounded by a court. As Hauteville House, even with Sir Carte's extraordinary exertions, could not be ready for his reception for three years, which to him appeared eternity, he determined to look about for an establishment. He was fortunate. A nobleman who possessed an hereditary mansion of the first class, and much too magnificent for his resources, suddenly became diplomatic, and accepted an embassy. The Duke of St. James took every thing off his hands: house, furniture, wines, cooks, servants, horses. Sir Carte was sent in to touch up the gilding, and make a few temporary improvements; and Lady Fitz-pompey pledged herself to organise the whole establishment, ere the full season commenced, and the early Easter had elapsed, which had now arrived.

It had arrived, and the young duke had departed to his chief family seat, Hauteville Castle, in Yorkshire. He intended at the same time to fulfil his long-pledged engagement at Castle Dacre. He arrived at Hauteville amid the ringing of bells, the roasting of oxen, and the crackling of bonfires. The castle, unlike most Yorkshire castles, was a Gothic edifice, ancient, vast, and strong; but it had received numerous additions in various styles of

architecture, which were at the same time great sources of convenience, and great violations of taste. The young duke was seized with a violent desire to live in a genuine Gothic castle: each day his refined taste was outraged by discovering Roman windows and Grecian doors. He determined to emulate Windsor, and he sent for Sir Carte.

Sir Carte came as quick as lightning after thunder. He was immensely struck with Hauteville, particularly with its capabilities. It was a superb place, certainly, and might be rendered unrivalled. The situation seemed made for the pure Gothic. The left wing should decidedly be pulled down, and its site occupied by a knight's hall; the old terrace should be restored: the donjon-keep should be raised, and a gallery, three hundred feet long, thrown through the body of the castle. Estimates, estimates, estimates! But the time! This was a greater point than the expense. Wonders should be done. There were now five hundred men working for Hauteville House; there should be a thousand for Hauteville Castle. *Carte blanche!* *Carte blanche!* *Carte blanche!*

On his arrival in Yorkshire the duke had learned that the Dacres were in Norfolk on a visit. As the castle was some miles off, he saw no necessity to make a useless exertion, and so he sent his jager with his card. He had now been ten days in his native county. It was dull, and he was restless. He missed the excitement of perpetual admiration, and his eye drooped for constant glitter. He suddenly returned to town, just when the county had flattered itself that he was about to appoint his public days.

CHAPTER VII.

EASTER was over, the sun shone, the world was mad, and the young duke made his *début* at Almack's. He determined to prove that he had profited by a winter at Vienna. His dancing was declared consummate. He galloped with grace, and waltzed with vigour. It was difficult to decide which was most admirable, the elegance of his prance, or the precision of his whirl. A fat Russian prince, a lean Austrian count, a little German baron, who, somehow or other, always contrived to be the most marked characters of the evening, disappeared in despair.

There was a lady in the room who very much attracted the notice of our hero, whom, as a hero, I will back against any one of his inches. As I am approaching a catastrophe, I will take a new pen. She—the lady, not the pen—was a very remarkable personage. There are some sorts of beauty which defy description, and almost scrutiny. Some faces rise upon us in the tumult of life, like stars from out the sea, or as if they had moved out of a picture. Our first impression is any thing but fleshly. We are struck dumb—we gasp for breath—our limbs quiver—a faintness glides over our frame—we are awed; instead of gazing upon the apparition, we avert the eyes, which yet will feed upon its beauty. A strange sort of unearthly pain mixes with the intense pleasure. And not till, with a struggle, we call back to our memory the commonplaces of existence, can we recover our commonplace demeanour. These, indeed, are rare

visions—these, indeed, are early feelings, when our young existence leaps with its mountain torrents; but as the river of our life rolls on, our eyes grow dimmer, or our blood more cold.

Some effect of this kind was produced on the Duke of St. James by the unknown dame. He turned away his head to collect his senses. His eyes again rally; and this time, being prepared, he was more successful in his observations.

The lady was standing against the wall; a young man was addressing some remarks to her which apparently were not very interesting. She was tall and young, and, as her tiara betokened, married; dazzling fair, but without colour; with locks like night, and features delicate, but precisely defined. Yet all this did not at first challenge the observation of the duke. It was the general and peculiar expression of her countenance which had caused in him such emotion. There was an expression of resignation, or the excited, or sorrow, or serenity, which in these exotic chambers was strange, and singular, and lone. She gazed like some genius invisible to the crowd, and mourning over its degradation.

He stopped St. Maurice, as his cousin passed by, to inquire her name, and learned that she was Lady Aphrodite Grafton, the wife of Sir Lucius Grafton.

"What, Lucy Grafton!" exclaimed the duke. "I remember, I was his fag at Eton. He was a handsome dog,—but I doubt whether he deserves such a wife. Introduce me."

Lady Aphrodite received our hero with a gentle bow, and did not seem quite as impressed with his importance as most of those to whom he had been presented in the course of the evening. The duke had considerable tact with women, and soon perceived that the common topics of a hack flirtation would not do in the present case. He was therefore very mild and modest, rather piquant, somewhat rational, and, apparently, perfectly unaffected. Her ladyship's reserve wore away. She refused to dance, but conversed with some animation. The duke did not leave her side. The women began to stare, the men to bet,—Lady Aphrodite against the field. In vain his grace laid a thousand plans to arrange a tea-room *à la-tête*. He was unsuccessful. As he was about to return to the charge, her ladyship desired a passer-by to summon her carriage. No time was to be lost. The duke began to talk hard about his old friend and school-fellow, Sir Lucius. A greenhorn would have thought it madness to take an interest in such a person, of all others; but women like you to enter their house as their husband's friend. Lady Aphrodite could not refrain from expressing her conviction that Sir Lucius would be most happy to renew his acquaintance with the Duke of St. James, and the Duke of St. James immediately said that he would take the earliest opportunity of giving him that pleasure.

CHAPTER VIII.

SIR LUCIUS GRAFTON was five or six years older than the Duke of St. James, although he had been his contemporary at Eton. He too had been a minor, and had inherited an estate capable of

supporting the becoming dignity of an ancient family. In appearance, he was an Antinous. There was, however, an expression of firmness, almost of ferocity, about his mouth, which quite prevented his countenance from being effeminate, and broke the dreamy voluptuousness of the rest of his features. In mind, he was a *roué*. Devoted to pleasure, he had reached the goblet at an early age; and before he was five-and-twenty, procured for himself a reputation which made all women dread, and some men shun him. In the very wildest moment of his career, when he was almost marked like Cain, he had met Lady Aphrodite Maltravers. She was the daughter of a nobleman, who justly prided himself, in a degenerate age, on the virtue of his house. Nature, as if in recompense for his goodness, had showered all her blessings on his only daughter. Never was daughter more devoted to a widowed sire—never was woman influenced by principles of purer morality.

This was the woman who inspired Sir Lucius Grafton with an ungovernable passion. Despairing of success by any other method, conscious that, sooner or later, he must, for family considerations, propagate future baronets of the name of Grafton, he determined to solicit her hand. But for him to obtain it he was well aware was difficult. Confident in his person, his consummate knowledge of the female character, and his unrivalled powers of dissimulation, Sir Lucius arranged his dispositions. The daughter feared, the father hated him. There was, indeed, much to be done; but the remembrance of a thousand triumphs supported the adventurer. Lady Aphrodite was at length persuaded that she alone could confirm the reformation, which she alone had originated. She yielded to a passion which her love of virtue had alone kept in subjection. Sir Lucius and Lady Aphrodite knelt at the feet of the old earl. The tears of his daughter, ay, and of his future son-in-law—for Sir Lucius knew when to weep—were too much for his kind and generous heart. He gave them his blessing, which faltered on his tongue.

A year had not elapsed ere Lady Aphrodite woke to all the wildness of a deluded woman. The idol on whom she had lavished all the incense of her innocent affections became every day less like a true divinity. At length, even the ingenuity of passion could no longer disguise the hideous and bitter truth. She was no longer loved. She thought of her father. Ah! what was the madness of her memory.

The agony of her mind disappointed her husband's hope of an heir, and the promise was never renewed. In vain she remonstrated to the being to whom she was devoted: in vain she sought, by meek endurance, again to melt his heart. It was cold—it was callous. Most women would have endeavoured to recover their lost influence by different tactics; some, perhaps, would have forgotten their mortification in their revenge. But Lady Aphrodite had been the victim of passion, and now was its slave. She could not dissemble.

Not so her spouse. Sir Lucius knew too well the value of a good character to part very easily with that which he had so unexpectedly regained. Whatever were his excesses, they were prudent ones. He felt that boyhood could alone excuse the folly of glorying in vice; and he knew that, to

respect virtue, it was not absolutely necessary to be virtuous. No one was, apparently, more choice in his companions than Sir Lucius Grafton; no husband was seen oftener with his wife; no one paid more respect to age, or knew better when to wear a grave countenance. The world praised the magical influence of Lady Aphrodite; and Lady Aphrodite, in private, wept over her misery. In public, she made an effort to conceal all she felt; and, as it is a great inducement to every woman to conceal that she is neglected by the man whom she adores, her effort was successful. Yet her countenance might indicate that she was little interested in the scene in which she mixed. She was too proud to weep, but too sad to smile. Elegant and lone, she stood among her crushed and lovely hopes, like a column amid the ruins of a beautiful temple.

The world declared that Lady Aphrodite was desperately virtuous—and the world was right. A thousand fire-flies had sparkled round this myrtle, and its fresh and verdant hue was still unscorched and unscorched. Not a very accurate image, but pretty; and those who have watched a glancing shower of these glittering insects, will confess that, poetically, the bush might burn. The truth is, that Lady Aphrodite still trembled when she recalled the early anguish of her broken sleep of love, and had not courage enough to hope that she might dream again. Like the old Hebrews, she had been so chastened for her wild idolatry, that she dared not again raise an image to animate the wilderness of her existence. Man she, at the same time, feared and despised. Compared with her husband, all who surrounded her were, she felt, in appearance inferior, and were, she believed, in mind the same.

I know not how it is, but love at first sight is a subject of constant ridicule; but somehow, I suspect that it has more to do with the affairs of this world than we are willing to own. Eyes meet which have never met before; and glances thrill with expression which is strange. We contrast these pleasant sights and new emotions, with hackneyed objects and worn sensations. Another glance, and another thrill—and we spring into each other's arms. What can be more natural!

Ah! that we should awake so often to truth so bitter! Ah, that charm by charm should evaporate from the talisman which had enchanted our existence!

And so it was with this sweet woman, whose feelings glow under my pen. She had repaired to a splendid assembly, to play her splendid part with the consciousness of misery—without the expectation of hope. She awaited, without interest, the routine which had been so often uninteresting; she viewed without emotion the characters which had never moved. A stranger suddenly appeared upon the stage, fresh as the morning dew, and glittering like the morning star. All eyes await—all tongues applaud him. His step is grace—his countenance is hope—his voice is music! And was such a being born only to deceive and be deceived? Was he to run the same false, palling, ruinous career, which had filled so many hearts with bitterness, and dimmed the radiance of so many eyes? Never! The nobility of his soul spoke from his glancing eye, and treated the foul suspicion with scorn. Ah, would that she had such a brother to warn, to guide, to—love!

So felt the Lady Aphrodite: So felt—we will not say, so reasoned. When once a woman allows an idea to touch her heart, it is miraculous with what rapidity the idea is fathered by her brain. All her experience, all her anguish, all her despair, vanished like a long frost in an instant, and in a night. She felt a delicious conviction that a knight had at length come to her rescue, a hero worthy of an adventure so admirable. The image of the young duke filled her whole mind; she had no ear for others' voices; she mused on his idea with the rapture of a votary on the mysteries of a new faith.

Yet, strange, when he at length approached her—when he addressed her—when she had replied to that mouth which had fascinated even before it had spoken, she was cold, reserved, constrained. Some talk of the burning cheek and the flashing eye of passion; but if I were not a quiet man, and cared not for these things, I should say, give me the woman who, when I approach her, treats me almost with scorn, and trembles while she affects to disregard me.

Lady Aphrodite has returned home: she hurries to her apartment—she falls into a sweet reverie—her head leans upon her hand. Her soubrette, a pretty and chattering Swiss, whose republican virtue had been corrupted by Paris, as Rome by Corinth, endeavours to divert her lady's ennui: she execrates her beautiful mistress with tattle about the admiration of Lord B—, and the sighs of Sir Harry. Her ladyship reprimands her for her levity, and the soubrette, grown sullen, revenges herself for her mistress's reproof, by converting the sleepy process of brushing into the most lively torture.

The Duke of St. James called upon Lady Aphrodite Grafton the next day, and at an hour when he trusted to find her alone. He was not disappointed. More than once the silver-tongued pendule sounded during that somewhat protracted, but most agreeable visit. He was, indeed, greatly interested by her; but he was an habitual gallant, and always began by feigning more than he felt. She, on the contrary, who was really in love, feigned much less. Yet she was no longer constrained, though calm. Fluent, and even gay, she talked as well as listened, and her repartees more than once put her companion on his mettle. She displayed a delicate and even luxurious taste, not only in her conversation, but—the duke observed it with delight—in her costume. She had a passion for music and for flowers: she sang a romance, and gave him a rose. He retired, perfectly fascinated.

O god—or gods of love!—for there are two Cupids—which of you it was that inspired the Duke of St. James I pretend not to decide. Perhaps, last night, it was thou, O son of Erebus and Nox! To-day, perhaps, it was the lady's *mind*. All I know is, that when I am led to the universal altar, I beg that both of you will shoot your darts!

CHAPTER IX.

I FIND this writing not so difficult as I had imagined. I see the only way is to rattle on, just as you talk. The moment that you anticipate your pen in forming a sentence, you get as stiff as

a gentleman in stays. I use my pen as my horse—I guide it, and it carries me on.

Sir Lucius Grafton called on the Duke of St. James. They did not immediately swear an eternal friendship, like the immortal heroines of the Rovers, but they greeted each other with considerable warmth, talked of old times, and old companions, and compared their former sensations with their present. No one could be a more agreeable companion than Sir Lucius, and this day he left a very favourable impression with his young friend. From this day, too, the duke's visits at the baronet's were frequent; and as the Graftons were intimate with the Fitz-pompeys, scarcely a day elapsed without his having, the pleasure of passing a portion of it in the company of Lady Aphrodite. His attentions to her were marked, and sometimes mentioned. Lord Fitz-pompey was rather in a flutter. George did not ride so often with Caroline, and never alone with her. This was disagreeable; but the earl was a man of the world, and a sanguine man withal. These things will happen. It is of no use to quarrel with the wind; and, for his part, he was not sorry that he had the honour of the Grafton acquaintance: it secured Caroline her cousin's company; and as for the liaison, if there were one, why it must end, and probably the difficulty of terminating it might even hasten the catastrophe which he had so much at heart. "So, Laura, dearest, let the Graftons be asked to most of our dinners."

In one of those rides to which Caroline was not admitted, for it was with Lady Aphrodite alone, the Duke of St. James took his way to the Regent's Park, a wild sequestered spot, whither he invariably repaired when he did not wish to be noticed; for the inhabitants of this pretty suburb are a distinct race, and although their eyes are not unobserving, from their inability to speak the language of London they are unable to communicate their observations.

The spring sun was setting, and flung a crimson flush over the blue waters and white houses. The scene was rather imposing, and reminded our hero of days of travel. A sudden thought rushed into his head. Would it not be delightful to build a beautiful retreat in this sweet and retired land, and be enabled in an instant to fly from the formal magnificence of a London mansion? Lady Aphrodite was charmed with the idea; for the enamoured are always delighted with what is fanciful. The duke determined immediately to convert the idea into an object. To lose no time, was his grand motto. As he thought that Sir Carte had enough upon his hands, he determined to apply to an artist whose achievements had been greatly vaunted to him by a very distinguished and very noble judge.

M. Bijou de Millecolannes, chevalier of the Legion of Honour, and member of the Academy of St. Luke's, except in his title, was the very antipodes of Sir Carte Blanche. Sir Carte was all solidity, solemnity, and correctness. Bijou de Millecolannes, all lightness, gayety, and originality. Sir Carte was ever armed with the Parthenon, Palladio, and St. Peter's. Bijou de Millecolannes laughed at the ancients, called Palladio and Michel barbarians of the middle ages, and had himself invented an order. Bijou was not as plausible as Sir Carte; but he was infinitely more enter-

taining. Far from being servile, he allowed no one to talk but himself, and made his fortune by his elegant insolence. How singular it is, that those who love servility are always the victims of impertinence!

Gayly did Bijou de Millecolannes drive his pea-green cabriolet to the spot in question. He formed his plan in an instant. "The occasional retreat of a noble should be something picturesque and poetical. The mind should be led to voluptuousness by exquisite associations, as well as by the creations of art. It is thus their luxury is rendered more intense by the reminiscences that add past experience to present enjoyment! For instance, if you sail down a river, imitate the progress of Cleopatra. And here—here, where the opportunity is so ample, what think you of reviving the Alhambra!"

Splendid conception! The duke already fancied himself a caliph. "Lose no time, chevalier! Dig, plant, build!"

Nine acres were obtained from the woods and forests; mounds were thrown up, shrubs thrown in; the paths emulated the serpent; the nine acres seemed interminable. All was surrounded by a paling eight feet high, that no one might pierce the mystery of the preparations.

A rumour was soon current, that the Zoological Society intended to keep a Bengal tiger *au naturel*, and that they were contriving a residence which would amply compensate him for his native jungle. The Regent's Park was in despair; the landlords lowered their rents, and the tenants petitioned the king. In a short time, some hooded domes, and Saracenic spires rose to sight, and the truth was then made known, that the young Duke of St. James was building a villa. The Regent's Park was in rapture; the landlords raised their rents, and the tenants withdrew their petition.

CHAPTER X

MR. DACRE again wrote to the Duke of St. James. He regretted that he had been absent from home when his grace had done him the honour of calling at Castle Dacre. Had he been aware of that intended gratification, he could with ease, and would with pleasure, have postponed his visit to Norfolk. He also regretted that it would not be in his power to visit London this season; and as he thought that no further time should be lost in resigning the trust with which he had been so honoured, he begged leave to forward his accounts to the duke, and with them some notes, which he believed would convey some not unimportant information to his grace for the future management of his property. The young duke took a rapid glance at the sum total of his rental, crammed all his papers into a cabinet, with a determination to examine them the first opportunity, and then rolled off to a morning concert, of which he was the patron.

The intended opportunity for the examination of the important papers was never caught, nor was it surprising that it escaped capture. It is difficult to conceive a career of more various, more constant, or more distracting excitement than that in which the Duke of St. James was now engaged. His

life was an ocean of enjoyment, and each hour, like each wave, threw up its pearl. How dull was the ball in which he did not bound! How dim the banquet in which he did not glitter! His presence in the gardens compensated for the want of flowers,—his vision in the Park, for the want of sun. In public breakfasts he was more indispensable than pine-apples; in private concerts, more noticed than an absent singer. How fair was the dame on whom he smiled! How brown was the tradesman on whom he frowned!

Think only of prime ministers and princes, to say nothing of princesses—nay! think only of managers of operas and French actors, to say nothing of French actresses,—think only of jewellers, milliners, artists, horse-dealers, all the shoals who hurried for his sanction,—think only of the two or three thousand civilized beings for whom all this population breathed, and who each of them had claims upon our hero's notice! Think of the statesmen, who had so much to ask and so much to give,—the dandies to feed with, and to be fed, —the dangerous dowagers, and the desperate mothers,—the widows wild as early partridges,—the budding virgins, mild as a summer cloud and soft as an opera hat! Think of the drony bores with their dull hum,—think of the chivalric guardsmen, with their horses to sell, and their bills to discount,—think of Willis, think of Crockford, think of White's, think of Brookes—and you may form a very faint idea how the young duke had to talk, and eat, and flirt, and cut, and pet, and patronise!

You think it impossible for one man to do all this. My friend! there is yet much behind. You may add to the catalogue, Melton and Newmarket; and if to hunt without any appetite, and to bet without an object, will not sicken you, why build a yacht!

The Duke of St. James gave his first grand entertainment for the season. It was like the assembly of the immortals at the first levee of Jove. All hurried to pay their devoirs to the young king of fashion; and each, who succeeded in becoming a member of the court, felt as proud as a peer with a new title, or a baronet with an old one. An air of regal splendour, an almost imperial assumption, was observed in the arrangements of the fête. A troop of servants in new and the richest liveries filled the hall; grooms lined the staircase; Spiridion, the Greek page, lounged on an ottoman in an antechamber, and, with the assistance of six young gentlemen in crimson and silver uniforms, announced the coming of the cherished guests. Cart-loads of pine-apples were sent up from the Yorkshire castle, and wagons of orange trees from the Twickenham villa.

A brilliant *colerie*, of which his grace was a member, had amused themselves a few nights before, by representing in costume the court of Charles the First. They agreed this night to reappear in their splendid dresses; and the duke, who was Villiers, supported his character, even to the gay shedding of a shower of diamonds. In his cap was observed an hereditary sapphire, which blazed like a volcano, and which was rumoured to be worth his rent-roll.

There was a short concert, at which the most celebrated signora made her *début*; there was a single vaudeville, which a white satin playbill, presented to each guest as they entered the temporary

theatre, indicated to have been written for the occasion; there was a ball in which was introduced a new dance. *Longueurs* were skilfully avoided, and the excitement was so rapid that every one had an appetite for supper.

A long gallery lined with bronzes and bijouterie, with cabinets and sculpture, with china and with paintings,—all purchased for the future ornament of Hauteville House, and here stowed away in unpretending, but most artificial, confusion,—offered accommodation to all the guests. To a table covered with gold, and placed in a magnificent tent upon the stage, his grace loyally led two princes of the blood and a child of France, and gave a gallant signal for the commencement of operations, by himself offering them, on his bended knee, a goblet of tokay. Madame de Protocoli, Lady Aphrodite Grafton, the Dutchess of Shropshire, and Lady Fitz-pompey, shared the honours of the pavilion, and some might be excused for envying a party so brilliant, and a situation so distinguished. Yet Lady Aphrodite was an unwilling member of it; and nothing but the personal solicitations of Sir Lucius would have induced her to consent to the wish of their host.

A pink and printed *carte* succeeded to the white and satin playbill. Vitellius might have been pleased with the banquet. Ah! how shall I describe those soups, which surely must have been the magical elixir! How shall I paint those ortolans dressed by the inimitable artiste, à la St. James, for the occasion, and which looked so beautiful in death, that they must surely have preferred such an euthanasia, even to flying in the perfumed air of an Ausonian heaven!

Sweet bird! though thou hast lost thy plumage, thou shalt fly to my mistress! Is it not better to be nibbled by her, than numbed by a cardinal? I too will feed on thy delicate beauty. Sweet bird! thy companion has fled to my mistress; and now thou shalt thrill the nerves of her master! O, doff, then, thy waistcoat of vine-leaves, pretty rover, and show me that bosom more delicious even than woman's! What gushes of rapture! What a flavour! How peculiar! Even how sacred! Heaven at once sends both manna and quails. Another little wanderer! Pray follow my example! Allow me. All paradise opens! Let me die eating ortolans to the sound of soft music! The flavour is really too intensely exquisite. Give me a tea-spoonful of maraschino!

Even the supper was brief though brilliant, and again the cotillon and the quadrille, the waltz and galloppe! At no moment of his life had the young duke felt existence so intense. Wherever he turned his eye he found a responding glance of beauty and admiration; wherever he turned his ear the whispered tones were soft and sweet as summer winds. Each look was an offering, each word was adoration! His soul dilated, the glory of the scene touched all his passions. He almost determined not again to mingle in society; but, like a monarch, merely to receive the world which worshipped him. The idea was sublime: was it even to him impracticable? In the midst of his splendour, he fell into a reverie, and mused on his magnificence. He could no longer resist the conviction that he was a superior essence even to all around him. The world seemed created solely for his enjoyment. Nor man nor woman could withstand him. From this hour he delivered himself up to a sublime self

ishness. With all his passions and all his profusion, a callousness crept over his heart. His sympathy for those he believed his inferiors and his vassals was slight. Where we do not respect, we soon cease to love—when we cease to love, virtue weeps and flies. His soul wandered in dreams of omnipotence.

This picture perhaps excites your dislike—it may be, your hatred—perchance, your contempt. Pause! Pity him! Pity his fatal youth!

CHAPTER XI.

THE Lady Aphrodite at first refused to sit in the duke's pavilion. Was she then in the *habit* of refusing? Let us not forget our Venus of the waters. Shall I whisper to you where St. James first dared to hope? No, you shall guess. *Je vous le donne en trois.* The gardens!—The opera!—The tea-room!—No! no! no! You are conceiving a locality much more romantic. Already you have created the bower of a Parisina, where the waterfall is even more musical than the birds, more lulling than the evening winds; where all is pale except the stars! all hushed except their beating pulses! Will this do? No! What think you then of a BAZAAR?

O! thou wonderful nineteenth century,—thou that believest in no miracles, and dost so many, has thou brought this, too, about, the ladies' hearts should be won—and gentlemen's also—not in courts, or tourney, or halls of revel, but over a counter and behind a stall! We are, indeed, a nation of shopkeepers!

The King of Otaheite,—Mr. Peel and the State-paper office must be thanked for this narrative,—though a despot, was a reformer. He discovered that the eating of bread-fruit was a barbarous custom, which would infallibly prevent his people from being a great nation. He determined to introduce French rolls. A party rebelled; the despot was energetic; some were executed; the rest ejected.

The vagabonds arrived in England. As they had been banished in opposition to French rolls, they were declared to be a British interest. They professed their admiration of civil and religious liberty, and also of a subscription. When they had drunk a great deal of punch, and spent all their money, they discovered that they had nothing to eat, and would infallibly have been starved had not an Hibernian marchioness, who had never been in Ireland, been exceedingly shocked that men should die of hunger,—and so, being one of the bustling, she got up a fancy sale, and a SANDWICH ISLE BAZAAR.

All the world was there, and of course our hero. Never was the arrival of a comet watched by astronomers who had calculated its advent with more anxiety than was the appearance of the young duke. Never did man pass through such dangers. It was the fiery ordeal. St. Anthony himself was not assailed with more temptations. Now he was saved from the lustre of a blonde face by the superior richness of a blonde lace. He would infallibly have been ravished by that ringlet, had he not been nearly reduced by that ring, which sparkled on a hand like the white cat's. He was only preserved from his unprecedented dangers by their number. No, no! He had a better talisman:—his conceit.

"Ah, Lady Balmont!" said his grace to a smiling artist, who offered him one of her own drawings of a Swiss cottage, "for me to be a tenant, it must be love and a cottage!"

"What! am I to buy this ring, Mrs. Abercroft! *Point de jour.* O! dreadful phrase! Allow me to present it to you, for you are the only one whom such words cannot make tremble."

"This chain, Lady Jemina, for my glass! I will teach me where to direct it."

"Ah! Mrs. Fitzroy!"—and he covered his face with affected fear.—"Can you forgive me? Your beautiful note has been half an hour unanswered. The box is yours for Tuesday."

He tried to pass the next stall with a smiling bow, but he could not escape. It was Lady de Courcy, a dowager, but not old. Once beautiful, her charms had not yet disappeared. She had a pair of glittering eyes, a skilfully carmined cheek, and looks yet raven. Her eloquence made her now as conspicuous as once did her beauty. The young duke was her constant object, and her occasional victim. He hated above all things a talking woman, he dreaded, above all others, Lady de Courcy.

He could not shirk. She summoned him by name so loud, that crowds of barbarians stared, and a man called to a woman, and said, "My dear! make haste, here's a duke!"

Lady de Courcy was prime confidant of the Irish marchioness. She affected enthusiasm about the poor sufferers. She had learned Otaheiteau—she lectured about the bread-fruit—and she played upon a barbarous thrum-thrum, the only musical instrument in those savage wastes, ironically called the Society Islands, because there is no society. She was dreadful. The duke in despair took out his purse, poured forth from the pink and silver delicacy, worked by the slender fingers of Lady Aphrodite, a shower of sovereigns, and fairly scampered off.—At length he reached the lady of his heart.

"I fear, said the young duke with a smile, and in a soft sweet voice, "that you will never speak to me again, for I am a ruined man."

A beam of gentle affection reprimanded him even for badinage upon such a subject.

"I really came here to buy up all your stock; but that gorgon, Lady de Courcy, captured me, and my ransom has sent me here free, but a beggar. I do not know a more ill-fated fellow than myself. Now, if you had only condescended to make me prisoner, I might have saved my money; for I should have kissed my chain."

"My chains, I fear, are neither very alluring, nor very strong." She spoke with a thoughtful air, and he answered her only with his eye.

"I must bear off something from your stall," he resumed, in a more rapid and gayer tone; "and as I cannot purchase, you must present. Now for a gift!"

"Choose!"

"Yourself."

"Your grace is really spoiling my sale. See! poor Lord Bagshot. What a valuable purchaser!"

"Ah! Bag, my boy!" said the duke to a slang young nobleman whom he abhorred, but of whom he sometimes made a butt,— "am I in your way? Here! take this, and this, and this, and give me your purse. I'll pay her ladyship." And so the duke again showered some sovereigns, and returned the shrunken silk to its defrauded owner, who stared, and would have remonstrated, but his grace turned his back upon him.

"There, now," he continued, to Lady Aphrodite, "there is two hundred per cent. profit for you. You are not half a *marchande*. I will stand here, and be your shopman.—Well, Annesley," said he, as that dignitary passed, "what will you buy of my mistress? I advise you to get a place. 'Pon my soul, 'tis pleasant! Try Lady de Courcy. You know you are a favourite."

"I assure your grace," said Mr. Annesley, speaking very slowly, "that that story about Lady de Courcy is quite untrue, and very rude. I never turn my back on any woman, only my heel. We are on the best possible terms.—She is never to speak to me, and I am always to bow to her.—But I really must purchase. Where did you get that glass-chain, St. James? Lady Afy, can you accommodate me?"

"Here is one prettier! But are you near-sighted too, Mr. Annesley?"

"Very. I look upon a long-sighted man as a brute who, not being able to see with his mind, is obliged to see with his body.—The price of this?"

"A sovereign," said the duke—"cheap; but we consider you as a friend."

"A sovereign! You consider me a young duke rather. Two shillings, and that a severe price—a charitable price. Here is half-a-crown—give me sixpence. I was not a minor. Farewell! I go to the little Pomfret. She is a sweet flower, and I intend to wear her in my button-hole. Good-bye, Lady Afy!"

The gay morning had worn away, and St. James never left his fascinating position. Many a sweet, and many a soft thing he uttered. Sometimes he was baffled, but never beaten, and always returned to the charge with spirit. He was confident, because he was reckless: the lady had less trust in herself, because she was anxious. Yet she combated well, and repressed the passion which she could hardly conceal.

Many of her colleagues had already departed. She requested the duke to look after her carriage. A bold plan suddenly occurred to him, and he executed it with rare courage and rarer felicity.

"Lady Aphrodite's carriage!"

"Here, your grace!"

"O! go home. Your lady will return with Madame de Protocoli."

He rejoined her.

"I am sorry that, by some blunder, your carriage has gone. What could you have told them?"

"Impossible! How provoking! How stupid!"

"Perhaps you told them that you would return with the Fitz-pompeys, but they are gone; or Mrs. Aberleigh, and she is not here;—or, perhaps,—but they have gone too. Every one has gone."

"What shall I do! How distressing! I had better send. Pray, send; or I will ask Lady de Courcy."

"O! no, no! I really did not like to see you with her. As a favour—as a favour to me, I pray you not."

"What can I do? I must send. Let me beg your grace to send."

"Certainly, certainly; but, ten to one, there will be some mistake. There always is some mistake when you send these strangers. And, besides, I forgot, all this time, my carriage is here. Let me take you home."

"No, no!"

"Dearest Lady Aphrodite, do not distress yourself. I can wait here till the carriage returns, or I

can walk; to be sure, I can walk. Pray, pray take the carriage! As a favour—as a favour to me!"

"But I cannot bear you to walk. I know you dislike walking."

"Well, then, I will wait."

"Well, if it must be so—but I am ashamed to inconvenience you. How provoking of these men! Pray, then, tell the coachman to drive fast, that you may not have to wait. I declare, there is scarcely a human being in the room; and those odd people are staring so!"

He pressed her arm, as he led her to his carriage. She is in; and yet, before the door shuts, he lingers.

"I shall certainly walk," said he. "I do not think the easterly wind will make me very ill. Good-bye! O, what a *coup de vent!*"

"Let me get out, then; and pray, pray take the carriage. I would much sooner do any thing than go in it. I would much rather walk. I am sure you will be ill!"

"Not if I be with *you!*" He pressed her hand with impassioned warmth—he spoke to her in a voice soft with adoration. Their eloquent eyes met—and he leaped in.

"Drive home!" said the young duke.

O! moment of triumph!

CHAPTER XII.

THERE was a brilliant levee,—all stars and garters; and a splendid drawing-room,—all plumes and *seduisantes*. Many a bright eye and its owner fought its way down St. James's street, shot a wistful glance at the enchanted bow-window where the duke and his usual companions, Sir Lucius, Charles Annesley, and Lord Squib, lounged and laughed, stretched themselves and sneered: many a bright eye, that for a moment pierced the futurity, that painted her going in state as Duchess of St. James.

His majesty summoned a dinner party, a rare but magnificent event,—and the chief of the house of Hauteville appeared among the chosen vassals. This visit did the young duke good; and a few more might have permanently cured the conceit which the present one momentarily calmed. His grace saw the plate, and was filled with envy; his grace listened to his majesty, and was filled with admiration. O! father of thy people! if thou wouldst but look a little oftener on thy younger sons, their morals and their manners might be alike improved. O! George, the magnificent and the great!—for hast thou not rivalled the splendour of Lorenzo, and the grandeur of Louis!—smile on the praises of one who is loyal, although not a poet-laureate, and who is sincere, though he sips no sack.

His majesty, in the course of the evening, with his usual good-nature, signalled for his notice the youngest, and not the least distinguished of his guests. He complimented the young duke on the accession to the ornaments of his court, and said, with a smile, that he had heard of conquests in foreign ones. The duke accounted for his slight successes by reminding his majesty that he had the honour of being his godson,—and this he said in a slight and easy way, not smart or quick, or as a repartee to the royal observation—for "it is not

decorous to bandy compliments with your sovereign." His majesty asked some questions about an emperor, or an archduchess, and his grace answered to the purpose, but short and not too pointed. He listened rather than spoke, and smiled more assents than he uttered. The king was pleased with his young subject, and marked his approbation by conversing with that unrivalled affability which is gall o a round-head, and inspiration to a cavalier. There was a *bon mot*, which blazed with all the soft brilliancy of sheet lightning. What a contrast to the forky flashes of a regular wit! Then there was an anecdote of Sheridan—the royal Sheridaniana are not thrice-told tales—recounted with that curious felicity which has long stamped the illustrious narrator as the most consummate *raconteur* (1) in Europe. Then—but the duke knew when to withdraw; and he withdrew with renewed loyalty.

When I call to mind the unlimited indulgence which solicits, from the earliest age, the passions of a king, I pardon their crimes and reverence their virtues. But if I view a sovereign, who, with all those advantages which can seduce others and himself, commits in a brilliant youth at the worst but a brilliant folly; if I view the same individual on the throne, exercising all those powers which adorn the intrusted chieftain of a free people with the calm wisdom which belongs only to that man who dares to ponder on a past error—of such a monarch I am proud, and such a monarch I call a true philosopher.

O! people of England, be contented! You know not what might have been your lot. I might have been your king: and, although you have already conceived me as the very prosopopeia of amiability, the dreaded, the stern, the mortifying truth must no longer be concealed,—I should have been a tyrant!

But what a tyrant! I would have smothered you in roses, shot you with bon-bons, and drowned you with eau de Cologne. I would have banged up your parliaments, knocked up your steam-engines, shut up all societies for the diffusion of any thing. I would have republished the Book of Sports, restored holidays, revived the drama. Every parish should have had its orchestra, every village its dancing-master. I would have built fountains, and have burned fireworks.

But I am not a king. Bitter recollection! Yet something may turn up,—Greece, for instance. In the mean time I will take a canter.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Duke of St. James had been extremely desirous of inducing the fair Aphrodite to accept *ome gage d'amour*, but had failed in all his plans, which annoyed him.

One day, looking in at his jeweller's, to see some models of a shield and vases, which were executing for him in gold,—ever since he had dined with his majesty that unhappy sideboard of plate had haunted him at all hours—he met Lady Aphrodite and the Fitz-pompeys. Lady Aphrodite was speaking to the jeweller about her diamonds, which were to be reset, or something, for her approaching fête. The duke took the ladies up-stairs

to look at the models, and while they were intent upon them and other curiosities, his absence for a moment was unperceived. He ran down stairs, and caught Mr. Garnet.

"Mr. Garnet! I think I saw Lady Aphrodite give you her diamonds!"

"Yes, your grace."

"Are they valuable?" in a careless tone.

"Hum! very pretty stones,—very pretty stones, indeed. Few baronets' ladies have a prettier set, worth perhaps 1000*l.*—say 1200*l.*—Lady Aphrodite Grafton is not the Dutchess of St. James, you know," said Mr. Garnet, as if he anticipated furnishing that future lady with a very different set of brilliants.

"Mr. Garnet, you can do me the greatest favour."

"Your grace has only to command me at all times."

"Well, then, in a word, for time presses. Can you contrive without particularly altering, that is, without altering the general appearance of these diamonds, can you contrive to change the stones, and substitute the most valuable that you have—consistent, as I must impress upon you, with maintaining their general appearance, as at present?"

"The most valuable stones," musingly repeated Mr. Garnet,—“general appearance, as at present. We cannot deceive her ladyship.”

"If that be absolutely impossible, then we must give that point up; but generally, generally can you preserve their present character?"

"The most valuable stones!" repeated Mr. Garnet; "your grace is aware that we may run up some thousands even in this set?"

"I give you no limit."

"But the time," rejoined Mr. Garnet. "They must be ready for her ladyship's party. We shall be hard pressed. I am afraid of the time."

"Cannot the men work all night? Pay them any thing."

"It shall be done, your grace. Your grace may command me in any thing."

"This is a secret between us, Garnet. Your partners—"

"Shall know nothing. And as for myself, I am as close as an emerald in a seal-ring."

CHAPTER XIV.

HUSSEIN PASHA, "the favourite," not only of the Marquis of Mash, but of Tattersall's, unaccountably sickened, and died. His noble master, full of chagrin, took to his bed, and followed his steed's example. The death of the marquis caused a vacancy in the stewardship of the approaching Doncaster. Sir Lucius Grafton was the other steward, and he proposed to the Duke of St. James, as he was a Yorkshireman, to become his colleague. His grace, who wished to pay a compliment to his county, closed with the proposition. Sir Lucius was a first-rate jockey; his colleague was quite ignorant of the noble science in all its details, but that was of slight importance. The baronet was to be the working partner, and do the business,—the duke, the show member of the concern, and do the magnificence: as one banker, you may observe, lives always in Portland Place, reads the Court

Journal all the morning, and has an opera-box, while his partner lodges in Lombard-street, thumbs a price-current, and only has a box at Clapham.

The young duke, however, was ambitious of making a good book; and, with all the calm impetuosity which characterizes a youthful Hauteville, determined to have a crack stud at once. So at Ascot, where he spent a few pleasant hours, dined at the cottage, was caught in a shower, in return caught a cold, a slight influenza for a week, and all the world full of inquiries and anxiety,—at Ascot, I say, he bought up all the winning horses at an average of three thousand guineas for each pair of ears. Sir Lucius stared, remonstrated, and, as his remonstrances were in vain, assisted him.

As people on the point of death often make a desperate rally, so this, the most brilliant of seasons, was even more lively as it nearer approached its end. The *dîjeuner* and the villa *fête*, the water-party and the rambling ride, followed each other with the bright rapidity of the final scenes in a pantomime. Each *dama* seemed only inspired with the ambition of giving the last ball; and so numerous were the parties, that the town really sometimes seemed illuminated. To breakfast at Twickenham, and to dine in Belgrave Square; to hear, or rather to honour, half an act of an opera; to campaign through half a dozen private balls, and to finish with a romp at the rooms, as after our wine we take a glass of liqueur—all this surely required the courage of an Alexander and the strength of a Hercules, and which, indeed, cannot be achieved without the miraculous powers of a Joshua. So thought the young duke, as with an excited mind and a whirling head, he threw himself actually at half past six o'clock on a couch which brought him no sleep.

Yet he recovered, and with the aid of the bath, the soda, and the coffee, and all the thousand remedies which a skilful valet has ever at hand, at three o'clock on the same day he rose and dressed, and in an hour was again at the illustrious bow-window, sneering with Charles Annesley, or laughing downright with Lord Squib.

The Duke of St. James gave a water party, and the astounded Thames swelled with pride, as his broad breast bore on the ducal barges. St. Maurice, who was in the Guards, secured his band; and Lord Squib, who, though it was July, brought a furred great-coat, secured himself. Lady Afy looked like Amphitrite, and Lady Caroline looked—in love. They wandered in gardens like Calypso's; they rambled over a villa, which reminded them of Baïæ; they partook of a banquet which should have been described by Ariosto. All were delighted: they delivered themselves to the charms of an unrestrained gayety. Even Charles Annesley laughed and romped.

This is, I think, the only mode in which public eating is essentially agreeable. A banquetting-hall is often the scene of exquisite pleasure; but that is not so much excited by the gratification of the delicate palate, as by the magnificent effect of light and shade—by the beautiful women, the radiant jewels, the graceful costume, her rainbow glass, the glowing wines, the glorious plate. For the rest, all is too hot, too crowded, and too noisy to catch a flavour—to analyze a combination—to dwell upon a gust. To eat—*really* to eat, one must eat alone, with a soft light, with simple furniture, an easy

dress, and a single dish—at a time. O, hours that I have thus spent! O, hours of virtue!—for what is more virtuous than to be conscious of the blessings of a bountiful Nature! A good eater must be a good man; for a good eater must have a good digestion, and a good digestion depends upon a good conscience. After having committed many follies, and tasted many dishes, but never with the intention of doing a bad action, of eating a bad *plat*, I give to the world this result of all philosophy, and present them with a great truth.

But to our tale. If I be dull,—skip: time will fly, and beauty will fade, and wit grow dull, and even the season, although it seems for the nonce like the existence of Olympus, will, nevertheless, steal away. It is the hour when trade grows dull, and tradesmen grow duller:—it is the hour that Howell loveth not, and Stultz cannot abide; though the first may be consoled by the ghost of his departed millions of *mouchoirs*—and the second, by the vision of coming millions of shooting-jackets. O, why that sigh, my gloomy Mr. Gunter! O, why that frown, my gentle Mrs. Grange!

One by one the great houses shut:—shoal by shoal the little people sail away. Yet beauty lingers still. Still the magnet of a straggling ball attracts the remaining brilliants; still, a lagging dinner, like a sumpter-mule on a march, is a mark for plunder. The park, too, is not yet empty, and perhaps is even more fascinating—like a beauty in a consumption, who each day gets thinner and more fair. The young duke remained to the last—for we linger about our first seasons, as we do about our first mistress, rather wearied, yet full of delightful reminiscences.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

LADY APHRODITE and the Duke of St. James were for the first time parted; and with an absolute belief on the lady's side, and an avowed conviction on the gentleman's, that it was impossible to live asunder, they broke from each other's arms, her ladyship shedding some temporary tears, and his grace avowing eternal fidelity.

It was the crafty Lord Fitz-pempey who brought about this catastrophe. Having secured his nephew as a visiter to Malthrope, by allowing him to believe that the Graftons would form part of the summer coterie, his lordship took especial care that poor Lady Aphrodite should not be invited. "Once part them, once get him to Malthrope alone," muscd the experienced peer, "and he will be emancipated. I am doing him, too, the greatest kindness. What would I have given, when a young man, to have had such an uncle!"

The Morning Post announced, with a sigh, the departure of the Duke of St. James to the splendid festivities of Malthrope: and also apprised the world that Sir Lucas and Lady Aphrodite were entertaining a numerous and distinguished party at their seat, Cleve Park, Cambridgeshire.

There was a constant bustle kept up at Malthrope, and the young duke was hourly permitted to observe, that, independent of all private feeling, it was impossible for the most distinguished nobleman to ally

himself with a more considered family. There was a continual swell of guests, dashing down, and dashing away like the ocean—brilliant as its foam, numerous as its waves. But there was one permanent inhabitant of this princely mansion far more interesting to our hero than the evanescent crowds who rose like bubbles, glittered, broke, and disappeared.

Once more wandering in that park of Malthrope, where had passed the most innocent days of his boyhood, his thoughts naturally recurred to the sweet companion who had made even those hours of happiness more felicitous. Here they had rambled,—here they had first tried their ponies,—there they had nearly fallen,—there he had quite saved her,—here were the two very elms where St. Maurice made for them a swing,—here was the very keeper's cottage of which she had made for him a drawing, and which he still retained. Dear girl! And had she disappointed the romance of his boyhood,—had the experience, the want of which had allowed him then to be pleased so early, had it taught him to be ashamed of those days of affection? Was she not now the most gentle, the most graceful, the most beautiful, the most kind? Was she not the most wifelike woman whose eyes had ever beamed with tenderness? Why, why not at once close a career which, though short, yet already could yield reminiscences which might satisfy the most craving admirer of excitement? But there was Lady Aphrodite; yet that must end. Alas! on his part, it had commenced in levity; he feared, on hers, it must terminate in anguish. Yet, though he loved Caroline,—though he could not recall to his memory the woman who was more worthy of being his wife, he could not also conceal from himself that the feelings which impelled him were hardly so romantic as he thought should have inspired a youth of one-and-twenty, when he mused on the woman he loved best. But he knew life, and he felt convinced that a mistress and a wife must always be two different characters. A combination of passion with present respect and permanent affection he supposed to be the delusion of romance writers. He thought he must marry Caroline, partly because he had never met a woman whom he had loved so much, and partly because he felt he should be miserable if her destiny in life were not, in some way or other, connected with his own. "Ah! if she had but been my sister!"

After a little more cogitation, the young duke felt very much inclined to make his cousin a dutchess; but time did not press. After Doncaster, he must spend a few weeks at Cleve, and then he determined to come to an explanation with Lady Aphrodite. In the mean time, Lord Fitz-pompey secretly congratulated himself on his skillful policy, as he perceived his nephew daily more engrossed with his daughter. Lady Caroline, like all unaffected and accomplished women, was seen to great effect in the country. There, where they feed their birds, tend their flowers, and tune their harp, and perform those more sacred but not less pleasing duties which become the daughter of a great proprietor, they favourably contrast with those more modish damsels, who, the moment they are freed from the park, and from Willis, begin fighting for silver arrows, and patronising county balls.

September came, and brought some relief to those who were suffering in the inferno of provincial *ennui*; but this is only the purgatory to the paradise of Battus. Yet September has its days of

slaughter; and the young duke gained some laurels, with the aid of friend Egg, friend Purdy, and Manton. And the premier galloped down sixty miles in one morning. He sacked his cover, made a light bet with St. James on the favourite, lunched standing, and was off before night; for he had only three days' holiday, and had to visit Lord Protest, Lord Content, and Lord Proxy. So, having knocked off four of his crack peers, he galloped back to London to flog up his secretaries.

And the young duke was off too. He had promised to spend a week with Charles Annesley and Lord Squib, who had taken some Norfolk baron's seat for the summer, and while he was at Spa were thinning his preserves. It was a week! What fantastic dissipation! One day, the brains of three hundred hares made a *pate* for Charles Annesley. O, Heliogabalus! you gained eternal fame for what is now "done in a corner!"

CHAPTER II.

The carnival of the north at length arrived. All civilized eyes were on the most distinguished party of the most distinguished steward, who, with his horse, Sanspareil, seemed to share universal favour. The French princes, and the Duke of Burlington; the Protocolis, and the Fitz-pompeys, and the Bloomerlies; the Duke and Dutchess of Shropshire, and the three Ladies Wrekin, who might have passed for graces; Lord and Lady Vatican on a visit from Rome, his lordship taking hints for a heat in the Corso, and her ladyship a classical beauty, with a face like a cameo; St. Maurice, and Annesley, and Squib,—composed the party. The premier was expected, and there was murmur of an archduke. Seven houses had been prepared,—a party-wall knocked down to make a dining-room,—the plate sent down from London, and venison and wine from Hauteville.

The assemblage exceeded in quantity and quality all preceding years, and the Hauteville arms, the Hauteville liveries, and the Hauteville outriders, beat all hollow in blazonry, and brilliancy, and number. The north countrymen were proud of their young duke and his six carriages and six, and longed for the castle to be finished. Nothing could exceed the propriety of the arrangements, for Sir Lucas was an unrivalled hand, and though a Newmarket man, gained universal approbation even in Yorkshire. Lady Aphrodite was all smiles and new liveries, and the Duke of St. James reined in his charger right often at her splendid equipage.

The day's sport was over, and the evening's sport begun,—to a quiet man, who has no bet more heavy than a dozen pair of gloves, perhaps not the least amusing. Now came the numerous dinner-parties, none to be compared to that of the Duke of St. James. Lady Aphrodite was alone wanting, but she had to head the *ménage* of Sir Lucius. Every one has an appetite after a race; the Duke of Shropshire attacked the venison, like Samson the Philistines; and the French princes, for once in their life, drank real Champagne.

Yet all faces were not so serene as those of the party of Hauteville. Many a one felt that strange mixture of fear and exultation which precedes a battle. To-morrow was the dreaded St. Leger.

None indeed had backed his horse with more fervour than the young duke; but, proud in his steed's blood and favour, his own sanguine temper, and his inexhaustible resources, he cared no more for the result than a candidate for a county who has a borough in reserve.

'Tis night, and the banquet is over, and all are hastening to the ball.

In spite of the brilliant crowd, the entrance of the Hauteville party made a sensation. It was the crowning ornament of the scene,—the stamp of the sovereign,—the lamp of the Pharos, the flag of the tower. The party dispersed, and the duke, after joining a quadrille with Lady Caroline, wandered away to make himself generally popular.

As he was moving along, he turned his head;—he started.

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed his grace.

The cause of this sudden and ungovernable exclamation can be no other than a woman. You are right. The lady who had excited it was advancing in a quadrille, some ten yards from her admirer. She was very young, that is to say, she had, perhaps, added a year or two to sweet seventeen, an addition which, while it does not deprive the sex of the early grace of girlhood, adorns them with that undefinable dignity which is necessary to constitute a perfect woman. She was not tall, but as she moved forward displayed a figure so exquisitely symmetrical, that for a moment the duke forgot to look at her face, and then her head was turned away; yet he was consoled a moment for his disappointment by watching the movements of a neck so white, and round, and long, and delicate, that it would have become Psyche, and might have inspired Praxiteles. Her face is again turned towards him. It stops too soon, yet his eye feeds upon the outline of a cheek not too full, yet promising of beauty, like hope of paradise.

She turns her head, she throws around a glance, and two streams of liquid light pour from her hazel eyes on his. It was a rapid, graceful movement, unstudied as the motion of a fawn, and was in a moment withdrawn, yet it was long enough to stamp upon his memory a memorable countenance. Her face was quite oval, her nose delicately aquiline, and her high pure forehead like a Parian dome. The clear blood coursed under her transparent cheek, and increased the brilliancy of her dazzling eyes. His eye never left her. There was an expression of decision about her small mouth—an air of almost mockery in her thin curling lip, which, though in themselves wildly fascinating, strangely contrasted with all the beaming light and beneficent lustre of the upper part of her countenance. There was something, too, in the graceful but rather decided air with which she moved—something even in the way in which she shook her handkerchief, or nodded to a distant friend, which seemed to betoken her self-consciousness of her beauty or her rank: perhaps it might be her wit; for the duke observed, that while she scarcely smiled, and conversed with lips hardly parted, her companion, with whom she was evidently very intimate, was almost convulsed with laughter, although, as he never spoke, it was clearly not at his own jokes.

Was she married? Could it be? Impossible! Yet there was a richness—a regality in her costume, which was not usual for unmarried women. A diamond arrow had pierced her clustering and

auburn locks; she wore, indeed, no necklace—(with such a neck it would have been sacrilege)—no ear-rings, for her ears were, literally, too small for such a burthen; yet her girdle was entirely of brilliants; and a diamond cross, worthy of Belinda and her immortal bard, hung upon her breast.

The duke seized hold of the first person he knew:—it was Lord Bagshot.

"Tell me," he said, in the stern, low voice of a despot, "tell me who that creature is!"

"Which creature?" asked Lord Bagshot.

"Booby! brute! Bag,—that creature of light and love!"

"Where?"

"There!"

"What, my mother?"

"Your mother! cub! cart-horse! answer me, or I will run you through."

"Who do you mean?"

"There, there, dancing with that rawboned youth with red hair."

"What, Lord St. Jerome! lord! he is a Catholic. I never speak to them. My governor would be so savage."

"But the girl, the girl!"

"O! the girl! lord! she is a Catholic too."

"But who is she?"

"Lord! don't you know?"

"Speak, hound—speak!"

"Lord! that is the beauty of the county; but then she is a Catholic. How shocking! Blow us all up, as soon as look at us."

"If you do not tell me who she is directly, you shall never get into White's. I will blackball you regularly."

"Lord! man, don't be in a passion. I will tell. But then I know you know all the time. You are joking. Everybody knows the beauty of the county—everybody knows May Dacre."

"May Dacre!" said the Duke of St. James, as if he were shot.

"Why, what is the matter now?" asked Lord Bagshot.

"What, the daughter of Dacre of Castle Dacre?" pursued his grace.

"The very same; the beauty of the county. Everybody knows May Dacre. I knew you knew her all the time. You did not take me in. Why, what is the matter?"

"Nothing; get away!"

"Civil! But you will remember your promise about White's?"

"Ay! ay! I shall remember you, when you are proposed."

"Here—here is a business!" soliloquized the young duke. "May Dacre! What a fool I have been! Shall I shoot myself through the head, or embrace her on the spot! Lord St. Jerome too! He seems rightily pleased. And my family have been voting for two centuries to emancipate this fellow! Curse his grinning face! I am decidedly anti-Catholic. But then she is a Catholic! I will turn papist. Ah! there is Lucy. I want a counsellor."

He turned to his fellow-steward—"O! Lucy, such a woman! such an incident!"

"What! the inimitable Miss Dacre, I suppose—Everybody speaking of her—wherever I go,—one subject of conversation. Burlington wanting to waltz with her, Charles Annesley being intro-

duced, and Lady Bloomerly decidedly of opinion that she is the finest creature in the county. Well! have you danced with her?"

"Danced, my dear fellow! Do not speak to me!"

"What is the matter?"

"The most diabolical matter that you ever heard of."

"Well, well!"

"I have not even been introduced."

"Well! come on at once."

"I cannot."

"Are you mad?"

"Worse than mad. Where is her father?"

"Who cares?"

"I do. In a word, my dear Lucy, her father is that guardian, whom I have perhaps mentioned to you, and to whom I have behaved so delicately."

"Why! I thought your guardian was an old curmudgeon."

"What does that signify, with such a daughter?"

"O! here is some mistake. This is the only child of Dacre, of Castle Dacre, a most delightful fellow. One of the first fellows in the county—I was introduced to him to-day on the course.—I thought you knew them.—You were admiring his outriders to-day—the green and silver."

"Why, Bag told me they were old Lord Sunderland's."

"Bag! how can you believe a word of that booby! He always has an answer. To-day, when Afy drove in, I asked Bag who she was, and he said it was his aunt, Lady de Courcy. I begged to be introduced, and took over the blushing Bag and presented him."

"But the father—the father, Lucy!—how shall I get out of this scrape?"

"O! put on a bold face. Here! give him this ring, and swear you procured it for him at Genoa, and then say, that now you are here you will try his pheasants."

"My dear fellow, you always joke. I am in agony. Seriously, what shall I do?"

"Why, seriously, be introduced to him, and do what you can."

"Which is he?"

"At the extreme end, next to the very pretty woman, who, by-the-by, I recommend to your notice, Mrs. Dallington Vere. She is very amusing. I know her well. She is some sort of relation to your Dacres. I will present you to both at once."

"Why, I will think of it."

"Well, then! I must away. The two stewards knocking their heads together is rather out of character. Do you know it is raining hard? I am cursedly nervous about to-morrow."

"Pooh! pooh! If I could get through to-night, I should not care for to-morrow."

CHAPTER III.

As Sir Lucius hurried off, his colleague advanced towards the upper end of the room, and taking up a position, made his observations, through the shooting figures of the dancers, on the dreaded Mr. Dacre.

The late guardian of the Duke of St. James was in the perfection of manhood; perhaps five-and-

forty by age; but his youth had lingered long. He was tall, thin, and elegant, with a mild and benevolent expression of countenance, not unmixed, however, with a little reserve, the ghost of youthly pride. Listening with the most polished and courtly bearing to the pretty Mrs. Dallington Vere, assenting occasionally to her piquant observations by a slight bow, or expressing his dissent by a still slighter smile, seldom himself speaking, yet always with that unembarrassed manner which makes a saying listened to, Mr. Dacre was altogether, in appearance, one of the most distinguished personages in this distinguished assembly. The young duke fell into an attitude worthy of Hamlet—"This, then, is *old* Dacre! O, deceitful Fitz-pompey! O, silly St. James! Could I ever forget that tall, mild man, who now is perfectly fresh in my memory? Ah! that memory of mine—it has been greatly developed to-night. Would that I had cultivated that faculty with a little more zeal! But what am I to do? The case is urgent. What must the Dacres think of me? What must May Dacre think? On the course the whole day, and I the steward, and not conscious of the family in the Riding! Fool! fool! Why—why did I accept an office for which I was totally unfitted? Why—why must I flirt away the whole morning with that silly Sophy Wrekin? An agreeable predicament, truly, this! What would I give now, once more to be at the bow-window! Confound my Yorkshire estates! How they must dislike—how they must despise me! And now truly I am to be *introduced* to him! The Duke of St. James—Mr. Dacre! Mr. Dacre—the Duke of St. James! What an insult to all parties! How supremely ludicrous! What a mode of offering my gratitude to the man to whom I am under the most solemn and inconceivable obligations! A choice way, truly, to salute the bosom-friend of my sire, the guardian of my interests, the creator of my property, the fosterer of my orphan infancy! It is useless to conceal it; I am placed in the most disagreeable, the most inextricable situation.

"Inextricable! Am I, then, the Duke of St. James,—am I that being who, two hours ago, thought that the world was formed alone for my enjoyment, and I quiver and shrink here like a common hind?—Out—out on such craven cowardice! I am no Hauteville! I am bastard! Never! I will not be crushed! I will struggle with this emergency, I will conquer it. Now aid me, ye heroes of my house! On the sands of Palestine, on the plains of France, ye were not in a more difficult situation than is your descendant in a ball-room in his own county. My mind elevates itself to the occasion,—my courage expands with the enterprise,—I will right myself with these Dacres with honour, and without humiliation."

The dancing ceased—the dancers disappeared. There was a blank between the Duke of St. James, on one side of the broad room, and Mr. Dacre, and those with whom he was conversing, on the other. Many eyes were on his grace, and he seized the opportunity to execute his purpose. He advanced across the chamber with the air of a young monarch greeting a victorious general. It seemed that, for a moment, his majesty wished to destroy all difference of rank between himself and the man that he honoured. So studied, and so inexpressively graceful were his movements, that

the gaze of all around involuntarily fixed upon him. Mrs. Dallington Vere unconsciously refrained from speaking as he approached; and one or two, without actually knowing his purpose, made way. They seemed positively awed by his dignity, and shuffled behind Mr. Dacre, as if he were the only person who was the duke's match.

"Mr. Dacre," said his grace, in the softest, but in very audible tones; and he extended, at the same time, his hand—"Mr. Dacre, our first meeting should have been neither here nor thus; but you, who have excused so much, will pardon also this!"

Mr. Dacre, though a calm personage, was surprised by this sudden address. He could not doubt who was the speaker. He had left his ward a mere child. He saw before him the exact and breathing image of the heart-friend of his ancient days. He forgot all but the memory of a cherished friendship. He was greatly affected; he pressed the offered hand; he advanced; he moved aside. The young duke followed up his advantage, and, with an air of the greatest affection, placed Mr. Dacre's arm in his own, and then bore off his prize in triumph.

Right skilfully did our hero avail himself of his advantage. He spoke, and he spoke with emotion. There is something inexpressively captivating in the contrition of a youthful and a generous mind. Mr. Dacre and his late ward soon understood each other—for it was one of those meetings which sentiment makes sweet.

"And now," said his grace, "I have one more favour to ask, and that is the greatest—I wish to be recalled to the recollection of my oldest friend."

Mr. Dacre led the duke to his daughter; and the Earl of St. Jerome, who was still laughing at her side, rose.

"The Duke of St. James, May, wishes to renew his acquaintance with you."

She bowed in silence. Lord St. Jerome, who was the great oracle of the Yorkshire school, and who had betted desperately against the favourite, took Mr. Dacre aside to consult him about the rain, and the Duke of St. James dropped into his chair. That tongue, however, which had never failed him, for once was wanting. There was a momentary silence, which the lady would not break; and at last her companion broke it, and not felicitously.

"I think there is nothing more delightful than meeting with old friends."

"Yes! that is the usual sentiment; but I half suspect that it is a commonplace, invented to cover our embarrassment under such circumstances; for, after all, 'an old friend' so situated is a person whom we have not seen for many years, and most probably not cared to see."

"You are indeed severe."

"O! no. I think there is nothing more painful than parting with old friends; but when we have parted with them, I am half afraid they are lost."

"Absence, then, with you is fatal!"

"Really, I never did part with any one I greatly loved; but I suppose it is with me as with most persons."

"Yet you have resided abroad, and for many years?"

"Yes; but I was too young then to have many friends; and, in fact, I accompanied perhaps all that I possessed."

"How I regret that it was not in my power to accept your kind invitation to Dacre in the spring!"

"O! My father would have been very glad to see you; but we really are dull kind of people, not at all in your way,—and I really do not think that you lost much amusement."

"What better amusement—what more interesting occupation could I have had than to visit the place where I passed my earliest and happiest hours? 'Tis nearly fifteen years since I was at Dacre."

"Except when you visited us at Easter. We regretted our loss."

"Ah! yes! except that," exclaimed the duke, remembering his jager's call; "but that goes for nothing. I of course saw very little."

"Yet, I assure you, you made a great impression. So eminent a personage of course observes less than he is himself observed. We had a most graphical description of you on our return, and a very accurate one too,—for I recognised your grace to-night merely from the report of your visit."

The duke shot a shrewd glance at his companion's face, but it betrayed no indication of badinage, and so, rather puzzled, he thought it best to put up with the parallel between himself and his servant. But Miss Dacre did not quit this agreeable subject with all that promptitude which he fondly anticipated.

"Poor Lord St. Jerome," said she, "who is really the most unaffected person I know, has been complaining most bitterly of his deficiency in the *air noble*. He is mistaken for a groom perpetually;—and once, he says, had a *douceur* presented to him in his character of an ostler. Your grace must be proud of your advantage over his lordship. You would have been greatly gratified by the universal panegyric of our household. They, of course, you know, are proud of their young duke, a real Yorkshire duke, and they love to dwell upon your truly imposing appearance. As for myself, who am true Yorkshire also, I take the most honest pride in hearing them describe your elegant attitude, leaning back in your britchska, with your feet on the opposite cushions, your hat cocked aside with that air of undefinable grace characteristic of the *grand seigneur*, and, which is the last remnant of the feudal system, your reiterated orders to drive over an old woman. You did not even condescend to speak English, which made them quite—enthusiastic."

"O! Miss Dacre,—spare me, spare me!"

"Spare you! I have heard of your grace's modesty; but this excessive sensibility, under well-earned praise, does indeed surprise me!"

"But, Miss Dacre, you cannot, indeed, really believe that this vulgar ruffian, this grim scarecrow this Guy Faux, was—was—myself."

"Not yourself! Really I am a simple personage. I believe in my eyes, and trust to my ears. I am at loss for your grace's meaning."

"I mean, then," said his grace, who had gained time to rally, "that this monster was some impositor, who must have stolen my carriage, picked my pocket, and robbed my card, which, next to his reputation, is a man's most delicate possession."

"Then you never called upon us?"

"I blush to confess it—never; but I will call, in future, every day."

"Your grace's ingenuousness really rivals your modesty."

"Now, after these confessions and compliments, I suggest a waltz."

"No one is waltzing now."

"When the quadrille, then, is finished?"

"Then I am engaged."

"After your engagement?"

"O, impossible! That is indeed making a business of pleasure. I have just refused a similar request of your fellow-steward. We damsels shall soon be obliged to carry a book to enrol our engagements as well as our bets, if this system of reversionary dancing be any longer encouraged."

"But you must dance with me!" said the duke, imploringly.

"O! you will stumble upon me in the course of the evening, and I shall probably be more fortunate. Suppose you feel nervous about to-morrow?"

"O, no! not at all."

"Ah! I forgot. Your grace's horse is the favourite. Favourites always win."

"Have I a horse?"

"Why, Lord St. Jerome says he doubts whether it be one."

"Lord St. Jerome seems a vastly amusing personage; and, as he is so often taken for an ostler, I have no doubt, is an exceedingly good judge of horseflesh."

Miss Dacre smiled. It was that wild, but rather wicked gleam which sometimes accompanies the indulgence of a little innocent malice. It seemed to insinuate, "I know you are piqued, and I enjoy it." But here her hand was claimed for the waltz.

The young duke remained musing.

"There she swims away! By heavens! unrivalled! And there is Lady Afy and Burlington,—grand, too. Yet there is something in this little Dacre which touches my fancy more. What is it? I think it is her impudence. That confounded scrape of Carlstein! I will cashier him to-morrow. Confound his airs! I think I got out of it pretty well. To-night, on the whole, has been a night of triumph; but if I do not waltz with the little Dacre, I will only vote myself an ovation. But see, here comes Sir Lucius. Well! how fares my brother consul?"

"I do not like this rain. I have been hedging with Hounslow, having previously set Bag at his worthy sire with a little information. We shall have a perfect swamp, and then it will be strength against speed—the old story. Damn the St. Leger! I am sick of it."

"Pooh! pooh! think of the little Dacre!"

"Think of her, my dear fellow! I think of her too much. I should absolutely have diddled Hounslow, if it had not been for her confounded pretty face flitting about my stupid brain. I saw you speaking to Guardy. You managed that business well."

"Why, as I do all things, I flatter myself, Lucy. Do you know Lord St. Jerome?"

"Verbally. We have exchanged monosyllables,—but he is of the other set."

"He is cursedly familiar with the little Dacre. As the friend of her father, I think I shall interfere. Is there any thing in it, think you?"

"O! no,—she is engaged to another."

"Engaged!" said the duke, absolutely turning pale.

"Do you remember a Dacre at Eton?"

"A Dacre at Eton!" mused the duke. At another time it would not have been in his power to have recalled the stranger to his memory, but this evening the train of association had been laid, and after struggling a moment with his mind, he had the man. "To be sure I do: Arundel Dacre—an odd sort of a fellow; but he was my senior."

"Well, that is the man—a nephew of Guardy, and cousin, of course, to La Belissima. He inherits, you know, all the property. She will not have a sou; but old Dacre, as you call him, has managed pretty well, and Monsieur Arundel is to compensate for the entail by presenting him with a grandson."

"The deuce!"

"The deuce, indeed! Often have I broken his head. Would that I had to a little more purpose!"

"Let us do it now!"

"He is not here, otherwise—One dislikes a spoony to be successful."

"Where are our friends?"

"Annesley with the dutchess, and Squib with the duke at *carté*."

"Success attend them both!"

"Amen!"

CHAPTER IV.

To feel that the possessions of an illustrious ancestry are about to slide from out your line forever; that the numerous tenantry, who look up to you with the confiding eye that the most liberal *parvenu* cannot attract, will not count you among their lords; that the proud park, filled with the ancient and toppling trees that your fathers planted, will yield neither its glory nor its treasures to your seed; and that the old gallery, whose walls are hung with pictures more cherished than the collections of kings, will not breathe with your long posterity—all these are feelings very sad and very trying, and are among those daily pangs which moralists have forgotten in their catalogue of miseries, but which do not the less wear out those heartstrings, at which they are so constantly tugging.

This was the situation of Mr. Dacre. The whole of his immense property was entailed, and descended to his nephew, who was a Protestant; and yet, when he looked upon the blooming face of his enchanting daughter, he blessed the Providence which, after all his visitations, had doomed him to be the sire of a thing so lovely.

An exile from her country at an early age, the education of May Dacre had been completed in a foreign land; yet the mingling bloods of Dacre and of Howard would not in a moment have permitted her to forget

"The inviolate island of the brave and free!"

even if the unceasing and ever-watchful exertions of her father had been wanting to make her worthy of so illustrious an ancestry.

But this, happily, was not the case; and to aid the development of the infant mind of his young child, to pour forth to her, as she grew in years and in reason, all the fruits of his own richly cultivated intellect, was the solitary consolation of one,

over whose conscious head was impending the most awful of visitations. May Dacre was gifted with a mind which, even if her tutor had not been her father, would have rendered tuition a delight. Her lively imagination, which early unfolded itself; her dangerous yet interesting vivacity; the keen delight, the swift enthusiasm with which she drank in knowledge, and then panted for more; her shrewd acuteness, and her innate passion for the excellent and the beautiful, filled her father with rapture which he repressed, and made him feel conscious how much there was to check, to guide, and to form, as well as to cherish, to admire, and to applaud.

As she grew up, the bright parts of her character shone with increased lustre; but, in spite of the exertions of her instructor, some less admirable qualities had not yet disappeared. She was still too often the dupe of her imagination, and though perfectly inexperienced, her confidence in her theoretical knowledge of human nature was unbounded. She had an idea that she could penetrate the characters of individuals at a first meeting; and the consequence of this fatal axiom was, that she was always the slave of first impressions, and constantly the victim of prejudice. She was ever thinking individuals better or worse than they really were; and she believed it to be out of the power of any one to deceive her. Constant attendance during many years on a dying and beloved mother, and her deeply religious feelings, had first broken, and then controlled, a spirit which nature had intended to be arrogant and haughty. Her father she adored; and she seemed to devote to him all that consideration which, with more common characters, is generally distributed among their acquaintance.

I hint at her faults. How shall I describe her virtues? Her unbounded generosity—her dignified simplicity—her graceful frankness—her true nobility of thought and feeling—her firmness—her courage and her truth—her kindness to her inferiors—her constant charity—her devotion to her parents—her sympathy with sorrow—her detestation of oppression—her pure unsullied thoughts—her delicate taste—her deep religion. All these combined would have formed a delightful character, even if unaccompanied with such brilliant talents and such brilliant beauty. Accustomed from an early age to the converse of courts, and the forms of the most polished circles, her manner became her blood, her beauty, and her mind. Yet she rather acted in unison with the spirit of society, than obeyed its minutest decree. She violated etiquette with a wilful grace, which made the outrage a precedent, and she mingled with princes without feeling her inferiority. Nature, and art, and fortune were the graces who had combined to form this girl. She was a jewel set in gold and worn by a king.

Her creed had made her, in ancient Christendom, feel less an alien; but when she returned to that native country which she had never forgotten, she found that creed her degradation. Her indignant spirit clung with renewed ardour to the crushed altars of her faith; and not before those proud shrines where cardinals officiate, and a thousand acolytes fling their censers, had she bowed with half the abandonment of spirit with which she invoked the Virgin in her oratory at Dacre.

The recent death of her mother rendered Mr.

Dacre and herself little inclined to enter into society; and as they were both desirous of residing on that estate from which they had been so long and so unwillingly absent, they had not yet visited London. The greater part of their time had been passed chiefly in communication with those great Catholic families with whom the Dacres were allied, and to which they belonged. The modern race of the Howards, and the Cliffords, the Talbots, the Arundels, and the Jerninghams, were not unworthy of their proud progenitors. Miss Dacre observed with respect, and assuredly with sympathy, the mild dignity, the noble patience, the proud humility, the calm hope, the uncompromising courage, with which her father and his friends sustained their oppression and lived as proscribed in the realm which they had created. Yet her lively fancy and gay spirit found less to admire in the feelings which influenced those families in their intercourse with the world, which induced them to foster but slight intimacies out of the pale of the proscribed, and which tinged their domestic life with that formal and gloomy colouring which ever accompanies a monotonous existence. Her disposition told her, that all this affected non-interference with the business of society might be politic, but assuredly was not pleasant; her quick sense whispered to her it was unwise, and that it retarded, not advanced, the great result in which her sanguine temper dared often to indulge. Under any circumstances, it did not appear to her to be wisdom to second the efforts of their oppressors for their degradation or their misery, and to seek no consolation in the amiable feelings of their fellow-creatures, for the stern rigour of their unsocial government. But, independent of all general principles, Miss Dacre could not but believe that it was the duty of the Catholic gentry to mix more with that world which so misconceived their spirit. Proud in her conscious knowledge of their exalted virtues, she felt that they had only to be known to be recognised as the worthy leaders of that nation which they had so often saved, and never betrayed.

She did not conceal her opinions from the circle in which they had grown up. All the young members were her disciples, and were decidedly of opinion, that if the House of Lords would but listen to May Dacre, emancipation would be a settled thing. Her logic would have destroyed Lord Liverpool's arguments—her wit extinguished Lord Eldon's jokes. But the elder members only shed a solemn smile, and blessed May Dacre's shining eyes and sanguine spirit.

Her greatest supporter was Mrs. Dallington Vere. This lady was a distant relation of Mr. Dacre. At seventeen, she, herself a Catholic, had married Mr. Dallington Vere, of Dallington House, a Catholic gentleman of considerable fortune, whose age resembled his wealth. No sooner had this incident taken place, than did Mrs. Dallington Vere dash up to London, and soon evinced a most laudable determination to console herself for her husband's political disabilities. Mrs. Dallington Vere went to court; and Mrs. Dallington Vere gave suppers after the opera, and concerts which, in number and in brilliancy, were only equalled by her balls. The dandies patronised her, and selected her for their muse. The Duke of Shropshire betted on her always at *écarté*; and, to crown the whole affair, she made Mr. Dallington Vere lay claim to a dormant peerage. The women were

all pique—the men all patronage. A Protestant minister was alarmed; and Lord Squib supposed that Mrs. Dallington must be the *scarlet lady* of whom they had heard so often.

Season after season she kept up the ball; and although, of course, she no longer made an equal sensation, she was not less brilliant, nor her position less eminent. She had got into the best set, and was more quiet, like a patriot in place. Never was there a gayer lady than Mrs. Dallington Vere, but never a more prudent one. Her virtue was only equalled by her discretion; but as the odds were equal, Lord Squib betted on the last. People sometimes indeed did say—they always will—but what is talk? Mere breath. And reputation is malleable, and iron, and sometimes brass; and so, you see, talk has no chance. They did say, that Sir Lucius Grafton was about to enter into the Romish communion; but then it turned out that it was only to get a divorce from his wife, on the plea that she was a heretic. The fact was Mrs. Dallington Vere, was a most successful woman, lucky in every thing, lucky even in her husband—for he died. He did not only die. He left his whole fortune to his wife. Some said that his relations were going to set aside the will, on the plea that it was written with a crow quill on pink paper; but this was false—it was only a codicil.

All eyes were on a very pretty woman, with fifteen thousand a year, and only twenty-three. The Duke of Shropshire wished he was disembarassed. Such a player of *carté* might double her income. Lord Raff advanced, trusting to his beard, and young Amadée de Roverie mortgaged his dressing-case, and came post from Paris; but he was more particular about his ruffles than some other parts of his dress; and so, in spite of his sky-blue nether garments and his hessians, he followed my lord's example, and recrossed the water. It is even said that Lord Squib was sentimental; but this must have been the malice of Charles Annesley.

All, however, failed. The truth is, Mrs. Dallington Vere had nothing to gain by re-entering Paradise, which matrimony, of course, is; and so she determined to remain mistress of herself. She had gained fashion, and fortune, and rank; she was young, and she was pretty. She thought it might be possible for a discreet, experienced little lady to lead a very pleasant life, without being assisted in her expenses, or disturbed in her diversion, by a gentleman who called himself her husband, occasionally asked her how she slept in a bed which he did not share, or munificently presented her with a necklace purchased with her own money. Discreet Mrs. Dallington Vere!

She had been absent from London during the past season, having taken it also into her head to travel. She was equally admired and equally plotted for at Rome, at Paris, and at Vienna, as at London; but the bird had not been caught, and, flying away, left many a despairing prince and amorous count to muse over their lean visages and meager incomes.

Dallington House made its fair mistress a neighbour of her relations, the Dacres. No one could be a more fascinating companion than Mrs. Dallington Vere. May Dacre read her character at once, and these ladies became great allies. She was to assist Miss Dacre in her plans for rousing their Catholic friends, as no one was better qualified to

be her adjutant. Already they had commenced their operations, and balls at Dallington and Dacre, frequent, splendid, and various, had already made the Catholic houses the most eminent in the Riding, and their brilliant mistresses the heroines of all the youth.

CHAPTER V.

It rained all night without ceasing; yet the morrow was serene. Nevertheless the odds had shifted. On the evening, they had not been more than two to one against the first favourite, the Duke of St. James's *ch. c. Sanspareil* by *Nephtis Ultra*; while they were five to one against the second favourite, Mr. Dash's *gr. c. the Dandy* by *Banker*, and nine and ten to one against the next in favour. This morning, however, affairs were altered. Mr. Dash and his Dandy were at the head of the poll; and as the owner rode his own horse, being a jockey and a fit rival for the Duke of St. James, his backers were sanguine. *Sanspareil* was, however, the second favourite.

The duke, however, was confident as a universal conqueror, and came on in his usual state—rode round the course,—inspired Lady Aphrodite, who was all anxiety,—betted with Miss Dacre, and bowed to Mrs. Dallington.

There were more than ninety horses, and yet the start was fair. But the result? Pardon me! The fatal remembrance overpowers my pen. An effort and some *eau de Portingale*, and I shall recover. The first favourite was never heard of, the second favourite was never seen after the distance post, all the ten-to-ones were in the rear, and a *dark* horse, which had never been thought of, and which the careless St. James had never even observed in the list, rushed past the grand stand in sweeping triumph. The spectators were almost too surprised to cheer; but when the name of the winner was detected, there was a deafening shout, particularly from the Yorkshiremen. The victor was the Earl of St. Jerome's *b. f. May Dacre* by *Howard*.

Conceive the confusion! *Sanspareil* was at last discovered, and immediately shipped off for Newmarket, as young gentlemen who get into scrapes are sent to travel. The Dukes of Burlington and Shropshire exchanged a few hundreds. The dutchess and Charles Annesley, a few gloves. The consummate Lord Bloomerly, though a backer of the favourite, in compliment to his host, contrived to receive from all parties, and particularly from St. Maurice. The sweet little Wrekins were absolutely ruined. Sir Lucius looked blue, but he had hedged; and Lord Squib looked yellow, but some doubted. Lord Hounslow was done, and Lord Bagshot was diddled.

The Duke of St. James was perhaps the heaviest sufferer on the field, and certainly bore his losses the best. Had he seen the five-and-twenty thousand he was *minus* counted before him, he probably would have been staggered; but as it was, another crumb of his half million was gone. The loss existed only in idea. It was really too trifling to think of, and he galloped up to May Dacre, and was among the warmest of her congratulators.

"I would offer your grace my sympathy for your congratulations," said Miss Dacre, in a rather

amiable tone, "but"—and here she resumed her usual air of mockery.—"you are too great a man to be affected by so light a casualty. And now that I recollect myself, did you run a horse?"

"Why—no; the fault was, I believe, that he would not run; but *Sanspareil* is as great a hero as ever. He has only been conquered by the elements."

The dinner at the Duke of St. James's was this day more splendid even than the preceding. He was determined to show that the disappointment had produced no effect upon the temper of so imperial a personage as himself, and he invited several of the leading gentry to join his *coterie*. The Dacres were among the solicited; but they were, during the races, the guests of Mrs. Dallington Vere, whose seat was only a mile off, and therefore were unobtainable.

Blazed the plate, sparkled the wine, and the aromatic venison sent forth its odorous incense to the skies. The favourite cook had done wonders, though a *Sanspareil pôte*, on which he had been meditating for a week, was obliged to be suppressed, and was sent up as a *tourte à la Bourbon*, in compliment to his royal highness. It was a delightful party:—all the stiffness of metropolitan society disappeared. All talked, and laughed, and ate, and drank; and the Protocols and the French princes, who were most active members of a banquet, ceased sometimes, from want of breath, to moralize on the English character. The little Wrekins, with their well-acted lamentations over their losses, were capital; and Sopty nearly smiled and chattered her head this day into the reversion of the coronet of Fitz-pompey. May she succeed! For a wilder little *partie* never yet flew. Caroline St. Maurice alone was sad, and would not be comforted; although Mr. James, observing her gloom, and guessing at its cause, had in private assured her that, far from losing, on the whole he was perhaps even a winner.

None, however, talked more agreeable nonsense, and made a *more* elegant uproar, than the Duke of St. James.

"These young men," whispered Lord Squib to Annesley, "do not know the value of money. We must teach it them—I know too well—I find it very dear."

If the old physicians are correct in considering from twenty-five to thirty-five as the period of lusty youth, Lord Squib was still a lusty youth, though a very corpulent one indeed. The carnival of his life, however, was nearly over, and probably the termination of the race-week might hail him a man. He was the best fellow in the world; short and sleek, half bald, and looked fifty; with a waist, however, which had not yet vanished, and where art successfully controlled rebellious nature, like the Austrians the Lombards. If he were not exactly a wit, he was still, however, full of unaffected fun, and threw out the results of a *roué* life with considerable ease and point. He had inherited a very fair and peer-like property, which he had contrived to embarrass in so complicated and extraordinary a manner, that he had been a ruined man for years, and yet lived well on an income allowed him by his creditors to manage his estate for their benefit. The joke was, he really managed it very well. It was his hobby, and he prided himself, especially, upon his character as a man of business.

The banquet is certainly the best preparative for

the ball if its blessings be not abused, and then you get heavy. Your true votary of Terpsichore, and of him I only speak, requires, particularly in a land of easterly winds, which cut into his cab-head at every turn of every street, some previous process to make his blood set him an example in dancing. It is strong Burgundy, and his sparkling sister Champagne, that make a race-ball always so amusing a divertissement. One enters the room with a gay elation, which defies rule without violating etiquette, and in these county meetings, there is a variety of character, and classes, and manners, which is highly interesting, and affords an agreeable contrast to those more brilliant and refined assemblies, the members of which, being educated by exactly the same system, and with exactly the same ideas, think, look, move, talk, dress, and even eat, alike—the only remarkable personage being a woman somewhat more beautiful than the beauties who surround her, and a man rather more original in his affections than the puppies that surround him. The proof of the general dulness of polite circles is the great sensation that is always produced by a new face. The season always commences briskly, because there are so many. Ball, and dinner, and concert collect them plenty of votaries; but as we move on, the dulness will develop itself; and then come the morning breakfast, and the water-party, and the *fête champêtre*, all desperate attempts to produce variety with old materials, and to occasion a second effect by a cause which is already exhausted.

These philosophical remarks precede another introduction to the public ball-room at Doncaster. Mrs. Dallington Vere and Miss Dacre are walking, arm in arm, at the upper end of the room.

"You are disappointed, love, about Arundel?" said Mrs. Dallington:

"Bitterly; I never counted on any event more certainly than on his return this summer."

"And why tarriest the wanderer—unwillingly, of course?"

"Lord Darrell, who was to have gone over as *chargé d'affaires*, has announced to his father the impossibility of his becoming a diplomatist, so our poor *attaché* suffers, and is obliged to bear the *porte-feuille ad interim*."

"Does your cousin like Vienna?"

"Not at all. He is a regular John Bull: and if I am to judge from his correspondence, he will make an excellent ambassador, in one sense, for I think his fidelity and his patriotism may be depended on. We seldom serve those whom we do not love; and if I am to believe Arundel, there is neither a person nor a place on the whole Continent that affords him the least satisfaction."

"How singular, then, that he should have fixed on such a *métier*; but I suppose, like other young men, his friends fixed for him!"

"Not at all. No step could be less pleasing to my father than his leaving England; but Arundel is quite unmanageable, even by papa. He is the oddest, but the dearest, person in the world!"

"He is very clever, is he not?"

"I think so. I have no doubt he will distinguish himself, whatever career he runs; but he is so extremely singular in his manner, that I do not think his general reputation harmonizes with my private opinion."

"And will his visit to England be a long one?"

"I hope that it will be a permanent one. I, ou

know, am his confidant, and intrusted with all his plans. If I succeed in arranging something according to his wishes, I hope that he will not again quit us."

"I pray you may, sweet! and wish, love! for your sake, that he would enter the room this moment."

"This is the most successful meeting, I should think, that ever was known at Doncaster," said Miss Dacre. "We are, at least, indebted to the Duke of St. James for a very agreeable party, to say nothing of all the gloves we have won."

"How do you like the Duke of Burlington?"

"Very much. There is a calm courtliness about him which I think very imposing. He is the only man I ever saw who, without being very young, was not an unfit companion for youth. And there is no affectation of juvenility about him. He involuntarily reminds you of youth, as an empty orchestra does of music."

"I shall tell him this. He is already your devoted; and I have no doubt that, inspired at the same time by your universal charms, and our universal hints, I shall soon hail you Dutchess of Burlington. Don Arundel will repent his diplomacy."

"I thought I was to be another dutchess this morning."

"You deserve to be a triple one. But dream not of the unhappy patron of *Sanspareil*. There is something in his eyes which tells me he is not a marrying man."

There was a momentary pause, and Miss Dacre spoke.

"I like his brother steward very much, Bertha. Sir Lucius is very witty, and very candid. It is an agreeable thing to see a man, who has been so very gay, and who has had so many temptations to be gay, turn into a regular domestic character, without losing any of those qualities which made him an ornament to society. When men of the world terminate their career as prudently as Sir Lucius, I observe that they are always amusing companions, because they are perfectly unaffected."

"No one is more unaffected than Lucius Graf-ton. I am quite nappy to find you like him: for he is an old friend of mine, and I know that he has a good heart."

"I like him, especially, because he likes you."

"Dearest!"

"He introduced me to Lady Afy. I perceive that she is very attached to her husband."

"Lady Afy is a charming woman. I know no woman so truly elegant as Lady Afy. The young duke, you know, they say, greatly admires Lady Afy."

"O! does he? Well, now, I should have thought her rather a sentimental and serious donna—one very unlikely—"

"Hush! here come two cavaliers."

The Dukes of Burlington and St. James advanced.

"We were attracted by observing two nymphs wandering in this desert," said his grace of Burlington. "This was the Burgundy."

"And we wish to know whether there be any dragon to destroy, any ogre to devour, any magician to massacre, or how, when, and where we can testify our devotion to the ladies of our love," added his grace of St. James. "This was the Champagne."

"The age of chivalry is past," said May Dacre. "Bores have succeeded to dragons, and I have shivered too many lances in vain ever to hope for their extirpation; and as for enchantments—"

"They depend only upon yourself," gallantly interrupted the Duke of Burgundy,—Psha!—Burlington.

"Our spells are dissolved, our wands are sunk five fathom deep: we had retired to this solitude, and we were moralizing," said Mrs. Dallington Vere.

"Then you were doing an extremely useless, and not very magnanimous thing," said the Duke of St. James; "for to moralize in a desert is no great exertion of philosophy. You should moralize in a drawing-room; and so let me propose our return to that world which must long have missed us. Let us do something to astound these elegant barbarians. Look at that young gentleman: how stiff he is! A Yorkshire Apollo! Look at that old lady, how elaborately she simpers! The Venus of the Riding! They absolutely attempt to flirt. Let us give them a gallop!"

He was advancing to salute this provincial couple; but his more matured companion repressed him.

"Ah! I forgot," said the young duke. "I am Yorkshire. If I were a western gent, like yourself, I might compromise my character. Your grace monopolizes the fun."

"I think your grace may safely attack them," said Miss Dacre. "I do not think you will be recognised. People entertain in this barbarous country, such vulgar, old-fashioned notions of a Duke of St. James, that I have not the least doubt your grace might have a good deal of fun without being found out."

"There is no necessity," said his grace, "to fly from Miss Dacre for amusement. By-the-by, you made a very good repartee. You must permit me to introduce you to my friend Lord Squib. I am sure you would agree so."

"I have been introduced to Lord Squib."

"And you found him most amusing? Did he say any thing which vindicates my appointment of him as my court-jester?"

"I found him very modest. He endeavoured to excuse his errors by being your companion: and to prove his virtues by being mine."

"Traacherous Squib! I positively must call him out. Duke, bear him a cartel."

"The quarrel is ours, and must be decided here," said Mrs. Dallington Vere. "I second Miss Dacre."

"We are in the way of some good people here, I think," said the Duke of Burlington, who, though the most dignified, was the most considerate of men; "at least, here are a stray couple or two, staring as if they wished us to understand we prevented a set."

"Let them stare," said the Duke of St. James; "we were made to be looked at. 'Tis our vocation. Hal, and they are gifted with vision purposely to behold us."

"Your grace," said Miss Dacre, "reminds me of my old friend Prince Rubarini, who told me one day that when he got up late he always gave orders to have the sun put back a couple of hours."

"And you, Miss Dacre, remind me of my old friend the Dutchess of Nemours, who told me one

day that in the course of her experience she had only met one man who was her rival in repartee."

"And that man?" asked Mrs. Vere.

"Was your slave, Mrs. Dallington," said the young duke, bowing profoundly, with his hand on his heart.

"I remember she said the same thing to me," said the Duke of Burlington, "about ten years before."

"That was her grandmother, Burley," said the Duke of St. James.

"Her grandmother!" said Mrs. Dallington, exciting the contest.

"Decidedly," said the young duke. "I remember my friend always spoke of the Duke of Burlington as grandpapa."

"You will profit, I have no doubt, then, by the company of so venerable a friend," said Miss Dacre.

"Why," said the young duke, "I am not a believer in the perfectibility of the species; and you know that when we come to a certain point—"

"We must despair of improvement," said the Duke of Burlington.

"Your grace came forward like a true knight to my rescue," said Miss Dacre, bowing to the Duke of Burlington.

"Beauty can inspire miracles," said the Duke of St. James.

"This young gentleman has been spoiled by travel, Miss Dacre," said the Duke of Burlington. "You have much to answer for, for he tells every one that you were his guardian."

The eyes of Miss Dacre and the Duke of St. James met. His grace bowed with that elegant impudence which is, after all, the best explanation for every possible misunderstanding.

"I always heard that the Duke of St. James was born of age," said Miss Dacre.

"The report was very rife on the Continent when I travelled," said Mrs. Dallington Vere.

"That was only a poetical allegory, which veiled the precocious results of my fair tutor's exertions."

"How very discreet he is!" said the Duke of Burlington. "You may tell immediately that he is two-and-forty."

"We are neither of us, though, off the *paré* yet, Burlington,—so what say you to inducing these inspiring muses to join the waltz which is just now commencing?"

The young duke offered his hand to Miss Dacre, and, followed by their companions, they were in a few minutes lost in the waves of the waltzers.

CHAPTER VI.

THE gayeties of the race week closed with a ball at Dallington House. As the pretty mistress of this proud mansion was acquainted with all the members of the ducal party, our hero and his noble band were among those who honoured it with their presence.

We really have had so many balls both in this and other as immortal works, published since the reformation of literature,—which I date from the moment that the gray goose-quill was first guided by a hand shaded by a blonde ruffie, or sparkling with a jewelled ring,—that, in a literary point of

view, I think I must give up dancing; nor would I have introduced you to Dallington House if I had no more serious business on hand than a flirtation with a lady or a lobster salad.

Ah! why is not a little brief communion with the last as innocent as with the first! Oysters and eggs, they say, are amatory food. Ceres and Bacchus have the reputation of being the favourite companions of Venus. The morality of the present age must be ascribed, then, to its temperance, or its indigestion. O! Abernethy, mildest of mankind! O! Brodie, blander than Favonian breezes!—why, why, then, cure us! why send us forth with renovated livers, to lose our souls through salads and the sex!

Small feet are fitting in the mazy dance, and music winds with inspiring harmony through halls whose lofty mirrors multiply beauty, and add fresh lustre to the blazing lamps. May Dacre there is wandering like a peri in paradise, and Lady Aphrodite is glancing with her dazzling brow, yet an Asmodeus might detect an occasional gloom over her radiant face. It is but for an instant, yet it thrills. She looks like some favoured sultana, who muses for a moment amid her splendour on her early love.

And she, the sparkling mistress of this scene—say, where is she? Not among the dancers, though a more graceful form you would scarcely look upon; not even among her guests, though a more accomplished hostess it would be hard to find. Gayety pours forth its flood, and all are thinking or themselves, or of some one sweeter even than self-consciousness, or else perhaps one absent might be mian.

Leaning on the arm of Sir Lucius Grafton, and shrouded in her cachemere, Mrs. Dallington Vere paces the terrace in earnest conversation.

"If I fail in this," said Sir Lucius, "I shall be desperate. Fortune seems to have sent him for the very purpose. Think only of the state of affairs for a moment. After a thousand plots on my part—after having for the last two years never ceased my exertions to make her commit herself, when neither a love of pleasure, nor a love of revenge, nor the thoughtlessness to which women in her situation generally have recourse, produced the slightest effect:—this stripling starts upon the stage, and in a moment the iceberg melts. O! I never shall forget the rapture of the moment when the faithful Lachen announced the miracle!"

"But why not let the adventure take the usual course? You have your evidence, or you can get it. Finish the business. These *exposés*, to be sure, are disagreeable enough; but to be the talk of the town for a week is no great suffering. Go to Baden, drink the waters, and it will be forgotten. Surely this is an inconvenience not to be weighed for a moment against the great result?"

"Believe me, my dearest friend, Lucy Grafton cares very little about the babble of the million, provided it do not obstruct him in his objects. Would to heaven I could proceed in the summary and effectual mode you point out! but that I much doubt. There is about Afy, in spite of all her softness and humility, a strange spirit, a cursed courage, or obstinacy, which sometimes has blazed out, when I have over-galled her, in a way half awful. I confess I dread her standing at bay. I am in her power, and a divorce she could successfully oppose if I appeared to be the person who

hastened the catastrophe, and she was piqued to show that she would not fall an easy victim. No, no! I have a surer though a more difficult game. She is intoxicated with this boy. I will drive her into his arms."

"A probable result, forsooth! I do not think your genius, baronet, has particularly brightened since we last met. I thought your letters were getting dull. You seem to forget, that there is a third person to be consulted in this adventure. And why, in the name of Doctors' Commons, the duke is to close his career by marrying a woman of whom, with your leave, he is already, if experience be not a dream, half wearied, is really past my comprehension, although as Yorkshire Lucy, I should not, you know, be the least apprehensive of mortals."

"I depend on my unbounded influence over St. James."

"What! do you mean to recommend the step, then?"

"Hear me! At present I am his confidential counsellor on all subjects—"

"But one."

"Patience, fair dame—and I have hitherto imperceptibly, but efficiently, exerted my influence to prevent his getting entangled with any other nets."

"Faithful friend!"

"*Point de moimierie!* Listen. I depend further upon his perfect inexperience of women,—for, in spite of his numerous gallantries, he has never yet had a grand passion, and is quite ignorant, even at this moment, how involved his feelings are with his mistress. He has not yet learned the bitter lesson, that unless we despise a woman when we cease to love her, we are still a slave without the consolation of intoxication. I depend further upon his strong feelings, for strong I perceive they are, with all his affectation; and on his weakness of character, which will allow him to be the dupe of his first great emotion. It is to prevent that explosion from taking place under any other roof but my own, that I now require your advice and assistance,—that advice and assistance which already have done so much for me. I like not this sudden and un- contemplated visit to Castle Daere. I fear these Daeres—I fear the revulsion of his feelings. Above all I fear that girl."

"But her cousin—is he not a talisman? She loves him."

"Pooh! a cousin! Is not the name an answer? She loves him, as she loves her pony, because he was her companion when she was a child, and kissed her when they gathered strawberries together. The pallid moonlight passion of a cousin, and an absent one too, has but a sorry chance against the blazing beams that shoot from the eyes of a new lover. Would to heaven I had not to go down to my boobies, at Cleve! I should like nothing better than to amuse myself an autumn at Dallington with the little Daere, and put an end to such an unnatural and irreligious connexion. She is a splendid creature! Bring her to town next season."

"But to the point. You wish me, I imagine, to act the same part with the lady, as you have done with the gentleman. I am to step in, I suppose, as the confidential counsellor on all subjects of sweet May. I am to preserve her from a youth whose passions are so impetuous, and whose principles are so unformed?"

"Admirable Bertha! you read my thoughts."

"But suppose I endanger, instead of advance, your plans. Suppose, for instance, I captivate his grace. As extraordinary things have happened, as you know. High place must be respected, and the coronet of a dutchess must not be despised."

"All considerations must yield to you, as do all men," said Sir Lucius, with ready gallantry, but not free from anxiety.

"No, no, Lucy, there is no danger of that. I am not going to play traitress to my system, even for the Duke of St. James; therefore any thing that occurs between us shall be merely an incident *pours passer le temps seulement*, and to preserve our young friend from the little Daere. I have no doubt he will behave very well, and that I shall send him safe to Cleve Park in a fortnight with a very good character. I would recommend you, however, not to encourage any unreasonable delay."

"Certainly not; but I must, of course, be guided by circumstances," Sir Lucius observed truly. There were other considerations besides getting rid of his spouse which cemented his friendship with the young duke. It will be curious, if lending a few thousands to the husband save our hero from the wife. There is no such thing as unmixed evil. A man who loses his money gains, at least, experience, and sometimes something better. But what the Duke of St. James gained is not yet to be told.

Time flies, and develops all things. I am, at present, writing the first volume of this veracious history—but fate alone can decide whether you shall read the second. I may dine this day with Sir Epicure Mammon, and die—as my host will, over the third course. I may be flung off my horse at Grosvenor gate, from the sudden entrance of Mrs. Argent and her new liveries. I mean that lady who, when her husband became an M. P., began franking her invitations by the twopenny, or particular post. But our friends are still on the terrace.

"And you like Lachen?" asked Mrs. Dallington.

"Very much."

"I formed her with great care, but you must keep her in good-humour."

"That is not difficult. *Elle est très jolie*; and pretty women, like yourself, are always good-natured."

"But has she really worked herself into the confidence of the virtuous Aphrodite?"

"Entirely. And the humour is, that Lachen has persuaded her that Lachen herself is on the best possible terms with my confidential valet, and can make herself at all times mistress of her master's secrets. So it is always in my power, apparently without taking the slightest interest in Afy's conduct, to regulate it as I will. At present she believes that my affairs are in a very distracted state, and that I intend to reside solely on the Continent, and to bear her off from her Cupidon. This thought haunts her rest, and hangs heavy on her waking mind. I think it will do the business."

"We have been too long absent. Let us return."

"I accompany you, my charming friend. What should I do without such an ally? I only wish that I could assist you in a manner equally friendly. Is there no obdurate hero who wants a confidential

adviser to dilate upon your charms, or to counsel him to throw himself at your feet; or are that beautiful face and lovely form, as they must always be, invincible?"

"I assure you, quite discombarred of any intentions whatever. But I suppose when I return to Athens, I must get Platonic again."

"Let me be the philosopher!"

"No, no, Lucy; we know each other too well. I have been free ever since that fatal affair of young Darrell, and travel has restored my spirits a little. They say his brother is just as handsome. He was expected at Vienna, but I could not meet him, although, I suppose, as I made him a viscount, I am rather popular than not with him."

"Pooh! pooh! think not of this. No one blames you. You are still a universal favourite. But I would recommend you nevertheless to take me as your cavalier."

"You are too generous, baronet, or too bold. No, man! I am tired of flirtation, and really think, for variety sake, I must fall in love. After all, there is nothing like the delicious dream, though it be but a dream.—Spite of my discretion, I sometimes tremble lest I should end by making myself a fool—with some grand passion.—You look serious. Fear not for the young duke. He is a dazzling gentleman, but not a hero exactly to my taste."

CHAPTER VII.

THE moment that was to dissolve the spell which had combined and enchanted so many thousands of human beings arrived. Nobles and nobodies, beauties and blacklegs, dispersed in all directions. The Duke of Burlington carried off the French princes, and the Protocolis, the Bloomeries, and the Vaticans, to his paradise of Marringworth. The Fitz-pompeys cantered off with the Shropshires—omen of felicity to the enamoured St. Maurice—and the enamouring Sophy. Annesley and Squib returned to their *pâtés*. Sir Lucius and Lady Aphrodite, neither of them with tempers like summer skies, betook their way to Cambridgeshire, like Adam and Eve from the glorious garden. The Duke of St. James dashed off for Dacre. He had already sent before him his groom and horses, and one carriage containing Luigi, Spiridion, and two pages, and now he followed, accompanied only by his jager and a single servant.

As his carriage rolled on he revelled in delicious fancies. The young duke built castles not only at Hauteville, but in less substantial regions. Revery, in the flush of our warm youth, generally indulges in the future. We are always anticipating the next adventure, and clothe the coming heroine with a rosy tint. When we advance a little on our limited journey, and an act or two of the comedy, the gayest in all probability, are over, the wizard Memory dethrones the witch Imagination, and 'tis the past on which the mind feeds in its musings. 'Tis then we ponder on each great result, which has stolen on us without the labour of reflection; 'tis then we analyze emotions, which, at the time, we could not comprehend, and probe the action which passion inspired, and which prejudice has hitherto defended. Alas! who can strike these occasional balances in life's great ledger without a sigh? Alas!

how little do they promise in favour of the great account! What whisperings of final bankruptcy! what a damnable consciousness of present insolvency! My friends! what a blunder is youth! Ah! why does Truth light her torch, but to illumine the ruined temple of our existence! Ah! why do we know we are men, only to be conscious of our exhausted energies!

And yet there is a pleasure in a deal of judgment, which your judicious man alone can understand. It is agreeable to see some younkens falling into the same traps which have broken our own shins; and, shipwrecked on the island of our hopes, one likes to mark a vessel go down full in sight. 'Tis demonstration that we are not branded as Cains among the favoured race of man. Then giving advice—that is delicious, and perhaps repays one all. It is a privilege your gray-haired signors solely can enjoy; but young men now-a-days may make some claim to it. And, after all, experience is a thing that all men praise. Bards sing its glories, and proud Philosophy has long elected it her favourite child. 'Tis the *τὸ ἀλλοτρίον*, in spite of all its ugliness, and the elixir vite, though we generally gain it with a shattered pulse.

No more! no more! it is a bitter cheat, the consolation of blunderers, the last refuge of expiring hopes, the forlorn battalion that is to capture the citadel of happiness—yet, yet impregnable! O! what is wisdom, and what is virtue, without youth! Talk not to me of knowledge of mankind;—give, give me back the sunshine of the breast which they o'erclouded! Talk not to me of proud morality—oh!—give me innocence!

"Sir, sir, what is all this about? Let us get on with the story. A reason for this delay. Is it gentlemanly? Is it courteous? Is it what might have been expected from you? So great a favourite, though so new a writer! Speak,—clear yourself!"

O! madam, if you be a madam, as I hope, why, why execrate with these queries? Postillions must be paid and horses changed, and now 'tis done, and so we'll on our journey.

Our hero's thoughts were of a very different complexion to those that lately broke out but unawares. The fact is, that a slight amiable egotism is my weakness, which all excuse as well as admire, upon this plea, that I am strictly an anonymous writer; and, consequently, being utterly unknown, am therefore permitted occasionally to illustrate my profound oracles respecting human nature, by the specimen of it which I have most profoundly studied. If I wrote for fame, and had a lithographic portrait of myself appended to this first volume, this self-introduction would then be in as "bad taste" as it is now in good, and as utterly reprehensible as it is now worthy of all panegyric; but as I only write for fun, and am even less desirous of being known by the public than they can be of knowing me, why, let it pass.

"But why then publish, sir?"

Beautiful being! That you should be amused is it nothing to feel, amid this solitude, that bright eyes are glancing o'er my thoughts! Besides, I like to make a little noise—in a quiet way, as peaceable gentlemen slide into a row at night.

An urchin sometimes will disturb the abstraction of his assembled fellow-students with a shrill and sudden whistle. All start, all stare, and the pedagogue fumes. Yet no one looks more astonished,

more indignant at the disturbance than the rioter himself; and there he sits alike undetected and desirous to be concealed, inspired at the same time by a love of fun and a contempt of fame.

He is a true philosopher, and might teach us more than we care to learn. He who teaches that enjoyment is the great object of existence, and that this can be obtained without the permission of your worship, is a heretic against the creed of cant. Now, if, instead of amusing you and myself, I were, which probably some day I may, to cut all your throats, or mend all your morals, what a wonderful fellow you would instantly dub me! What odes, what medals, what shifting diadems, what changing sceptres, what cheers from widows whose blood had washed my chariot wheels, what grants from parliaments—themselves ready to receive! I say nothing of the public dinner and the private praise. These are small deer. Yet a life in the National Library is not to be despised; and it is something to have one's portrait in demand among the Sandwich Isles.

To conquer and to cant—these are the modes to ruin mankind. Must they be so forever? Is it a dream that flits across my mind, fed by the silence of this sacred place; or is it revelation? Yes, yes, methinks a softer voice, a sweeter breath, moves on the wings of coming time, and whispers consolation.

Amid the ruins of eternal Rome, I scribble pages lighter than the wind, and feed with fancies, volumes which will be forgotten ere I can hear that they are even published. Yet am I not one insensible to the magic of my memorable abode, and I could pour my passion o'er the land; but I repress my thoughts, and beat their tide back to their hollow caves!

The ocean of my mind is calm, but dim, and ominous of storms that may arise. A cloud hangs heavy o'er the horizon's verge, and veils the future. Even now, a star appears, steals into light, and now again 'tis gone! I hear the proud swell of the growing waters,—I hear the whispering of the wakening winds; but Reason lays her trident on the cresting waves, and all again is hushed.

For I am one, though young, yet old enough to know Ambition is a demon; and I fly from what I fear. And Fame has eagle wings, and yet she mounts not as high as man's desires. When all is gained, how little then is won! And yet to gain that little, how much is lost! Let us once aspire, and madness follows. Could we but drag the purple from the hero's heart; could we but tear the laurel from the poet's throbbing brain, and read their doubts, their dangers, their despair, we might learn a greater lesson than we shall ever acquire by musing over their exploits or their inspiration. Think of unrecognised Cæsar, with his wasting youth, weeping over the Macedonian's young career! Could Pharsalia compensate for those withering pangs? View the obscure Napoleon starving in the streets of Paris! What was St. Helena to the bitterness of such existence! The visions of past glory might illumine even that dark imprisonment; but to be conscious that his supernatural energies might die away without creating their miracles—can the wheel or the rack rival the torture of such a suspicion! Lo! Byron, bending over his shattered lyre, with inspiration in his very rage. And the pert taunt could sting even this child of light! To doubt of the truth of the creed in

which you have been nurtured, is not so terrific as to doubt respecting the intellectual vigour on whose strength you have staked your happiness. Yet these were mighty ones; perhaps the records of the world will not yield us threescore to be their mates. Then tremble, ye whose cheek glows too warmly at their names! Who would be more than riar should fear lest he be less.

Yet there is hope—there should be happiness—for them, for all! Kind nature, ever mild, extends her fond arms to her truant children, and breathes her words of solace. As we weep on her indulgent and maternal breast, the exhausted passions, one by one, expire, like gladiators in yon huge pile, that has made barbarity sublime. Yes! there is hope and joy—and it is here!

Where the breeze wanders through a perfumed sky, and where the beautiful sun illumines beauty. On the poet's firm, and on the conqueror's arch, thy beam is lingering! It lingers on the shattered porticoes that once shrouded, from thy o'erpowering glory, the lords of earth; it lingers upon the ruined temples that, even in their desolation, are yet sacred! 'Tis gone, as if in sorrow! Yet the woody lake still blushes with thy warm kiss; and still thy rosy light tinges the pine that breaks the farthest heaven!

A heaven all light, all beauty, and all love! What marvel men should worship in these climes? And lo! a small and single cloud is sailing in the immaculate ether, burnished with twilight, like an Olympian chariot from above, with the fair vision of some graceful god!

It is the hour that poets love; but I crush thoughts that rise from out my mind, like nymphs from out their caves when sets the sun. Yet 'tis a blessing here to breathe and muse. And cold his clay, indeed, who does not yield to thy Ausonian beauty! Clime where the heart softens and the mind expands! Region of mellowed bliss! O! most enchanting land!

When I began this meritorious tale, I had determined to confine myself in the strictest manner to its interesting narration; but blood will show itself, and nature will have her way; and if I had kept her in, we never could have got on. So, here is an explosion; but if you think that, on the whole, it is rather too sublime and solemn, let me inform you, sir, that this chapter is no common chapter, but embalms by far the most important incident, not only in this work, but in the life of man. And so, we are at the park gates.

They whirled along through a park which would have contained half a hundred of those Patagonian paddocks of modern times which have usurped the name. At length the young duke was roused from his reverby by Carlstein, proud of his previous knowledge, leaning over and announcing—

“Chateau de Dacre, your grace!”

The duke looked up. The sun, which had already set, had tinged with a dying crimson the eastern sky, against which rose a princely edifice. Castle Dacre was the erection of Vanbrugh, an imaginative artist, whose critics I wish no bitterer fate than to live in his splendid creations. A spacious centre, richly ornamented, though broken perhaps into rather too much detail, was joined to wings of a corresponding magnificence by faucial colonnades. A terrace, extending the whole front, was covered with orange-trees, and many a statue

and many an obelisk, and many a temple, and many a fountain, were tinted with the warm twilight. The duke did not view the forgotten scene of youth without emotion. It was a palace worthy of the heroine on whom he had been musing. The carriage gained the lofty portal. Luigi and the pages were ready to receive his grace, who was immediately ushered to the rooms prepared for his reception. The duke was later than he had intended, and no time was to be unnecessarily lost in his preparation for his appearance.

His grace's toilet was already prepared: the magical dressing-box had been unpacked, and the shrine for his devotions was covered with richly cut bottles of all sizes, arranged in all the elegant combinations which the picturesque fancy of his valet could devise, adroitly intermixed with the golden instruments, the china vases, and the ivory and rosewood brushes, which were worthy even of Delcroix's exquisite inventions.

The Duke of St. James was master of the art of dress, and consequently consummated that paramount operation with the decisive rapidity of one whose principles are settled. He was cognisant of all effects, could calculate in a second all consequences, and obtained his result with that promptitude and precision which stamp the great artist. (2) For a moment he was plunged in profound abstraction, and at the same time stretched his legs after his ride. He then gave his orders, with the decision of Wellington on the arrival of the Prussians, and the battle began.

Spiridion stood with a corbillon of towels, ready to supply the watchful Luigi, whose duty it was ever to have one in his extended hand. When the ablutions were performed, Luigi came forward with a richly quilted silken robe, and his grace, folding himself with the dignity of Cæsar, fell, not at the base of Pompey's statue, but on an ottoman. Luigi supported his back, while Spiridion, with a fineness of tact of which a Greek is alone susceptible, arranged the *bas de soie*, and fitted the feet into velvet shoes, fastened by buckles of mother-of-pearl. The feet would have become a woman; but the Duke of St. James followed up his advantage: and by having the tube of his white trousers somewhat amplified at their termination, the delicate extremities became in their character not merely feminine, but would have filled with envy the mistress of a mandarin.

Spiridion, then, with an arrosoir of agate—exquisite invention of Parisian taste—waters, with the essence of a bank of violets, that important garment which in former days was styled the under tunic. This on, Luigi advances, fits it perfectly to the neck, inserts the jewelled studs, and presents, at the same time, the cravat. But do not misconceive me. It was not that indescribable compound of starch and cambric to which courtesy has too long yielded an honoured name. O! no; the Duke of St. James's neck was covered with the finest muslin, delicately strengthened by a process with which Luigi was alone acquainted, and fringed with a fall of blonde, more beautiful, if not as sublime as the fall of Niagara.

His grace had a taste for magnificence in costume; but he was handsome, young, and a duke. Pardon him. Yet to-day he was, on the whole, simple, and with the exception of the pink topaz buttons, which shed their rosy hue over his white silk waistcoat, he wore no jewels. Confident in a

complexion whose pellucid lustre had not yielded to a season of dissipation, his grace did not dread the want of relief which a white face, a white cravat, and a white waistcoat, would seem to imply: nevertheless, the interior of the waistcoat was imperceptibly lined with rose-coloured silk, and a rich and flickering light was thus thrown over the soft beauties of the blonde. The effect, as the cause was concealed, was in a manner supernatural.

Luigi advanced with a coat of a colour—remember it was summer—stolen from the neck of Juno's peacock. While he fits it to the back, Spiridion arranges the ruffles, replaces on his favoured finger the signet-ring, and presents his lord with a handkerchief, which assuredly must have been dropped on that immortal bank o'er which the south did breathe so sweetly! A hair-chain set in diamonds, worn in memory of the absent Aphrodite, and to pique the present Daere, is annexed to a glass, which reposes in the waistcoat pocket. This was the only weight that the Duke of St. James ever carried. It was a bore, but it was indispensable.

It is done. He stops one moment before the long pier-glass, and shoots a glance which would have read the mind of Talleyrand. It will do. He assumes the look, the air that befits the occasion—cordial, but dignified; sublime, but sweet. He descends like a deity from Olympus to a banquet of illustrious mortals.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. DACRE received him with marked affection: his daughter, with a cordiality which he had never yet experienced from her. Though more simply dressed than when she first met his ardent gaze, her costume again charmed his practised eye. "It must be her shape," thought the young duke—"it is magical!"

The rooms were full of various guests, and some of these were presented to his grace, who was, of course, an object of universal notice, but particularly by those persons who pretended not to be aware of his entrance. The party assembled at Castle Daere consisted of some thirty or forty persons, all of great consideration, but of a different character to any with whom the Duke of St. James had been acquainted during his short experience of English society. They were not what are called *fashionable* people. I have no princes and no ambassadors, no duke who is a gourmand, no earl who is a jockey, no manœuvring mothers, no flirting daughters, no gambling sons, for your entertainment. There is no superlative gentleman brought down specially from town to gauge the refinement of the manners of the party, and to prevent them, by his constant supervision and occasional sneer, from losing any of the beneficial results of their last campaign. We shall sadly want, too, a lady patroness, to issue a decree or quote her code of consolidated etiquette. I am not sure that Almack's will ever be mentioned; I am quite sure that Maradan has never yet been heard of. The Jockey Club may be quoted, but Crockett will be a dead letter. As for the rest, Boodle's is all I can promise—miserable consolation for the bow-window. As for buffoons and artists, to amuse a vacant hour or sketch a vacant face, I must

frankly tell you at once that there is not one. Are you frightened? Will you go on? Will you trust yourselves with these savages? Try. They are rude, but they are hospitable.

The party, I have said, were all persons of great consideration: some were noble, most were rich, all had ancestors. There were the Earl and Countess of Faulconcourt. He looked as if he were fit to reconquer Palestine, and she, as if she were worthy to reward him for his valour. Misplaced in this superior age, he was *sans peur*, and she *sans reproche*. There was Lord Mildmay, an English peer, and a French colonel. Methinks such an incident might have been a better reason for a late measure, than an Irishman being returned a member of our imperial parliament. But that is past and settled. I say nothing; but if I had been there at the time, which, God be praised! I was not, I know who would have read a moral lesson or two, varied the dullness of a worn debate, and shown considerable talent in his way. There was our friend Lord St. Jerome, of course; his step-mother, yet young, and some sisters, pretty as nuns. There were some cousins from the farthest north, Northumbria's bleakest bound, who came down upon Yorkshire like the Goths upon Italy, and were revelling in what they considered a southern clime.

There was an M. P. in whom the Catholics had hopes. He had made a great speech,—not only a great speech, but a great impression. His matter certainly was not new, but well arranged, and his images not singularly original, but appositely introduced—in short, a bore, who, speaking on a subject in which a new hand is indulged, and connected with the families whose cause he was pleading, was for once courteously listened to by the very men who determined to avenge themselves for their complaisance by a cough on the first opportunity. But the orator was prudent; he reserved himself, and the session closed with his fame yet full blown.

Then there were country neighbours in great store, with wives that were treasures, and daughters fresh as flowers. Among them I would particularize two gentlemen that caught my eye. They were great proprietors, and Catholics, and baronets, and consoled themselves by their active maintenance of the game-laws, for their inability to regulate their neighbours by any other. One was Sir Chetwode Chetwode of Chetwode; the other was Sir Tichborne Tichborne of Tichborne. I never saw two men less calculated to be the slaves of a foreign and despotic power, which we all know Catholics are. Tall, and robust, and rosy, with hearts even stouter than their massy frames, they were just the characters to assemble in Runnymede, and probably, even at the present day, might have imitated their ancestors, even in their signatures. In disposition, they were much the same, though they were friends. In person, there were some differences, but they were slight. Sir Chetwode's hair was straight and white; Sir Tichborne's brown and curly. Sir Chetwode's eyes were blue; Sir Tichborne's gray. Sir Chetwode's nose was perhaps a snub; Sir Tichborne's was certainly a bottle. Sir Chetwode was somewhat garrulous, and was often like a man at a play, in the wrong box; Sir Tichborne was somewhat taciturn; but when he spoke, it was always to the purpose, and made an impression, even if it were not new.

Both were kind hearts; but Sir Chetwode was jovial, Sir Tichborne rather stern. Sir Chetwode often broke into a joke, Sir Tichborne sometimes backed into a sneer.

A few of these characters were made known by Mr. Daere to his young friend, but not many, and in an easy way,—those that stood nearest. Introduction is a formality, and a bore, and is never resorted to by your well-bred host, save in a casual way. When proper people meet at proper houses, they give each other credit for propriety, and slide into an acquaintance by degrees. The first day, they catch a name; the next, they ask you whether you are the son of General——. “No, he was my uncle.”—“Ah! I knew him well. A worthy soul!” And then the thing is settled. You ride together, shoot, or fence, or hunt. A game of billiards will do no great harm; and when you part, you part with a hope that you may meet again.

Lord Mildmay was glad to meet with the son of an old friend. He knew the late duke well, and loved him better. It is pleasant to hear our fathers praised. We too may inherit their virtues with their lands, or cash, or bonds; and, scapegraces as we are, it is agreeable to find a precedent for the blood turning out well. And, after all, there is no feeling more thoroughly delightful, than to be conscious that the kind being from whose loins we spring, and to whom we cling with an innate and overpowering love, is viewed by others with regard, with reverence, or with admiration. There is no pride like the pride of ancestry, for it is a blending of all emotions. How immeasurably superior to the herd is the man whose father only is famous! Imagine, then, the feelings of one who can trace his line through a thousand years of heroes and of princes!

In fathers, nature gives us kinder friends than proud society can ever yield; and yet we fly too often from the face that beams with fondness on its own creation. But time, and sharp experience, sooner or later, return us to our hearths, though somewhat roughly. A bill that must be paid, a shattered horse, a sulky tailor, a rebellious goldsmith, are not the greatest evils, yet they make one dull, and bring the young master quickly to his senses.

'Tis then that nature speaks with her still voice, so soft and small! 'Tis then we fly to him who, in our adversity, is the only one on whom we surely count. He draws his purse-strings, or he draws a check, and gives us, with his good assistance, good advice.

Kind soul! beneficent, beloved friend! O! let me die the traitor's death, let me be hurled from yon Tarpeian mount, if such it be, if ever I do love thee not; if I wear not thy image in my inmost core,—adore thee living, and revere thee dead!

What though, at this most fatal moment, I am drawing a most unhappy, a most unexpected, and a most unreasonable bill, and at the shortest date! I grant it all—yet pity! pardon! pay!

Well will it be for him who loses such as thee, to find some female friend to smooth the years that yet remain. Woman alone can urge a claim to soften the bitterness of filial recollections. I have half a mind to anticipate the remedy; but the ceremony is really awful. I like the ancient fancy of a wedding. You may mark it on a gem, where Cupid leads his Psyche to the altar—all birds and plumes, all fruit, and flowers, and flame!

In modern days, the most graceful Psyche looks awkward at that hour, and Cupid stands before her all confessed with cheeks even whiter than his whitest jeans. I say nothing of the parson and the clerk, the anxious mother, and the smirking sire. Even there I could stand. But spare! O! spare me, the giggling bride's-maids and the grinning groomsmen.

'Tis dinner! hour I have loved, as loves the bard the twilight; but no more those visions rise, that once were wont to spring in my quick fancy. The dream is past, the spell is broke, and even the lore on which I pondered in my first youth is strange as figures in Egyptian tombs.

No more—no more, O! never more to me that hour shall bring its raptured bliss! No more—no more, O! never more for me, shall Flavour sit upon her thousand thrones, and, like a siren with a sunny smile, win to renewed excesses—each more sweet! My feasting days are over: me, no more, the charms of fish, or flesh, still less of fowl, can make the fool of that they made before. (3) The fricandeau is like a dream of early love; the fricasee, with which I have so often flirted, is like the tattle of the last quadrille; and no longer are my dreams haunted with the dark passion of the rich ragout. Ye soups! o'er whose creation I have watched, like mothers o'er their sleeping child! Ye sauces! to which I have even lent a name, where are ye now? Tickling, perchance, the palate of some easy friend, who quite forgets the boon companion whose presence once lent lustre even to his ruby wine, and added perfume to his perfumed hook!

Shade of my grandsire!—rightly I invoke thy spirit in the land in which thy restless youth did also wander. Was it for this that I sat at thy Gamaliel-feet, and tasted knowledge with my earliest years? Was it for this thy aged eye did gleam with the bright thought, that thy fine taste should survive in thy young posterity? Was it for this thy favourite Beaujolais prepared the beccafico, and procured the truffle! O! for an hour of thy Condé soups! O! for the hermitage that Tilney loved! O! for the port that flowed alone for dukes! (4)

Was it for this, thy curious table poured its delicate mysteries to my infant mind—that I, your hope, your joy—I, who praised (or damned) your cook, ere my fourth birth-day, should now, with my fifth lustre yet imperfect, with a frame half-dying, and a brain half-dry—with all my high hopes thrown by in a corner, like a Ridotto cloak, with faded grace, maintain a miserable existence, which is not life, by the atrocious torture of a diet?

A simple sandwich, a severe olive, a cutlet purer than a virgin's cheek, with less of sauce *piquante* than that of rouge; an ortolan or two—ah! once 'twas six; a glass or two, or three, of ruby wine, such as Chianti yields, and Redi sings, strong, yet mellow—dignified, yet mild—these form a meal that sends me lightly on an evening ride.

And thus glides on a life, which is not life, if life be passion, as I truly think. To feel each day you hold your bridle with a grasp less firm: each day, to guide even this frivolous pen, with which I beguile a vanishing existence, with a more feeble aim—all this, too, daily teaches a poor gentleman how very quickly the milestones of his life are hurrying on.

What then? We die. What then, again? We go where there is all of hope and naught of

fear, to those who, on right subjects, rightly think. My life has been but brief, and in that brevity there has been enough of bitterness; yet have I not lived in vain, since I have learned to die. To die!—it is a doom that hangs o'er all,—to die!—it is a fate that all must meet. Then, let us meet it boldly, and with a calm and holy courage. What we are we know less than we might; what we shall be is written on a page which none can read. All here is doubt—all beyond is darkness. Between a troubled sea and covered sky, the mariners grow pale; and yet there is an invisible Pilot hurrying on our barks to shores of lucid light, and havens all repose!

“But what the deuce is death, when dinner is waiting all this time?”

Good heavens! how can you run on so, madam! Our duke but little recked of his decease or his digestion. He pecked as prettily as any bird. Seated on the right hand of his delightful hostess, nobody could be better pleased; supervised by his jager, who stood behind his chair, no one could be better attended. He smiled, with the calm, amiable complacency of a man who feels the world is quite right. But this chapter must not be too long.

CHAPTER IX.

“How is your grace's horse, *Sanspareil*?” asked Sir Chetwode Chetwode of Chetwode of the Duke of St. James, shooting at the same time a sly glance at his opposite neighbour, Sir Tichborne Tichborne of Tichborne.

“Quite well, sir,” said the duke, in his quietest tone, but with an air which, he flattered himself, might repress further inquiry.

“Has he got over his fatigue?” pursued the dogged baronet, with a short, gritty laugh, that sounded like a loose drag-chain dangling against the stones. “We all thought the *Yorkshire* air would not agree with him.”

“Yet, Sir Chetwode, that could hardly be your opinion of *Sanspareil*,” said Miss Dacre, “for I think, if I remember right, I had the pleasure of making you encourage our glove manufactory?”

Sir Chetwode looked a little confused. The Duke of St. James, inspired by his fair ally, rallied, and hoped Sir Chetwode did not back him, steed to a fatal extent. “If,” continued he, “I had had the slightest idea that any friend of Miss Dacre was indulging in such an indiscretion, I certainly would have interfered, and have let him know that the horse was not to win.”

“Is that a fact?” asked Sir Tichborne Tichborne of Tichborne, with a sturdy voice.

“Can a Yorkshireman doubt it?” rejoined the duke. “Was it possible for any one but a mere Newmarket dandy to have entertained for a moment the supposition that any one but May Dacre should be the queen of the St. Leger?”

“I have heard something of this before,” said Sir Tichborne, “but I did not believe it. A young friend of mine consulted me upon the subject. ‘Would you advise me,’ said he, ‘to settle?’—‘Why,’ said I, ‘if you can prove any bubble, my opinion is—don't; but if you cannot prove any thing, my opinion is—do.’”

“Very just!—Very true!” were murmured by

many in the neighbourhood of the oracle; by no one with more personal sincerity than Lady Tichborne herself.

"I will write to my young friend," continued the baronet.

"Certainly not," said May Dacre. "His grace's candour must not be abused. I have no idea of being robbed of my well-earned honours.—Sir Tichborne, private conversation must be respected, and the sanctity of domestic life must not be profaned. If the tactics of Doncaster are no longer to be fair war, why, half the families in the Riding will be ruined!"

"Still—" said Sir Tichborne.

But Mr. Dacre, like a deity in a Trojan battle, interposed, and asked his opinion of a gamekeeper.

"I hope you are a great sportsman," said Miss Dacre to the duke, "for this is the very palace of Nimrod."

"I have hunted; it was not very disagreeable. I sometimes shoot; it is not very stupid."

"Then, in fact, I perceive that you are a heretic. Lord Faulconcourt, his grace is moralizing on the barbarity of the chase."

"Then he has never had the pleasure of hunting in company with Miss Dacre."

"Do you indeed follow the hounds?" asked the duke.

"Sometimes do worse—ride over them; but Lord Faulconcourt is fast emancipating me from the trammels of my frippery foreign education, and I have no doubt that in another season I shall fling off quite in style."

"You remember Mr. Annesley!" asked the duke.

"It is difficult to forget him. He always seemed, to me, to think that the world was made on purpose for him to have the pleasure of 'cutting' it."

"Yet he was your admirer!"

"Yes, and once paid me a compliment. He told me it was the only one that he had ever uttered."

"O! Charley, Charley! this is excellent. We shall have a tale when we meet. What *was* the compliment?"

"It would be affectation in me to pretend that I had forgotten it. Nevertheless you must excuse me."

"Pray, pray let me have it."

"Perhaps you will not like it."

"Now, I must hear it."

"Well, then, he said, that talking to me was the only thing that consoled him for having to dine with you, and to dance with Lady Shropshire."

"Charles is jealous," drawled the duke.

"Of her grace!" asked Miss Dacre, with much anxiety.

"No; but Charles is aged, and once, when he dined with me, was taken for my uncle."

The ladies retired, and the gentlemen sat barbarously long. Sir Chetwode Chetwode of Chetwode and Sir Tichborne Tichborne of Tichborne were two men who drank wine independent of fashion, and exacted, to the last glass, the identical quantity which their fathers had drunk half a century before, and to which they had been used almost from their cradle. The only subject of conversation was sporting. Terrible shots, more terrible runs, neat barrels, and pretty fencers. The Duke of St. James was not sufficiently acquainted with the geography of the mansion to make a

premature retreat, an operation which is looked upon with an evil eye, and which, to be successful, must be prompt and decisive, and executed with the most supercilious *nonchalance*. So, he consoled himself by a little chat with Lord Mildmay, who sat smiling, handsome, and mustachioed, with an empty glass, and who was as much out of water as he was out of wine. The duke was not very learned in Parisian society; but still, with the aid of the Duchesse de Berry and the Duchesse de Duras, Leontine Fay and Lady Stuart de Rothesay, they got on, and made out the time, until purgatory ceased and paradise opened.

For paradise it was, although there were there assembled some thirty or forty persons not less dull than the majority of our dull race, and in those little tactics that make society less burdensome, perhaps even less accomplished. But a sunbeam will make the cloudiest day break into smiles; a bounding fawn will banish monotony even from a wilderness; and a glass of claret, or perchance some stronger grape, will convert even the platitude of a goblet of water into a pleasing beverage,—and so May Dacre moved among her guests, shedding light, life, and pleasure.

She was not one who, shrouded in herself, leaves it to chance or fate to amuse the beings whom she has herself assembled within her halls. *Nonchalance* is the *métier* of your modern hostess; and as long as the house be not on fire, or the furniture not kicked, you may be even ignorant who is the priestess of the hospitable fane in which you worship.

They are right. Men shrink from a fussy woman. And few can aspire to regulate the destinies of their species, even in so slight a point as an hour's amusement, without rare powers. There is no greater sin than to be *trop prononcée*. A want of tact is worse than a want of virtue. Some women, it is said, work on pretty well against the tide without the last: I never knew one who did not sink who ever dared to sail without the first.

Loud when they should be low, quoting the wrong person, talking on the wrong subject, teasing with notice, exerceiating with attentions, disturbing a *tête-à-tête* in order to make up a dance; wasting eloquence in persuading a man to participate in amusement, whose reputation depends on his social sullenness; exacting homage with a restless eye, and not permitting the least worthy knot to be untwined without their divinityship's interference; patronising the meek, anticipating the slow, intoxicated with compliment, plastering with praise, that you in return may gild with flattery: in short, energetic without elegance, active without grace, and loquacious without wit, mistaking bustle for style, raillery for badinage, and noise for gayety—these are the characters who mar the very career they think they are creating, and who exercise a fatal influence on the destinies of all those who have the misfortune to be connected with them.

Not one of these was she, the lady of our tale. There was a quiet dignity lurking even under her easiest words and actions, which made you feel her notice a compliment; there was a fascination in her calm smile, and in her sunlit eye, which made her invitation to amusement itself a pleasure. If you refused, you were not pressed, but left to that isolation which you appeared to admire if

you assented, you were rewarded with a word, which made you feel how sweet was such society! Her invention never flagged,—her gayety never ceased; yet both were spontaneous and often were unobserved. All felt amused, and all were unconsciously her agents. Her word and her example seemed, each instant, to call forth from her companions new accomplishments, new graces, new sources of joy and of delight. All were surprised that they were so agreeable.

CHAPTER X.

MORNING came, and the great majority of the gentlemen rose early as aurora. The chase is the favourite pastime of man and boy; yet some preferred plundering their host's preserves, by which means their slumbers were not so brief, and their breakfast less disturbed. The *battuc*, however, in time, called forth its band, and then, one by one, or two by two, or sometimes even three, leaning on each other's arms, and smiling in each other's faces, the ladies dropped in the breakfast-room at Castle Dacre. There, until two o'clock, a lounging meal might always be obtained, but generally by twelve the coast was clear: for our party were a natural race of beings, and would have blushed if flaming noon had caught them napping in their easy couches. Our bright bird, May Dacre, too, rose from her bower, full of the memory of the sweetest dreams, and fresh as lilies ere they kiss the sun.

She bends before her ivory crucifix, and gazes on her blessed mother's face, where the sweet Florentine had tinged with light a countenance

“Too fair for worship, too divine for love!” (5)

And innocence has prayed for fresh support, and young devotion told her holy beads. She rises with an eye of mellowed light, and her soft cheek is tinted with the flush that comes from prayer. Guard over her, ye angels! wheresoe'er, and whatsoever ye are! For she shall be your meet companion in an after-day. Then love you, gentle friend, this sunless child of clay!

The morning passed as mornings ever pass where twenty women, for the most part pretty, are met together. Some read, some drew, some worked—all talked. Some wandered in the library, and wondered why such great books were written. One sketched a favourite hero in the picture gallery—a Dacre, who had saved the state or church—had fought at Cressy, or flourished at Windsor:—another picked a flower out of the conservatory, and painted its powdered petals. Here, a purse, half-made, promised, when finished quite, to make some hero happy. Then there was chat about the latest fashions, caps and bonnets, *séduisantes* and sleeves. As the day grew old, some walked, some drove. A pony-chaise was Lady Faulconcourt's delight, whose arm was roundly turned, and graced the whip; while, on the other hand, Lady St. Jerome rather loved to try the paces of an ambling nag, because her figure was of the sublime; and she looked not unlike an Amazonian queen, particularly when Lord Mildmay was her Theseus.

He was the most consummate, polished gentleman that ever issued from the court of France. He did his friend Dacre the justice to suppose that

he was a victim to his barbarous guests; but for the rest of the galloping crew, who rode and shot all day, and in the evening fell asleep just when they were wanted, he shrugged his shoulders and he thanked his stars! In short, Lord Mildmay was the ladies' man; and in their morning dearth of beaux, to adopt their unanimous expression, “quite a host!”

Then there was archery for those who could draw a bow or point an arrow; and I am yet to learn the sight that is more dangerous for your bachelor to witness, or the ceremony which more perfectly develops all that the sex would wish us to remark, than this “old English” custom. They may talk of waltzing—but I say nothing—only, if I had a son (but then I have not) or a pretty daughter, (which I may have for aught you know,) why, then, miss should march to the archery ground.

But then, before the arrow of our young Camilla skims along the plain, let her take my advice, and discreetly go to some *danscuse*, of a good style, and presenting her with guineas four or five, imbibe a little of her imposing lore.

Lo! my pupil appears in all the grace of attitudes. Mark, as she bends the fatal bow, the line of beauty beautifully defined! Mark the waving arm, the well-planted foot, the gentle inclination of the head—quite Greek. The triumphant arrow whizzes through the air, and transfixes on the spot—the eye of the target! O, no! Who cares for that?—the heart of an elder brother.

But to our morning party. With all these resources, all was, of course, free and easy as the air. Your appearance was your own act. If you liked, you might have remained, like a monk or nun, in your cell till dinner-time—but no later. Privacy and freedom are granted you in the morning, that you may not exhaust your powers of pleasing before night, and that you may reserve for those favoured hours all the new ideas that you have collected in the course of your morning adventures.

But where was he, the hero of our tale? Fencing? Craning! Hitting? Missing? Is he over, or is he under? Has he killed! or is he killed!—for the last is but the chance of war, and pheasants have the pleasure of sometimes seeing as gay birds as themselves with plumage quite as shattered. But there is no danger of the noble countenance of the Duke of St. James bearing to-day any evidence of the exploits of himself or his companions. His grace was in one of his sublime fits, and remained in bed till four o'clock. Luigi consoled himself for the bore of this protracted attendance, by diddling the page in waiting at dominos.

The Duke of St. James was in one of his sublime fits. He had commenced by thinking of May Dacre, and he ended by thinking of himself. He was under that delicious and dreamy excitement which we experience, when the image of a lovely and beloved object begins to mix itself up with our own intense self-love. She was the heroine rather of an indefinite reverie, than of definite romance. Instead of his own image alone playing about his fancy, her beautiful face and springing figure intruded their exquisite presence. He no longer mused merely on his own voice and wit: he called up her tones of thrilling power; he imagined her in all the triumph of her gay repartee. In his mind's eye, he clearly watched all the graces of her existence. She moved, she gazed, she smiled.

Now he was alone, and walking with her in some rich wood, sequestered, warm, solemn, dim, feeding on the music of her voice, and gazing with intense passion on the wakening passion of her devoted eye. Now they rode together, scudded over champagne, galloped down hills, scampered through valleys, all life, and gayety, and vivacity, and spirit. Now they were in courts and crowds; and he led her with pride to the proudest kings. He covered her with jewels; but the world thought her brighter than his gems. Now they met in the most unexpected and improbable manner; now they parted with a tenderness which subdued their souls even more than rapture. Now he saved her life; now she blessed his existence. Now his reverie was too vague and misty to define its subject. It was a stream of passion, joy, sweet voices, tender tones, exulting hopes, beaming faces, chaste embraces, immortal transports!

For a young gentleman to lie awake on a summer morning, and with his eyes and shutters alike unclosed, to pass six or eight hours in this manner, will to some people perhaps appear impossible. Harsher spirits may even salute my last page or two with the ungentle title of nonsense. If it be nonsense, it is only such because I have attempted to describe what is perhaps indescribable; but they who have heightened the delight of their existence by an habitual indulgence in reverie, the mental opium, they will sympathise with this faint tracing of delicious joy!

It was three o'clock, and for the twentieth time our hero made an effort to recall himself to the realities of life. How cold, how tame, how lifeless, how imperfect, how inconsecutive, did every thing appear! This is the curse of reverie. But they who revel in its pleasures must bear its pains, and are content. Yet it wears out the brain, and unfits us for social life. They who indulge in it most are the slaves of solitude. They wander in a wilderness, and people it with their voices. They sit by the side of running waters, with an eye more glassy than the stream. The sight of a human being scares them more than a wild beast does a traveller; the conduct of life, when thrust upon their notice, seems only a tissue of adventures without point; and, compared with the creatures of their imagination, human nature seems to send forth only abortions.

"I must up," said the young duke; "and this creature on whom I have lived for the last eight hours, who has, in herself, been to me the universe,—this constant companion, this cherished friend, whose voice was passion, and whose look was love, will meet me with all the formality of a young lady, all the coldness of a person who has never even thought of me since she saw me last. Damnable delusion! To-morrow I will get up and hunt."

He called Luigi, and a shower-bath assisted him in taking a more healthy view of affairs. Yet his faithful fancy recurred to her again. He must indulge it a little. He left off dressing, and flung himself in a chair. Luigi offered the eau de Cologne. Without looking at it, his grace tossed the richly cut bottle into a corner. It broke. Reverie is a most expensive luxury.

"And yet," he continued, "when I think of it again, there surely can be no reason that this should not turn into a romance of real life. I perceived that she was a little piqued, when we first met at

Doncaster. Very natural! Very flattering! I should have been piqued. Certainly, I behaved decidedly bad. But how, in the name of Heaven, was I to know that she was the brightest little being that ever breathed! Well, I am here now! She has got her wish. And I think an evident alteration has already taken place. But she must not melt too quickly. She will not,—she will do nothing but what is exquisitely proper. How I do love this child! I dote upon her very image. It is the very thing that I have always been wanting. The women call me inconstant. I have never been constant. But they will not listen to us without we feign feelings, and then they upbraid us for not being influenced by them. I have sighed, I have sought, I have wept, for what I now have found. What would she give to know what is passing in my mind! By heavens! there is no blood in England that has a better chance of being a dutchess!"

CHAPTER XI.

A CANTER is the cure for every evil, and brings the mind back to itself sooner than all the lessons of Chrysis and Crantor. It is the only process that, at the same time, calms your feelings, and elevates your spirits, banishes blue devils, and raises you to the society of "angels ever bright and fair." It clears the mind; it cheers the heart. It is the best preparation for all enterprises, for it puts a man in good humour both with the world and himself; and whether you are going to make a speech or scribble a scene—whether you are about to conquer the world or yourself—order your horse. As you bound along, your wit will brighten, and your eloquence blaze, your courage grow more adamant, and your generous feelings burn with a livelier flame. And when the exercise is over, the excitement does not cease, as when it grows from music, for your blood is up, and the brilliancy of your eye is fed by your bubbling pulses. Then, my young friend, take my advice—rush into the world, and triumph will grow out of your quick life, like Victory bounding from the palm of Jove!

Our duke ordered his horses, and as he rattled along, recovered from the enervating effects of his soft reverie. On his way home he fell in with Mr. Dacre and the two baronets, returning on their hackneys from a hard-fought field.

"Gay sport?" asked his grace.

"Twelve hours, by George!" answered Sir Chetwode. "I only hope Jack Wilson will take care of poor Fanny. I did not half like leaving her. Your grace does not join us?"

"I mean to do so; but I am unfortunately a late riser."

"Hem!" said Sir Tichborne.—The monosyllable meant much.

"I have a horse which I think will suit your grace," said Mr. Dacre, "and to which, in fact, you are entitled, for it bears the name of your house. You have ridden Hauteville, Sir Tichborne?"

"Yes; fine beast!"

"I shall certainly try his powers," said the duke. "When is your next field-day?"

"Thursday," said Sir Tichborne; "but we shall be too early for you, I am afraid," with a gruff smile.

"O! no," said the young duke, who saw his man; "I assure you, I have been up to-day nearly two hours. Let us go on."

The first person that his grace's eye met, when he entered the room in which they assembled before dinner, was Mrs. Dallington Vere.

Dinner was a favourite moment with the Duke of St. James, during this visit at Castle Dacre, since it was the only time in the day that, thanks to his rank, which he now doubly valued, he could enjoy a *tête-à-tête* with its blooming mistress.

"I am going to hunt," said the duke, "and I am to ride Hauteville. I hope you will set me an example on Thursday, and that I shall establish my character with Sir Tichborne."

"I am to lead on that day a bold band of archers. I have already too much neglected my practising, and I fear that my chance of the silver arrow is very slim."

"I have betted upon you with everybody," said the Duke of St. James.

"Remember Doncaster! I am afraid that May Dacre will again be the occasion of your losing your money."

"But now I am on the right side. Together, we must conquer."

"I have a presentiment that our union will not be a very fortunate one."

"Then I am ruined," said his grace, with rather a serious tone.

"I hope you have not staked any thing upon such nonsense," said May Dacre.

"I have staked every thing," said his grace.

"Talking of stakes," said Lord St. Jerome, who pricked up his ears at a congenial subject, "do you know what they are going to do about that affair of Anderson's?"

"What does he say for himself?" asked Sir Chetwode.

"He says that he had no intentions of embezzling money, but that, as he took it for granted the point could never be decided, he thought it was against the usury laws to allow money to be idle."

"That fellow has always got an answer," said Sir Tichborne. "I hate men who have always got an answer. There is no talking common sense with them. They think no more of contradicting a gentleman than Ripley does of riding without stirrups, which I never could see the beauty of."

The duke made his escape to-day, and emboldened by his illustrious example, Charles Faulcon, Lord St. Jerome, and some other heroes followed, to the great disgust of Sir Chetwode Chetwode of Chetwode and Sir Tichborne Tichborne of Tichborne.

As the evening glided on, conversation naturally fell upon the amusements of society.

"I am sure we are tired of dancing every night," said May Dacre. "I wonder if we could introduce any novelty.—What think you, Bertha? You can always suggest."

"You remember the *tableaux vivans*?" said Mrs. Dallington Vere.

"Beautiful! but too elaborate a business, I fear, for us. I want something more impromptu. The *tableaux* are nothing without the most brilliant and accurate costume, and to obtain that, we must work at least a week, and then after all, in all probability, a failure. *Ils sont trop recherchés*," she said, lowering her voice to Mrs. Dallington, "*pour nous ici*. They must spring out of a society used to such exhibitions."

"I have a costume dress here," said the Duke of St. James.

"And I have a uniform," said Lord Mildmay.

"And then," said Mrs. Dallington, "there are cachemeres, and scarfs, and jewels to be collected. I see, however, you think it impossible."

"I fear so. However, we will think of it. In the mean time, what shall we do now? Suppose we act a fairy tale!"

"None of the girls can act," said Mrs. Dallington with a look of kind pity.

"Let us teach them. That itself will be an amusement. Suppose we act Cinderella! There is the music of Cendrillon, and you can compose, when necessary, as you go on. Clara Howard!" said May Dacre, "come here love! We want you to be Cinderella in a little play."

"I act! O! dear May! How can you laugh at me so! I cannot act."

"You will not have to speak. Only just move about as I direct you, while Bertha plays music."

"O! dear May, I cannot indeed! I never did act. Ask Eugenia!"

"Eugenia! If *you* are afraid, I am sure she will faint. I asked you because I thought you were just the person for it."

"But only think," said poor Clara, with an imploring voice, "*to act*, May! Why, acting is the most difficult thing in the world. Acting is quite a dreadful thing. I know many ladies who will not act."

"But it is not *acting*, Clara. Well! I will be Cinderella, and you shall be one of the sisters!"

"No, dear May!"

"Well then, the fairy?"

"No, dear, dear, dear May?"

"Well, your grace, what am I to do with this rebellious troop?"

"Let me be Cinderella!"

"It is astonishing," said May Dacre, "the difficulty which you encounter in England, if you try to make people the least amusing, or vary the regular dull routine, which announces dancing as the beautiful of diversion, and cards as the sublime."

"We are barbarians," said the duke.

"We were not," said May Dacre. "What are *tableaux*, or acted charades, or romances, to masks, which were the splendid and various amusements of our ancestors. Last Christmas we performed Comus here with great effect; but then we had Arundel, and he is an admirable actor."

"Curse Arundel!" thought the duke. "I had forgotten him."

"I do not wonder," said Mrs. Dallington Vere, "at people objecting to act regular plays, for independent of the objections,—not that I think any thing of them myself,—which are urged against 'private theatricals,' the fact is, to get up a play is a very tremendous business, and one or two is your bound. But masks, where there is so little to learn by rote, a great consideration, where music and song are so exquisitely introduced, where there is such an admirable opportunity for brilliant costume, and where the scene may be beautiful without change,—such an important point,—I cannot help wondering that this national diversion is not revived."

"Suppose we were to act a romance without the costume?" said the duke. "Let us consider it a

rehearsal. And perhaps the Misses Howard will have no objection to sing?"

"It is difficult to find a suitable romance," said May Dacre. "All our modern English ones are too full of fine poetry. We tried once an old ballad, but it was too long. Last Christmas we got up a good many, and Arundel, Isabella, and myself used to scribble some nonsense for the occasion. But I am afraid they are all either burned or taken away. I will look in the music-case."

She went to the music-case with the duke and Mrs. Dallington.

"No," she continued, "not one, not a single one. But what are these?" She looked at some lines written in pencil in a music-book. "O! here is something, too slight, but it will do.—You see," she continued, reading it to the duke, "by the introduction of the same line in every verse, describing the same action, a back-scene is, as it were, created, and the story, if you can call it such, proceeds in front. Really, I think, we might make something of this."

Mr. Dacre and some others were at whist. The two barons were together talking over the morning's sport. *Écarté* covered a flirtation between Lord Mildmay and Lady St. Jerome. Miss Dacre assembled her whole troop; and, like a manager with a new play, read in the midst of them the ballad, and gave them directions for their conduct. A japan screen was unfolded at the end of the room. Two couches indicated the limits of the stage. Then taking her guitar, she sang with a sweet voice and arch simplicity, these simpler lines:

I.

Childe Dacre stands in his father's hall,
While all the rest are dancing;
Childe Dacre gazes on the wall,
While brightest eyes are glancing.
Then prithee tell me, gentles say!
What makes our Childe so dull to-day?

Each verse was repeated. In the background they danced a cotillon. In the front, the Duke of St. James, as Childe Dacre, leaned against the wall with arms folded, and eyes fixed,—in short, in most romantic mood, and in an attitude which commanded great applause.

II.

I cannot tell, unless it be,
While all the rest are dancing,
The Lady Alice, on the sea,
With brightest eyes is glancing,
Or muses on the twilight hour
Will bring Childe Dacre to her bower.

Mrs. Dallington Vere advances as the Lady Alice. Her walk is abrupt; her look anxious and distracted; she seems to be listening for some signal. She falls into a musing attitude, motionless, and graceful as a statue. Clara Howard alike marvels at her genius and her courage.

III.

Childe Dacre hears the curfew chime,
While all the rest are dancing;
Unless I find a fitting rhyme,
O! here ends my romancing!
But see! her lover's at her feet!
O! words of joy! O! meeting sweet!

The duke advances: chivalric passion in his every gesture. The Lady Alice rushes to his arms, with that look of trembling transport which tells the tale of stolen love. They fall into a

group which would have made the fortune of an annual.

IV.

Then let us hope, when next I sing,
And all the rest are dancing,
Our Childe a gentle bride may bring,
All other joys enhancing
Then we will bless the twilight hour,
That call'd him to a lady's bower.

The duke led Mrs. Dallington to the dancers with courtly grace. There was great applause, but the spirit of fun and one-and-twenty inspired him, and he led off a gallop. In fact, it was a most elegant romp. The two baronets started from their slumbers, and Lord Mildmay called for Mademoiselle Dacre. The call was echoed. Miss Dacre yielded to the public voice, and acted to the life the gratified and condescending air of a first-rate performer. Lord Mildmay called for Madame Dallington. Miss Dacre led on her companion, as Sontag would Malibran. There was no wreath at hand, but the Duke of St. James robbed his coat of its rose, and offered it on his knee to Mademoiselle, who presented it with Parisian feeling to her rival. The scene was as superb as any thing at the *Académie*.

CHAPTER XII.

"We certainly must have a mask," said the young duke, as he threw himself into his chair, satisfied with his performance.

"You must open Hauteville with one," said Mrs. Dallington.

"A capital idea; but we will practise at Dacre first."

"When is Hauteville to be finished?" asked Mrs. Dallington. "I shall really complain if we are to be kept out of it much longer. I believe I am the only person in the Riding who has not been there."

"I have been there," said the duke, "and am afraid I must go again; for Sir Carte has just come down for a few days, and I promised to meet him. It is a sad bore. I wish it were finished."

"Take me with you," said Mrs. Dallington,—
"take us all, and let us make a party."

"An admirable idea," exclaimed the young duke, with a brightening countenance.

"What admirable ideas you have, Mrs. Dallington! This is, indeed, turning business into pleasure! What says our hostess?"

"O! I will join you."

"To-morrow, then?" said the duke.

"To-morrow! You are rapid!"

"Never postpone, never prepare:—that is your own rule. To-morrow, to-morrow—all must go."

"Papa, will you go to-morrow to Hauteville?"

"Are you serious?"

"Yes," said May Dacre; "we never postpone; we never prepare."

"But do not you think a day, at least, had better intervene?" urged Mr. Dacre; "we shall be unexpected."

"I vote for to-morrow," said the duke.

"To-morrow, to-morrow!" was the universal exclamation. "To-morrow was carried."

"I will write to Blanche at once," said the duke. Mrs. Dallington Vere ran for the writing materials, and his grace dictated the following pithy note

"Half-past ten.—Castle Dacre.

"DEAR SIR CARTE,

"Our party here intend to honour Hauteville with a visit to-morrow, and anticipate the pleasure of viewing the improvements with yourself for their cicerone. Let Rawdon know immediately of this. They tell me here that the sun rises about six. As we shall not be with you till noon, I have no doubt your united energies will be able to make all requisite preparations. We may be thirty or forty. Believe me, dear Sir Carte,

"Your faithful servant,

"ST. JAMES.

"Carlestein bears this, which you will receive in an hour. Let me have a line by return."

CHAPTER XIII.

It was a morning all dew and sunshine, soft yet bright, just fit for a hawking party, for dames of high degree, feathered cavaliers, ambling pallfreys, and tinkling bells. Our friends rose early, and assembled punctually. All went on horseback; but they sent before a couple of carriages for the return, in case the ladies should be wearied with excessive pleasure. This cavalcade, for it was no less, broke into parties which were often out of sight of each other. The duke and Lord St. Jerome, Clara Howard and Charles Faulcon, and May Dacre and Mrs. Dallington formed one, and, as they flattered themselves, not the least brilliant. They were all in high spirits, and his grace lectured on riding-habits with erudite enthusiasm.

Their road lay through a country wild and woody, where crag and copse beautifully intermixed with patches of the richest cultivation. Halfway, they passed Rosemont, a fanciful pavilion, where the Dukes of St. James sometimes sought that elegant simplicity which was not afforded by all the various charms of their magnificent Hauteville. At length they arrived at the park-gate of the castle, which might itself have passed for a tolerable mansion. It was ancient and embattled, flanked by a couple of sturdy towers, and gave a noble promise of the baronial pile which it announced. The park was a petty principality; and its apparently illimitable extent, its rich variety of surface, its ancient woods, and numerous deer, attracted the attention and the admiration even of those who had been born in these magical enclosures.

Away they cantered over the turf, each moment with their blood more sparkling. A turn in the road, and Hauteville, with its donjon-keep and lordly flag, and many-windowed line of long perspective; its towers, and turrets, and terraces, bathed with the soft autumnal sun, met their glad sight.

"Your majesty is welcome to my poor castle!" said the young duke, bowing with head uncovered to May Dacre.

"Nay, we are at the best but captive princesses about to be immured in that fearful keep; and this is the way you mock us!"

"I am content that you shall be my prisoner."

"A struggle for freedom!" said May Dacre, looking back to Mrs. Dallington, and she galloped towards the castle.

Lord Mildmay and Lady St. Jerome cantered up, and the rest soon assembled. Sir Carte came forward, all smiles, with a clerk of the works bearing a portfolio of plans. A crowd of servants, for the duke maintained a full establishment at Hauteville, advanced, and the fair equestrians were dismounted. They shook their habits and their curls, vowed that riding was your only exercise, and that dus in the earthly economy was a blunder. And then they entered the castle.

Room after room, gallery after gallery—you know the rest. Shall I describe the silk hangings and the reverend tapestry, the agate tables and the tall screens, the china and the armour, the state beds; and the curious cabinets, and the family pictures mixed up so quaintly with Italian and Flemish art? But I pass from meek Madonnas and seraphic saints,—from gleaming Claudes, and Guidos soft as Eve,—from Rubens' satyrs and Albano's boys, and even from those gay and natural medleys—paintings that cheer the heart—where fruit and flower, with their brilliant bloom, call to a feast the butterfly and bee; I pass from these to square-headed ancestors by Holbein, all black velvet and gold chains; cavaliers, by Vandyke, all lace and spurs, with pointed beards, that did more execution even than their pointed swords; patriots and generals, by Kneller, in Blenheim wigs and Steenkirk cravats, all robes and armour; scarlet judges that supported ship-money, and purple bishops, who had not been sent to the Tower. Here was a wit who had sipped his coffee at Button's, and there some mad Alcibiades duke who had exhausted life ere he had finished youth, and yet might be considered for all his flashing follies, could he witness the bright eyes that lingered on his countenance, while they glanced over all the patriotism and all the piety, all the illustrious courage and all the historic craft which, when living, it was daily told him that he had shamed. Ye dames! with dewy eyes, that Lely drew, have I forgotten you? No! by that sleepy loveliness that reminds us that light belongs to beauty, ye were made for memory! And O! our grandmothers, that I now look upon as girls, breathing in Reynold's playful canvass, let me also pay my homage to your grace!

The chapel, where you might trace art from the richly Gothic tomb, designed by some neighbouring abbot, to the last effort of Flaxman,—the riding-house, where, brightly framed, looked down upon you with a courtly smile the first and gartered duke, who had been master of the horse, were alike visited, and alike admired. They mounted the summit of the round-tower, and looked around upon the broad country, which they were proud to call their own. Amid innumerable seats, where blazed the hearths of the best blood of England, they recognised with delight, the dome of Dacre and the woods of Dallington. They walked along a terrace not unworthy of the promenade of a court; they visited the flower-gardens, where the peculiar style of every nation was in turn imitated; they loitered in the vast conservatories, which were themselves a palace; they wandered in the wilderness, where the invention of consummate art presented them with the ideal of nature. In this poetic solitude, where all was green, and still, and sweet, or where the only sound was falling water, or fluttering birds, the young duke recurred to the feelings which, during the last momentous week, had so mastered his nature, and he longed to wind his arm round the

beautiful being, without whom this enchanting domain was a dreary waste.

They assembled in a green retreat, where the energetic Sir Carte had erected a *marquée*, and where a collation greeted the eyes of those who were well prepared for it. Rawdon had also done his duty, and the guests, who were aware of the sudden manner in which the whole affair had arisen, wondered at the magic which had produced a result worthy of a week's preparation. But it is a great thing to be a young duke. The pasties, and the venison, and the game, the pines, and the peaches, and the grapes, the cakes and the confectionary, and the ices, which proved that the still-room at Hauteville was not an empty name, were all most popular. But the wines—they were something miraculous! And as the finest cellars in the country had been ransacked for excellence and variety, it is not wonderful that their produce obtained a panegyric. There was hock a century old, which made all stare, though I, for my part, cannot see, or rather taste, the beauty of this antiquity. Wine, like woman, in my opinion, should be young,—so I raise my altar to the infant Bacchus; but this is not the creed of the million, nor was it the persuasion of Sir Chetwode Chetwode of Chetwode, or of Sir Tichborne Tichborne of Tichborne, good judges both. The Johannsberger quite converted them. They no longer disliked the young duke. They thought him a fool, to be sure, but at the same time a very good-natured one. In the mean time, all were interested, and Carlstein, with his key-bugle, from out a neighbouring brake, afforded the only luxury that was wanting.

It is six o'clock—carriages are ordered, and horses are harnessed. Back, back to Dacre! But not at the lively rate at which they had left that lordly hall this morning. They are all alike inclined to move slowly; they are silent, yet serene and satisfied; they ponder upon the reminiscences of a delightful morning, and also of a delightful meal. Perhaps, they are a little weary; perhaps, they wish to gaze upon the sunset.

It is eight o'clock, and they enter the park-gates. Dinner is universally voted a bore, even by the baronets. Coffee covers the retreat of many a wearied bird to her evening bower. The rest lounge on a couch or sofa, or chew the cud of memory on an ottoman. It was a day of pleasure which had been pleasant. That was certain, but that was past. Who is to be Dutchess of St. James? Answer me this:—May Dacre, or Bertha Vere, or Clara Howard!—Lady St. Jerome, is it to be a daughter of thy house! Lady Faulcourt, art thou to be hailed as the unrivalled mother? 'Tis mystery all, as must always be the future of this world. We muse, we plan, we hope, but naught is certain but that which is naught; for, a question answered, a doubt satisfied, an end attained—what are they but fit companions for clothes out of fashion, cracked china, and broken fans?

Our hero was neither wearied nor sleepy, for his mind was too full of exciting fancies to think of the interests of his body. As all were withdrawing, he threw his cloak about him and walked on the terrace. It was a night soft as the rhyme that sighs from Rogers' shell, and brilliant as a phrase just turned by Moore. The thousand stars smiled from their blue pavilions, and the moon shed the mild light that makes a lover muse. Fragrance

came in airy waves from trees rich with the golden orange, and from out the woods there ever and anon arose a sound, deep and yet hushed, and mystical, and soft. It could not be the wind!

His heart was full, his hopes were sweet, his fate pledged on a die. And in this shrine where all was like his love, immaculate and beautiful, he vowed a faith which had not been returned. Such is the madness of love! Such is the magic of beauty!

Music rose upon the air. Some huntsmen were practising their horns. The triumphant strain elevated his high hopes, the tender tone accorded with his emotions. He paced up and down the terrace in the most excited revery, fed by the music. In imagination she was with him: she spoke, she smiled, she loved. He gazed upon her beaming countenance: his soul thrilled with tones which only she could utter. He pressed her to his throbbing and tumultuous breast!

The music stopped. He fell from the seventh heaven. He felt all the exhaustion of his prolonged revery. All was flat, dull, unpromising. The moon seemed dim, the stars were surely fading, the perfume of the trees was faint, the wind of the woods was a howling demon. Exhausted, dispirited, ay! almost desperate,—with a darkened soul and staggering pace, he regained his chamber.

CHAPTER XIV

THERE is nothing more strange, but nothing more certain, than the different influence which the seasons of night and day exercise upon the modes of our minds. Him whom the moon sends to bed with a head full of misty meaning, the sun will summon in the morning with a brain clear and lucid as his beam. Twilight makes us pensive; Aurora is the goddess of activity. Despair curses at midnight; hope blesses at noon.

And the bright beams of Phœbus—why should this good old name be forgotten?—called up our duke, rather later than a monk at matins, in a less sublime disposition than that in which he had paced among the orange trees of Dacre. His passion remained, but his poetry was gone. He was all confidence, and gayety, and love, and panted for the moment when he could place his mother's coronet on the only head that was worthy to share the proud fortunes of the house of Hauteville.

"Luigi, I will rise. What is going on to-day?"

"The gentlemen are all out, your grace."

"And the ladies?"

"Are going to the archery ground, your grace."

"Ah! she will be there, Luigi!"

"Yes, your grace."

"My robe, Luigi."

"Yes, your grace."

"I forgot what I was going to say.—Luigi!"

"Yes, your grace."

"Luigi, Luigi, Luigi," hummed the duke, perfectly unconscious, and beating time with his brush. His valet stared, but more when his lord, with eyes fixed on the ground, fell into a soliloquy, not a word of which, most provokingly, was audible, except to my reader.

"How beautiful she looked yesterday upon the keep, when she tried to find Dacre! I never saw such eyes in my life! I must speak to Lawrence immediately. I think I must have her face painted in four positions, like that picture of Lady Alice Gordon, by Sir Joshua. Her full face is sublime; and yet there is a piquancy in the profile, which I am not sure—and yet again, when her countenance is a little bent towards you, and her neck gently turned, I think that is, after all—but then when her eyes meet yours, full—oh! yes! yes! yes! That first look at Doncaster! It is impressed upon my brain like self-consciousness. I never can forget it. But then her smile! When she sang on Tuesday night—Pretty puss! By heavens!" he exclaimed aloud, "life with such a creature is immortality!"

He advanced with rapid strides, with his razor in hand.—Luigi retreated,—the duke pushed on,—Luigi was in a corner, in a moment his throat must have been cut. He coughed: the duke started.

"Ah! Luigi, am I up! Archery, eh? Then I wear my green frock."

About one o'clock the duke descended into empty chambers. Not a soul was to be seen. The birds had flown. He determined to go to the archery ground. He opened the door of the music-room. He found May Dacre alone at a table, writing. She looked up, and his heart yielded, as her eye met his.

"You do not join the nymphs?" asked the duke.

"I have lent my bow," she said, "to an able substitute."

She resumed her task, which he perceived was copying music. He advanced, he seated himself at the table, and began playing with a pen. He gazed upon her, his soul thrilled with unwonted sensations, his frame shook with emotions which, for a moment, deprived him even of speech. At length he spoke in a low and tremulous tone—

"I fear I am disturbing you, Miss Dacre?"

"By no means," she said, with a courteous air; and then remembering she was a hostess, "Is there any thing that your grace requires?"

"Much—more than I can hope. O! Miss Dacre, suffer me to tell you how much I admire, how much I love you!"

She started, she stared at him with distended eyes, and her small mouth was open like a ring.

"My lord!"

"Yes!" he continued, in a rapid and impassioned tone; "I at length find an opportunity of giving way to feelings which it has been long difficult for me to control. O! beautiful being, tell me—tell me that I am blessed!"

"My lord! I—I am most honoured—pardon me if I say, most surprised."

"Yes! from the first moment that your ineffable loveliness rose on my vision, my mind has fed upon your image. Our acquaintance has only realized, of your character, all that my imagination had preconceived. Such unrivalled beauty, such unspeakable grace, could only have been the companions of that exquisite taste, and that charming delicacy, which, even to witness, has added great felicity to my existence. O! tell me—tell me that they shall be for me something better than a transient spectacle. Condescend to share the fortune and the fate of one, who only esteems his lot in

life because it enables him to offer you a station not utterly unworthy of your transcendent excellence!"

"My lord, I have permitted you to proceed too far. For you, for my own sake, I should sooner have interfered; but, in truth, I was so perfectly astounded at your unexpected address, that I have but just succeeded in recalling my scattered senses. Let me again express to you my acknowledgments for an honour which I feel is great; but permit me to regret, that for your offer of your hand and fortune, these acknowledgments are all I can return."

"Miss Dacre! am I then to wake to the misery of being rejected?"

"A little week ago, my lord, we were strangers. It would be hard if it were in the power of either of us now to deliver the other to misery."

"You are offended, then, at the presumption which, on so slight an acquaintance, has aspired to your hand. It is indeed a high possession. I thought only of you, not of myself. Your perfections require no time for recognition. Perhaps my imperfections require time for indulgence. Let me then hope!"

"My lord, you have misconceived my meaning, and I regret that a foolish phrase should occasion you the trouble of fresh solicitude, and me the pain of renewed refusal. In a word, it is not in my power to accept your hand."

He rose from the table, and stifled the groan which struggled in his throat. He paced up and down the room with an agitated step and a convulsed brow, which marked the contest of his passions. But he was not desperate. His heart was full of high resolves and mighty meanings, indefinite but great. He felt like some conqueror, who, marking the battle going against him, proud in his infinite resources and invincible power, cannot credit the madness of a defeat. And the lady, she leaned her head upon her delicate arm, and screened her countenance from his scrutiny.

He advanced.

"Miss Dacre! pardon this prolonged intrusion; forgive this renewed discourse. But let me only hope, that a more favoured rival is the cause of my despair, and I will thank you—"

"My lord," she said, looking up with a faint blush, but with a flashing eye, and in an audible and even energetic tone—"the question you ask is neither fair nor manly; but as you choose to press me, I will say, that it requires no recollection of a third person to make me decline the honour which you intended me."

"Miss Dacre! you speak in anger, almost in bitterness. Believe me," he added, rather with an air of pique, "had I imagined from your conduct towards me that I was an object of dislike, I would have spared you this inconvenience, and myself this humiliation."

"My lord, as mistress of Castle Dacre, my conduct to all its inmates is the same. The Duke of St. James, indeed, had both hereditary and personal claims to be considered here as something better than a mere inmate; but your grace has elected to dissolve all connexion with our house, and I am not desirous of assisting you in again forming any."

"Harsh words, Miss Dacre!"

"Harsher truth, my lord duke," said Miss Dacre, rising from her seat, and twisting a pen with

agitated energy.—“You have prolonged this interview, not I. Let it end, for I am not skilful in veiling my mind; and I should regret, here at least, to express what I have hitherto succeeded in concealing.”

“It cannot end thus,” said his grace; “let me, at any rate, know the worst. You have, if not too much kindness, at least too much candour, to part so!”

“I am at a loss to understand,” said Miss Daere, “what other object our conversation can have for your grace, than to ascertain my feelings, which I have already declared more than once upon a point, which you have already more than once urged. If I have not been sufficiently explicit or sufficiently clear, let me tell you, sir, that nothing but the request of a parent whom I adore, would have induced me even to speak to the person who had dared to treat him with contempt.”

“Miss Daere!”

“Your grace is moved, or you affect to be moved. ’Tis well:—if a word from a stranger can thus affect you, you may be better able to comprehend the feelings of that person whose affections you have so long outraged—your equal in blood, my lord duke, your superior in all other respects.”

“Beautiful being!” said his grace, advancing, falling on his knee, and seizing her hand—“Pardon, pardon, pardon! Like your admirable sire, forgive, cast into oblivion all remembrance of my fatal youth. Is not your anger—is not this moment a bitter, an utter expiation for all my folly,—all my thoughtless, all my inexperienced folly,—for it was no worse? On my knees, and in the face of Heaven, let me pray you to be mine. I have staked my happiness upon this venture. In your power is my fate. On you it depends whether I shall discharge my duty to society, to the country to which I owe so much—or whether I shall move in it without an aim, an object, or a hope. Think—think only of the sympathy of our dispositions—the similarity of our tastes. Think—think only of the felicity that might be ours. Think of the universal good that we might achieve! Is there any thing that human reason could require that we could not command!—any object which human mind could imagine that we could not obtain? And as for myself, I swear I will be the creature of your will. Nay, nay!—oaths are mockery—vows are idle! Is it possible to share existence with you, beloved girl! without watching for every wish—without—”

“My lord, my lord, this must end. You do not recommend yourself to me by this rhapsody. What do you know of me, that you should feel all this? I am rather different from what you expected—that, that is all. Another week, and another woman may command a similar effusion. I do not believe you to be insincere. There would be more hope for you if you were. You act from impulse, and not from principle. This is your best excuse for your conduct to my father. It is one that I accept, but which will certainly ever prevent me from becoming your wife. Farewell!”

“Nay, nay! let us not part in enmity!”

“My lord, enmity and friendship are very strong words—words that are very much abused. There is another, which must describe our feelings towards the majority of mankind, and mine towards you. Substitute for enmity—indifference.”

She quitted the room: he remained there for

some minutes leaning on the mantel-piece, and then rushed into the park. He hurried for some miles with the rapid and uncertain step which betokens a tumultuous and disordered mind. At length he found himself among the ruins of Daere Abbey. The silence and solemnity of the scene made him conscious, by the contrast, of his own agitated existence,—the desolation of the beautiful ruin accorded with his own crushed and beautiful hopes. He sat himself at the feet of the clustered columns, and, covering his face with his hands, he wept.

They were the first tears that he had shed since childhood, and they were agony. Men weep but once, but then their tears are blood. I think almost their hearts must crack a little, so heartless are they ever after. Enough of this. It is bitter to leave our father's hearth for the first time: bitter is the eye of our return, when a thousand fears rise in our haunted souls. Bitter are hope deferred, and self-reproach, and power unrecognised. Bitter is poverty; bitterer still is debt. It is bitter to be neglected; it is more bitter to be misunderstood.

It is bitter to lose an only child. It is bitter to look upon the land which once was ours. Bitter is a sister's woe, a brother's scrap; bitter a mother's tear, and bitterer still a father's curse. Bitter are a briefless bag, a curate's bread, a diploma that brings no fee. Bitter is half-pay!

It is bitter to muse on vanished youth; it is bitter to lose an election, or a suit. Bitter are rage suppressed, vengeance unwreaked, and prize-money kept back. Bitter are a failing crop, a glutted market, and a shattering spec. Bitter are rents in arrear, and tithes in kind. Bitter are salaries reduced, and perquisites destroyed. Bitter is a tax, particularly if misapplied; a rate, particularly if embezzled. Bitter is a trade too full, and bitterer still a trade that has worn out. Bitter is a bore!

It is bitter to lose one's hair or teeth. It is bitter to find our annual charge exceed our income. It is bitter to hear of others' fame when we are boys. It is bitter to resign the seals we fain would keep. It is bitter to hear the winds blow when we have ships or friends at sea. Bitter are a broken friendship and a dying love. Bitter a woman scorned, a man betrayed!

Bitter is the secret wo which none can share. Bitter are a brutal husband and a faithless wife, a silly daughter, and a sulky son. Bitter are a losing card, a losing horse. Bitter the public hiss, the private sneer. Bitter are old age without respect, manhood without wealth, youth without fame. Bitter is the east wind's blast; bitter a stepdame's kiss. It is bitter to mark the wo which we cannot relieve. It is bitter to die in a foreign land.

But bitterer far than this, than these, than all, is waking from our first delusion!—For then we first feel the nothingness of self—that hell of sanguine spirits. All is dreary, blank, and cold. The sun of hope sets without a ray, and the dim night of dark despair shadows only phantoms. The spirits that guard round us in our pride have gone. Fancy, weeping, flies. Imagination droops her glittering pinions and sinks into the earth. Courage has no heart, and love seems a traitor. A busy demon whispers in our ear that all is vain and worthless, and we among the vainest of a worthless crew!

And so our young friend here now depreciated as much as he had before exaggerated his powers,

There seemed not on the earth's face a more forlorn, a more feeble, a less estimable wretch than himself,—but just now a hero. O! what a fool, what a miserable, contemptible fool was he! With what a light tongue and lighter heart had he spoken of this woman who despised, who spurned him! His face blushed, ay, burned at the remembrance of his reveries and his foul monologues! The very recollection made him shudder with disgust. He looked up to see if any demon were jeering him among the ruins.

His heart was so crushed, that Hope could not find even one desolate chamber to smile in. His courage was so cowed, that far from indulging in the distant romance to which under these circumstances we sometimes fly, he only wondered at the absolute insanity which for a moment had permitted him to aspire to her possession. "Sympathy of dispositions! Similarity of tastes, forsooth! Why, we are different existences! Nature could never have made us for the same world, or with the same clay! O! consummate being, why—why did we meet! Why—why are my eyes at length unsealed! Why—why do I at length feel conscious of my utter worthlessness! O, God! I am miserable!"

He arose, and hastened to the house. He gave orders to Luigi and his people to follow him to Rosemount with all practicable speed; and having left a note for his host with the usual excuse, he mounted his horse, and in half an hour's time, with a countenance like a stormy sea, was galloping through the park-gates of Daerc.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

WHETHER or not the progress of invention be accelerated by consulting the comforts of the body as well as of the mind; whether Bacchus and Ceres are fitting company for the graces and the muses; whether, in short, the grape and the grill are as essential to the concoction of a sublime poem, or a taking tale, as the ardour of enthusiasm and the piquancy of wit, is a great question, which has not yet been decided. Blackstone, we all know, wrote with the bottle; but then, law is proverbially a dry study. Dryden, instead of Champagne, took calomel. Sir Walter writes before breakfast: Byron always wrote at night, backed by every meal in the day.

When Charles Diodati excused some indifferent verses to Milton, on the plea that it was Christmas, and he was feasting, the indignant bard sent for answer an ode, which might have inspired him at the same time with better verse and more correct sentiments. Here follows a version of a stanza or two:—

"And why should revelry and wine
Be shunn'd as foes to song divine?
Bacchus loves the power of verse,
Bacchus oft the Nine rehearse;
Nor Phoebus' self disdains to wear
His berries in his golden hair,
And ivy green with laurel twine;
And oft are seen the sisters nine
Joining, in mystic dance along
Aonia's hills, with Bacchus' throng.

In frozen Scythia's barren plains,
What dulness seized on Ovid's strains!
Their sweetness fled to climes alone
To Ceres and Lyæus known.

"What but wine with roses crown'd
Did the Teian lyre resound?
Bacchus, with pleasing frenzy fired,
The high Pindaric song inspired:
Each page is redolent of wine
When crashing loud the car supine
On Elis' plains disjointed lies,
And soil'd with dust the courser flies.
Rapt with God's all-pleasing fire,
The Roman poet strikes the lyre,
And in measure sweet addresses
Chloe fair, with golden tresses;
Or his loved Glycere sings,
Touching light the immortal strings."

Now I do not know what your opinion is, but I call this very pretty poetry. In my mind, it is a version not unworthy of Gray. Whose is it then?

Last night, being, as single gentlemen occasionally are, a little moody, I unpacked a case, the contents of which bear the too dignified title of a library. And here let me advise my friends to follow my example, and give up reading. All my books are print-books. There is no longer any possibility of concealing the mortifying truth, that no book has yet been written which does not weary, and as this cannot be the fault of the writers, it is clear that there is some radical blunder in this mode of conveying our ideas. Now, gazing on a print, a result is conveyed at once, without the slightest labour of mind, and immortal revery never degenerates into mortal thought. The Iliad and the Odyssey of Flaxman excite in my mind ideas infinitely more vivid, than the Iliad and Odyssey by Homer. A Salvator, a Gaspar Poussin, and a Piranesi are each a stanza of Childe Harold. And I would sooner turn over the pages of Callot, than even the pages of Shakspeare and Voltaire.

No man should read after nineteen. From thirteen to nineteen, hold your tongue, and read every thing you can lay your hands on. In this period, you may gain some acquaintance with every desirable species of written knowledge. From nineteen to twenty-two, action, action, action. Do every thing, dare every thing, imagine every thing. Fight, write, love, spont, travel, talk, feast, dress, drink. I limit you to three years, because I think that in that period a lively lad may share every passion, and because if he do, at the end of that period he will infallibly be done up.

Then to your solitude, and *meditate on youth*. In these words is the essence of all human wisdom. By five-and-twenty, my pupil may know all that man can attain, both of himself and his fellow-creatures. If our young gentleman live, he may chance to turn out something amusing to himself and to the world. If he die, he dies with the consolation that he has fathomed the mystery of mankind.

But to our tale; or rather to our episode.—My volumes, which are clothed in a style and substance which would raise a flash of enthusiasm even from the perfect and practised eye of Dibdin, were guarded from the wear and tear of travel by that most useful and universally-known matter yeleft waste-paper.

It was printed—I have a horror of waste-paper under such circumstances. It may be, (one does not know how,) that some confounded indiscretion (one cannot tell what) which we have quite for-

gotten, (some people remember every thing,) and though. I am sure, for my part, I have no recollection, and hope to God nobody else has, yet still we have all been young, and every thing, at some time or other, will turn up. O! the luck of the rogue who falls to the pastry-cook, and not to the trunk-maker!

I have a horror of this waste and wo-begone—this outlawed, wandering, Cain-like material, which all men despise, and which none can do without; which, like the Greek, the Armenian, the Hebrew, and the gipsy, all think they may burn, and tear, and scorn, and banish. I have a perfect horror of it! Even my portmanteaus are lined with pink satin note paper.

However, on the present occasion, I could not withstand the lure of looking at a page or so, and then I recovered. It turned out to be a translation of the Latin and Italian poems of Milton; a translation so extremely pleasing, that I continued my researches, and even nearly made up a complete copy. Also, like a second Mai, I recovered a great part of a translation of Claudian, by the same hand, and which I even prefer to the Milton. Sceldom have I met with a version which more completely conveyed the spirit, as well as the sense, of an original, and which did fuller justice to a most ardent and picturesque poet. For instance, how fine is this squadron in complete armour, in Rufinus!

“One would have thought, that polish'd statues, dug
From beds of solid ore, had fiercely breath'd,
And started into action.”

These translations purport to be the production of a gentleman bearing the name of “*J. G. Strutt*,” a name, I regret to say, I never before heard, nor, in all probability, did any one else. A somewhat plaintive preface seems to anticipate that the preface was working to pack up my books. Yet these versions are works which probably have demanded many an hour of nightly meditation—perhaps have yielded to their creator some moments of poetic rapture. Such are the “calamities of authors!”

Very gratified should I be, if this notice, in my transitory page, should attract the public attention to the far more important labours of this ingenious man, who has displayed great taste, and great talent, in a department of literature at the present day too much neglected, and from which neglect, in my opinion, the public mind has suffered.

And, indeed, unless we moderns quickly mend,—the sooner we recur to the clear and creative spirits of antiquity, the better chance has the memory of the beautiful still to linger in a world which should have been its temple, and not its tomb! It is difficult to fix on a more mournful study than the contemplation of the literary efforts of mankind during the last fifteen dark centuries, and particularly since the fatal invention of printing. What fits and starts!—what desperate plunging!

—what final bolting! If a man have chanced, for a small quarter of a century, to exhibit any thing like a sequence of intellect, what raising of eyes!—what clapping of hands!—what wonderment!—what self-congratulation!—what chatter about illustrious ages!—what tattle about celebrated times! The age of Augustus! The age of Leo! The age of Louis! The age of Anne! Give me the age of human nature. If our political and moral systems, had been any thing better than bloody blunders, and unsocial compacts, we should

have had no cyclis of intellect to puzzle a degenerate posterity, and the natural light of the human mind would never have been clouded by the Cimmerian darkness of barbaric conquerors and feudal tyrants, Catholic inquisitors and Protestant puritans.

Then, perhaps Portugal might have boasted of more than one poet, and Germany might even have owned a classic. Then, romance might have erected a delightful Moorish palace in the plains of Grenada, and Italy might not then have gazed upon her paintings with a tear, and on her poesy with a blush. France, too, who has a literature, might then have been honoured, instead of being insulted; and England, that miraculous England, of whom I dare not whisper a disparagement, although a Calmuc man-of-war at anchor in sight reminds me with disgust that even in the Mediterranean I might find safety from her vengeance; even England, I say, might then have boasted of an historian rather earlier than the last half century.

Yet there are some great names. There is Shakspeare, of whom our great-grandfathers never heard, but whom we have discovered to be a god that was passed over; because we have learned to misquote some forty of his commonplaces, which are so true, that we have mistaken them for revelation. What is this Shakspeare but an Orson, who, wandering in his woods, and stumbling on dame nature a-maying, has ravished the mighty mother, and mistaken the agony of his mistress for rapture! Then there is Dante, who, on this side of the Alps, shares with the Virgin Mary all the adoration. I do not know how it is, but Dante always reminds me of some antique statue of a Dacian monarch. There is a sad dignity, a grim majesty about him; but then, after all, he is a barbarian. He is a giant, to be sure; but then he is a Cyclops. Then there is Milton, who has favoured us with a puritanic view of the celestial regions—rather different, certainly, from the pagan. He has assuredly succeeded in his character of Satan, but then he was secretary to Cromwell, and with such opportunities, could he fail! He has some delightful passages—this Milton, but I would sooner hear their originals in the choruses of the city of the Violet Crown! O! this imitation! Is this the fruit of our classic studies? Are we never to emulate instead of imitate? Are we never to direct the means of the ancients to a modern end? There is Gray, for instance. I would sooner listen to a nightingale on the banks of the Ilyssus than to the lyre of Gray! His poems always remind me of a picture dug up at Pompeii—of a muse in mosaic. Yet we are not utterly destitute. There is one Englishman—Pope; and there are La Fontaine, and Le Sage, and Molière, and Voltaire, natives of that consummate France, whose literature we affect to despise. There is—

“Hold your tongue, Le Drole, and fasten this buckle.”

The judicious reader will long ago have perceived, that these latter observations are by my valet, an ingenious Gaul. I vow to heaven, I shall be annoyed if they be mistaken for mine.

And now, having discharged my conscience towards Mr. Strutt, in consideration that I am about to begin a new book, and in unison with the exhortation of the illustrious and unrivalled Milton I intend to get tipsy.

CHAPTER II.

THE day after the arrival of the Duke of St. James at Cleve Park, his host, Sir Lucius Grafton, received the following note from Mrs. Dallington Vere.

“*Castle Dacre, —, 182—.*”

“MY DEAR BARONET,—Your pigeon has flown, otherwise I should have tied this under his wing, for I take it for granted, he is trained too dexterously to alight anywhere but a Cleve.

“Lucy! I confess that, in this affair, your penetration has exceeded mine. I hope throughout it will serve you as well. I kept my promise, and arrived here only a few hours after him. The prejudice which I had long observed in the little Dacre towards your *protégé* was too marked to render any interference on my part at once necessary, nor did I anticipate even beginning to *give her good advice* for a month to come. Heaven knows what a month of his conduct might have done! A month achieves such wonders! And, to do him justice, he was most agreeable; but our young gentleman grew impetuous, and so, the day before yesterday he vanished, and in the most extraordinary manner! Sudden departure,—unexpected business;—letter and servants both left behind; monsieur grave, and a little astonished; and the demoiselle thoughtful at the least, but not curious. Very suspicious this last circumstance! A flash crossed my mind, but I could gain nothing, even with my most dexterous wiles, from the little Dacre, who is a most unmanageable heroine. However, with the good assistance of a person who in a French tragedy would figure as my *confidante*, and who is the sister of your Lachen,—I am sure I need say no more—(let it suffice, she is not unworthy of her mistress)—something was learned from monsieur le valet, to say nothing of the pages. All agree; a countenance pale as death, orders given in a low voice of suppressed passion, and sundry oaths. I hear he sulked the night at Rosemount.

“Now, my dear Lucy, listen to me. Lose no time about the *great object*. If possible, let this autumn *be distinguished*. You have an idea that our friend is a very manageable sort of personage; in phrase less courteous, is sufficiently weak for all reasonable purposes. I am not quite so clear about this. He is at present very young, and his character is not formed; but there is a something about him which makes me half fear, that if you permit his knowledge of life to increase too much, you may quite fear having neglected my admonitions. At present, his passions are high. Use his blood while it is hot, and remember, that if you count on his rashness, you may, as nearly in the present instance, yourself rue it. In a word, *despatch*. The deed that is done, you know—

“My kindest remembrances to dear Lady Afy, and tell her how much I regret I cannot avail myself of her most friendly invitation. Considering, as I know, she hates me, I really do feel flattered. Give her a kiss for me, Lucy.

“You cannot conceive what Vandals I am at present among! Nothing but my sincere regard for you, my much valued friend, would induce me to stay here a moment. I have received from the countenance of the Dacres all the benefit which a marked connexion with so respectable and so moral

a family confers, and I am tired to death. But it is a well-devised plan to have a reserve in the battles of society. You understand me; and I am led to believe that it has had the best effect, and silenced even the loudest. ‘Confound their politics!’ as dear little Squib says, from whom I had the other day the funniest letter, which I have half a mind to send you, only you figure in it so much!

“Burlington is at Brighton, and all my friends except yourself. I have a few barbarians to receive at Dallington, and then I shall be off there. Join us as quickly as you can. Do you know, I think that it would be an excellent locale for the scena. We might drive them over to Dieppe: only do not put off your visit too long, or else there will be no steamers.

“The Duke of Shropshire has had a fit, but rallied. He vows he was only picking up a letter, or tying his shoe-string, or something of that kind; but Ruthven says, he dined off *boudins à la Sifton*, and that, after a certain age, you know—

“Lord Darrell is with Annesley and Co. I understand, most friendly towards me, which is pleasant; and Charles, who is my firm ally, takes care to confirm the kind feeling. I am glad about this.

“Felix Crawlegh, or *Crawley*, as some say, has had an affair with Tommy Seymour, at Grant’s. Felix was grand about porter, or something, which he never drank, and all that. Tommy, who knew nothing about the brewing father, asked him, very innocently, why malt liquors had so degenerated. Conceive the agony, particularly as Lady Selina is said to have no violent aversion to quartering her arms with a mash-tub, argent.

“The Macaronis are most hospitable this year; and the marquis says, that the only reason that they kept in before was, because he was determined to see whether economy was practicable. He finds it is not—so, now, expense is no object.

“Augustus Henley is about to become a senator! What do you think of this? He says he has tried every thing for an honest livelihood, and even once began a novel, but could not get on; which, Squib says, is odd, because there is a receipt going about for that operation, which saves all trouble.

“‘Take a pair of pistols and a pack of cards, a cookery-book, and a set of new quadrilles; mix them up with half an intrigue and a whole marriage, and divide them into three equal portions.’ Now, as Augustus has both fought and gamed, dined and danced, I suppose it was the morality, which posed him, or, perhaps, the marriage. Talking of books, I have been rather amused by Fribble’s little indiscretion, ‘The Season;’ but it is not true that the first volume was written by Gunter, the second by Stultz, and the third by Cuffe.

“They say there is something about Lady Flutter, but, I should think, all talk. Most probably, a report set about by her ladyship. Lord Flame has been black-balled, that is certain. But there is no more news, except that the Wiltshires are going to the Continent—we know why; and that the Spankers are making more dash than ever—God knows how! Adieu!

B. D. V.

The letter ended—all things end at last. A she correspondent for my money—provided always that she does not *cross*.

Our duke—in spite of his disgrace, he still is ours, and yours too, I hope, gentlest reader—our

duke found himself at Cleve Park again, in a different circle to the one to which he had been chiefly accustomed. The sporting world received him with open arms. With some of these worthies, as owner of Sanspareil, he had become slightly acquainted. But what is half a morning at Tattersall's, or half a week at Doncaster, compared with a meeting at Newmarket? There, your congenial spirits congregate, freemasons every man of them! No uninitiated wretch there dares to disturb with his profane presence the hallowed mysteries. There, the race is not a peg to hang a few days of dissipation on but a sacred ceremony, to the celebration of which all men and all circumstances tend and bend. No balls, no concerts, no public breakfasts, no bands from Litolf, no singers from Welsh, no pine-apples from Gunter, are there called forth by thoughtless thousands, who have met, not from any affection for the turf's delights or their neighbour's cash, but to sport their splendid liveries and to display their showy selves.

The house was full of men, whose talk was full of bets. The women were not as bad, but they were not plentiful. Some lords and signors were there without their dames. Lord Bloomerly, for instance, alone, or rather with his eldest son, Lord Bloom, just of age, and already a knowing hand. His father introduced him to all his friends, with that smiling air of self-content which men assume when they introduce a youth who may show the world what they were at his years: so the earl presented the young viscount, as a lover presents his miniature to his mistress. Lady Afy shone in unapproached perfection. A dull marchioness, a gauche viscountess, and some other dames, who did not look like the chorus of this Diana, acted as capital foils, and permitted her to meet her cavalier under, what are called, the most favourable auspices.

They dined, and discussed the agricultural interest in all its exhausted ramifications. Corn was sold over again, even at a higher price; poachers were recalled to life, or from beyond seas, to be re-killed or re-transported. The poor-laws were a very rich topic, and the poor lands a very ruinous one. But all this was merely the light conversation, just to vary in an agreeable mode, which all could understand, the regular material of course, and that was of stakes and stallions, pedigrees and plates.

Our party rose early, for their pleasure was their business. Here were no lounging dandies, and no exclusive belles, who kept their bowers until hunger, which also drives down wolves from the Pyrenees, brought them from their mystical chambers to luncheon and to life. In short, an air of interest, a serious and a thoughtful look, pervaded every countenance. Fashion was kicked to the devil, and they were all too much in earnest to have any time for affectation.

Breakfast was over, and it was a regular meal at which all attended and they hurried to the course. It seems, when the party arrive, that they are the only spectators. A party or two come on to keep them company. A club discharges a crowd of gentlemen, a stable a crowd of grooms. At length, a sprinkling of human beings is collected, but all is wondrous still and wondrous cold. The only thing that gives sign of life is Lord Bredall's movable stand; and the only intimation that fire is

still an element, is the sailing breath of a stray cigar.

"This, then, is Newmarket!" exclaimed the young duke. "If it required five-and-twenty thousand pounds to make Doncaster amusing, a plum, at least, will go in rendering Newmarket endurable."

But the young duke was wrong. There was a fine race, and the connoisseurs got enthusiastic. Sir Lucius Grafton was the winner. The duke sympathized with his friend's success.

He began galloping about the course, and his blood warmed. He paid a visit to Sanspareil. He heard his steed was still a favourite for a coming cup. He backed his steed, and Sanspareil won. He began to find Newmarket not so disagreeable. In a word, our friend was in an entirely new scene, which was exactly the thing he required. He was interested, and forgot, or rather forcibly expelled from his mind, his late overwhelming adventure. He grew popular with the set. His courteous manners, his affable address, his gay humour, and the facility with which he adopted their tone and temper, joined with his rank and wealth, subdued the most rugged and the coldest hearts. Even the jockeys were civil to him, and welcomed him with a sweet smile and gracious nod, instead of the sour grin and malicious wink with which those characters generally greet a stranger—those mysterious characters who, in their influence over their superiors, and their total want of sympathy with their species, are our only match for the oriental eunuch.

He grew, I say, popular with the set. They were glad to see among them a young nobleman of spirit. He became a member of the Jockey Club, and talked of taking a villa in the neighbourhood. All recommended the step, and assured him of their readiness to dine with him as often as he pleased. He was a universal favourite; and even Chuck Farthing, the gentleman-jockey, with a cock-eye, and a knowing shake of his head, squeaked out, in a sporting treble, one of his monstrous fudges about the prince in days of yore, and swore that, like his royal highness, the young duke made the market all alive.

The heart of our hero was never insensible to flattery. He could not refrain from comparing his present with his recent situation. The constant consideration of all around him, the affectionate cordiality of Sir Lucius, and the constant but unobtrusive devotion of Lady Afy melted his soul. These agreeable circumstances graciously whispered to him each hour, that he could scarcely be the desolate and despicable personage which lately, in a moment of madness, he had fancied himself. He began to indulge the satisfactory idea, that a certain person, however unparalleled in form and mind, had perhaps acted with a little precipitation. Then his eyes met those of Lady Aphrodite; and, full of these feelings, he exchanged a look which reminded him of their first meeting! though now, mellowed by gratitude, and regard, and esteem, it was perhaps even more delightful. He was loved,—and he was loved by an exquisite being, who was the object of universal admiration. What could he desire more? Nothing but the wilfulness of youth could have induced him for a moment to contemplate breaking chains which had only been formed to secure his felicity. He determined

to bid farewell forever to the impetuosity of youth. He had not been three days under the roof of Cleve, before he felt that his happiness depended upon its fairest inmate. You see, then, that absence is not always fatal to love!

CHAPTER III.

His grace completed his stud, and became one of the most distinguished votaries of the turf. Sir Lucius was the inspiring divinity upon this occasion. Our hero, like all young men, and particularly young nobles, did every thing in extremes; and extensive arrangements were made by himself and his friend for the ensuing campaign. Sir Lucius was to reap half the profit, and to undertake the whole management. The duke was to produce the capital, and to pocket the whole glory. Thus rolled on six weeks, at the end of which our hero began to get a little tired. He had long ago recovered all his self-complacency, and if the form of May Daere ever fitted before his vision for an instant, he clouded it over directly by the apparition of a bet, or thrust it away with that desperate recklessness with which we expel an ungracious thought. The duke sighed for a little novelty. Christmas was at hand. He began to think that a regular country Christmas must be a sad bore. Lady Afy, too, was rather *exigeante*. It destroys one's nerves to be amiable every day to the same human being. She was the best creature in the world; but Cambridgeshire was not a pleasant county. He was most attached; but there was not another agreeable woman in the house. He would not hurt her feelings for the world; but his own were suffering most desperately. He had no idea that he ever should get so entangled. Brighton, they say, is a pleasant place.

To Brighton he went; and although the Graftons were to follow him in a fortnight, still even these fourteen days were a holyday. It is extraordinary how hourly, and how violently, change the feelings of an inexperienced young man.

Sir Lucius, however, was disappointed in his Brighton trip. Ten days after the departure of the young duke, the county member died. Sir Lucius had been long maturing his pretensions to the vacant representation. He was strongly supported; for he was a personal favourite, and his family had claims; but he was violently opposed; for a *novus homo* was ambitious, and the baronet was poor. Sir Lucius was a man of violent passions, and all feelings and considerations immediately merged in his paramount ambition. His wife, too, at this moment, was an important personage. She was generally popular; she was beautiful, highly connected, and highly considered. Her canvassing was a great object. She canvassed with earnestness, and with success; for since her consolatory friendship with the Duke of St. James, her character had greatly changed, and she was now as desirous of conciliating her husband and the opinion of society, as she was before disdainful of the one, and fearless of the other. Sir Lucius and Lady Aphrodite Grafton were indeed on the best possible terms, and the whole county admired his conjugal attentions, and her wifelike affections.

The duke, who had no influence in this part of the world, and who was not at all desirous of quit-

ting Brighton, compensated for his absence at this critical moment by a friendly letter, and the offer of his purse. By this good aid, his wife's attractions, and his own talents, Sir Lucy succeeded, and by the time parliament had assembled, he was returned member for his native county.

In the mean time his friend had been spending his time at Brighton, in a far less agitated manner, but, in its way, not less successful; for he was amused, and therefore gained his object as much as the baronet. The duke liked Brighton much. Without the bore of an establishment, he found himself among many agreeable friends, living in an unostentatious and impromptu, though refined and luxurious style. One day, a new face; another day, a new dish; another day, a new dance, successively interested his feelings, particularly if the face rode, which they all do. The dish was at Sir George Sauceville's, and the dance at the Duke of Burlington's. So time flew on, between a canter to Rottindean, the flavours of a Perigord, and the blunders of the Mazurka.

But February arrived, and this agreeable life must end. The philosophy of society is so practical, that it is not allowed even to a young duke absolutely to trifle away existence. Duties will arise, in spite of our best endeavours; and his grace had to roll up to town, to dine with the premier, and to move the address.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER season had arrived,—another of those magical periods of which one had already witnessed his unparalleled triumphs, and from which he had derived such exquisite delight. To his surprise, he viewed its arrival without emotion;—if with any feeling, with disgust.

He had quaffed the cup too eagerly. The draught had been delicious; but time also proved that it had been satiating. Was it possible for his vanity to be more completely gratified than it had been? Was it possible for victories to be more numerous and more unquestioned during the coming campaign, than during the last? Had not his life, then, been one long triumph? Who had not offered their admiration? Who had not paid homage to his all-acknowledged empire? Yet, even this career, however dazzling, had not been pursued,—even this success, however brilliant, had not been obtained without some effort, and some weariness, also some exhaustion. Often, as he now remembered, had his head ached; more than once, as now occurred to him, had his heart faltered. Even his first season had not passed over without his feeling lone in the crowded saloon, or starting at the supernatural finger in the banquetting-hall. Yet then he was the creature of excitement, who pursued an end, which was as indefinite as it seemed to be splendid. All had now happened that could happen. He drooped. He required the impulse which we derive from an object unattained.

Yet, had he exhausted life at two-and-twenty? This must not be. His feelings must be more philosophically accounted for. He began to suspect that he had lived too much for the world, and too little for himself; that he had sacrificed his ease to the applause of thousands, and mistaken excitation for enjoyment. His memory dwelt with

satisfaction on the hours which had so agreeably glided away at Brighton, in the choice society of a few intimates. He determined entirely to remodel the system of his life; and with the sanguine impetuosity which characterized him, he, at the same moment, felt that he had at length discovered the road to happiness, and determined to pursue it without the loss of a precious moment.

The Duke of St. James was seen less in the world, and he appeared but seldom at the various entertainments which he had once so adorned. Yet he did not resign his exalted position in the world of fashion; but, on the contrary, adopted a course of conduct which even increased his consideration. He received the world not less frequently, or less splendidly, than heretofore; and his magnificent mansion, early in the season, was open to the favoured crowd. Yet in that mansion, which had been acquired with such energy, and at such cost, its lord was almost as strange, and certainly not as pleased an inmate, as the guests, who felt their presence in his chambers a confirmation or a creation of their claims to the world's homage. The Alhambra was finished, and there the Duke of St. James entirely resided; but its regal splendour was concealed from the prying eye of public curiosity, with a proud reserve, a studied secrecy, and stately haughtiness becoming a caliph. A small band of initiated friends alone had the occasional *entrée*: and the mysterious air which they provokingly assumed, whenever they were cross-examined on the internal arrangements of this mystical structure, only increased the number and the wildness of the incidents which daily were afloat, respecting the fantastic profusion and scientific dissipation of the youthful sultan and his envied viziers.

The town, ever since the season commenced, had been in feverish expectation of the arrival of a new singer, whose fame had heralded her presence in all the courts of Christendom. Whether she were an Italian or a German, a Gaul or a Greek, was equally unknown. An air of mystery environed the most celebrated creature in Europe. There were odd whispers of her parentage. Every potentate was in turn entitled to the gratitude of mankind for the creation of this marvel. Now, it was an emperor,—now it was a king. A grand- duke then put in his claim; and then an archduke. To-day she was married—to-morrow she was single. To-day her husband was a prince incog.—to-morrow a drum-major well known. Even her name was a mystery; and she was known and worshipped throughout the whole civilized world by the mere title of “THE BIRD OF PARADISE!”

About a month before Easter, telegraphs announced her arrival. The admiralty yacht was too late. She determined to make her first appearance at the opera; and not only the young duke, but even a far more exalted personage, was disappointed in the sublime idea of anticipating the public opinion by a private concert. She was to appear, for the first time, on Tuesday:—the House of Commons adjourned.

The curtain is drawn up, and the house is crowded. Everybody is there who is anybody. Protocols, looking as full of fate as if the French were again on the Danube; Macaroni, as full of himself as if no other being were engrossing universal attention. The premier appears far more anxious than he does at council; and the Duke of

Burlington arranges his fan-like screen with an agitation which, for a moment, makes him forget his unrivalled *nonchalance*. Even Lady Blomery is in suspense; and even Charles Annesley's heart beats. But, ah! (or rather bah!) the enthusiasm of Lady de Courcy! Even the very young guardsman, who paid her ladyship for her ivory trunks by his idle presence,—even he must have felt, callous as those very young guardsmen are.

Will that bore of a tenor ever finish that provoking aria, that we have heard so often? How drawingly he drags on his dull, deafening—

ÈCCOLA!

Have you seen the primal dew, ere the sun has lipped the pearl? Have you seen a summer fly, with tinted wings of shifting light, glance in the liquid noontide air? Have you marked a shooting star, or watched a young gazelle at play? Then you have seen nothing fresher, nothing brighter, nothing wilder, nothing lighter, than the girl who stands before you!

She was infinitely small, fair, and bright. Her black hair was braided in Madonnas over a brow like ivory; a deep pure pink spot gave lustre to each cheek. Her features were delicate beyond a dream; her nose quite straight, with a nostril which would have made you crazy, if you had not already been struck with idiotism, by gazing on her mouth. She a singer! Impossible! She cannot speak! And now I look again, she must sing with her eyes, they are so large and lustrous!

The Bird of Paradise courtesied, as if she shrunk under the overwhelming greeting, and crossed her breast with arms that gleamed like moonbeams, and hands that glittered like stars. This gave time to the cognoscenti to remark her costume, which was ravishing, and to try to see her feet; but they were too small. At last Lord Squib announced that he had discovered them by a new glass, and described them as a couple of diamond-claws most exquisitely finished.

She rolled round her head with a faint smile, as if she distrusted her powers, and feared the assembly would be disappointed, and then she shot forth a note, which thrilled through every heart, and nearly cracked the chandelier. Even Lady Fitzpompey said “Brava!”

As she proceeded, the audience grew quite frantic. It was agreed on all hands, that miracles had recommenced. Each air was only sung to call forth fresh exclamations of “Miracolo!” and encores were as unmerciful as a usurper.

Amid all this rapture the young duke was not silent. His box was on the stage; and ever and anon the siren shot a glance, which seemed to tell him that he was marked out amid this brilliant multitude. Each round of applause, each roar of ravished senses, only added a more fearful action to the wild purposes which began to flit about his grace's mind. His imagination was touched. His old passion to be distinguished returned in full force. This creature was strange, mysterious, celebrated. Her beauty, her accomplishments were as singular and as rare as her destiny and her fame. His reverie absolutely raged: it was only disturbed by her repeated notice and his returned acknowledgments. He arose in a state of mad excitement, once more the slave or the victim of his intoxicated vanity. He hurried behind the scenes.

He congratulated her on her success, her genius, and her beauty; and, to be brief, within a week of her arrival in our metropolis, the Bird of Paradise was fairly caged in the Alhambra.

CHAPTER V.

HITHERTO the Duke of St. James had been a very celebrated personage; but his fame had been confined to the two thousand Brahmins who constitute the world. His patronage of the signora extended his celebrity in a manner which he had not anticipated; and he became also the hero of the ten, or twelve, or fifteen millions of Parias, for whose existence philosophers have hitherto failed to adduce a satisfactory cause.

The Duke of St. James was now, in the most comprehensive sense of the phrase, a public character. Some choice spirits took the hint from the public feelings, and determined to dine on the public curiosity. A Sunday journal was immediately established. Of this epic our duke was the hero. His manners, his sayings, his adventures, regularly regaled, on each holyday, the Protestant population of this Protestant empire, who, in France or Italy, or even Germany, faint at the sight of a peasantry testifying their gratitude for a day of rest, by a dance or a tune. "Sketches of the Alhambra."—"Soupirs in the Regent's Park."—"The court of the Caliph."—"The Bird-cage," &c. &c. &c., were duly announced, and duly devoured. This journal, being solely devoted to the illustration of the life of a single and a private individual, was appropriately entitled "The Universe." Its contributors were eminently successful. Their pure inventions and impure details were accepted as the most delicate truth; and their ferocious familiarity with persons with whom they were totally unacquainted, demonstrated, at the same time, their acquaintance both with the forms and the personages of polite society.

At the first announcement of this hebdomedal, his grace was a little annoyed, and "*Noctes Hautevillenses*" made him fear treason; but when he had read a number, he entirely acquitted any person of a breach of confidence. On the whole he was amused. A variety of ladies, in time, were introduced, with many of whom the duke had scarcely interchanged a bow; but the respectable editor was not up to Lady Afy.

If his grace, however, were soon reconciled to this, not very agreeable, notoriety, and consoled himself under the activity of his libellers, by the conviction that their proflusions did not even amount to a caricature, he was less easily satisfied with another performance which speedily advanced its claims to public notice.

There is an unavoidable reaction in all human affairs. The Duke of St. James had been so successfully attacked, that it became worth while successfully to defend him, and another Sunday paper appeared, the object of which was to maintain the silver side of the shield. Here every thing was *couleur de rose*. One week, the duke saved a poor man from the Serpentine; another, a poor woman from starvation: now an orphan was grateful; and now Miss Zouch, impelled by her necessity, and his reputation, addressed him a

column and a half, quite heart-rending. Parents with nine children; nine children without parents; clergymen most improperly unbeneficed; officers most wickedly reduced; widows of younger sons of quality sacrificed to the colonies; sisters of literary men sacrificed to national works, which required his patronage to appear; daughters who had known better days, but somehow or other had not been as well acquainted with their parents; all advanced with multiplied petitions, and that hackneyed, heartless air of misery which denotes the mumper. His grace was infinitely annoyed, and scarcely compensated for the inconvenience by the prettiest little creature in the world, who one day forced herself into his presence to solicit the honour of dedicating to him her poems.

He had enough upon his hands, so he wrote her a check, and with a courtesy which must have made this Sappho quite desperate, put her out of the room.

I forgot to say, that the name of the new journal was the "New World." The new world is not quite as big as the universe, but then it is as large as all the other quarters of the globe together. The worst of this business was, the Universe protested that the Duke of St. James, like a second Canning, had called this New World into existence, which was too bad, because, in truth, he deprecated its discovery scarcely less than the Venetians.

Having thus managed, in the course of a few weeks, to achieve the reputation of an unrivalled *roué*, our hero one night betook himself to Almack's, a place where his visits, this season, were both shorter and less frequent.

Many an anxious mother gazed upon him as he passed, with an eye which longed to pierce futurity; many an agitated maiden looked exquisitely unembarrassed, while her fluttering memory feasted on the sweet thought that, at any rate, another had not captured this unrivalled prize. Perhaps she might be the Anson to fall upon this galleon. It was worth a long cruise, and even the chance of a shipwreck.

He danced with Lady Aphrodite, because, since the affair of the signora, he was most punctilious in his attentions to her, particularly in public. That affair, of course, she passed over in silence, though it was bitter. She, however, had had sufficient experience of a man to feel that remonstrance is a last resource, and usually an ineffectual one. It was something that her rival—not that her ladyship dignified the bird by that title—it was something, that she was not her equal, that she was not one with whom she could be put in painful and constant collision. She tried to consider a freak, to believe only half she heard, and to indulge the fancy, that it was a toy which would soon tire. As for Sir Lucius, he saw nothing in this adventure, or indeed in the Alhambra system at all, which militated against his ulterior views. No one more constantly officiated at the dual orgies than himself, both because he was devoted to self-gratification, and because he liked ever to have his *protégé* in sight. He studiously prevented any other individual from becoming the Petronius of the circle. His deep experience also taught him, that with a person of the young duke's temper, the mode of life which he was now leading was exactly the one which not only would ensure, but even hurry, the catastrophe his faithful friend so eagerly

desired. His pleasures, as Sir Lucius knew, would soon pall; for he easily perceived that the duke was not heartless enough for a *roué*. When thorough satiety is felt, young men are in the cue for desperate deeds. Looking upon happiness as a dream, or a prize which, in life's lottery, they have missed—worn, hipped, dissatisfied, and desperate, they often hurry on a result which they disapprove, merely to close a miserable career, or to brave the society with which they cannot sympathize.

The duke, however, was not yet sated. As, after a feast, when we have despatched a quantity of wine, there sometimes, as it were, arises a second appetite, unnatural, to be sure, but very keen; so, in a career of dissipation, when our passion for pleasure appears to be exhausted, the fatal fancy of man, like a wearied hare, will take a new turn, throw off the hell-hounds of *ennui*, and course again with renewed vigour.

And to-night the Duke of St. James was, as he had been for some weeks, all life, and fire, and excitement; and his eye was even now wandering round the room, in quest of some consummate spirit, whom he might summon to his Saracenic paradise.

A consummate spirit his eye lighted on. There stood May Dacre. He gasped for breath. He turned pale. It was only for a moment, and his emotion was unperceived. There she stood, beautiful as when she first glanced before him;—there she stood, with all her imperial graces; and all surrounding splendour seemed to fade away before her dazzling presence, like mournful spirits of a lower world before a radiant creature of the sky.

She was speaking with her sunlight smile to a young man, whose appearance attracted his notice. He was dressed entirely in black, short, but slenderly made; sallow, but clear, with long black curls, and a Murillo face, and looked altogether like a young Jesuit, or a Venetian official by Giorgione or Titian. His countenance was reserved, and his manner not very easy; yet, on the whole, his face indicated intellect, and his figure blood. The features haunted the duke's memory. He had met this person before. There are some countenances which, when once seen, can never be forgotten, and the young man owned one of these. The duke recalled him to his memory with a pang.

Our hero,—let him still be ours; for he is rather desolate, and he requires the backing of his friends,—our hero behaved pretty well. He seized the first favourable opportunity to catch Miss Dacre's eye, and was grateful for her bow. Emboldened, he accosted her, and asked after Mr. Dacre. She was very courteous, but amazingly unembarrassed. Her calmness, however, piqued him sufficiently to allow him to rally. He was tolerably easy, and talked of calling. Their conversation lasted only for a few minutes, and was fortunately terminated without his withdrawal, which would have been awkward. The young man whom we have noticed came up to claim her hand.

"Arunde! Dacre, or my eyes deceive me," said the young duke. "I always consider an old Etonian a friend, and therefore I address you without ceremony."

The young man accepted, but not with great readiness, the offered hand. He blushed, and spoke, but in a hesitating and husky voice. Then he cleared his throat, and spoke again, but not much

more to the purpose. Then he looked to his partner, whose eyes were on the ground, and rose as he endeavoured to catch them. For a moment, he was silent again; then he bowed slightly to Miss Dacre, and solemnly to the duke, and then he carried off his cousin.

"Poor Dacre!" said the duke; "he always had the worst manner in the world. Not in the least changed."

His grace wandered into the tea-room. A knot of dandies were in deep converse. He heard his own name, and that of the Duke of Burlington; then came "Doncaster Beauty"—"Don't you know?"—"O! yes,"—"All quite mad," &c. &c. &c. As he passed, he was invited in different ways to join this coterie of his admirers, but he declined the honour, and passed them with that icy hauteur which he could assume, and which, judiciously used, contributed not a little to his popularity.

He could not conquer his depression; and although it was scarcely past midnight, he determined to disappear. Fortunately, his carriage was waiting. He was at a loss what to do with himself. He dreaded even to be alone. The signora was at a private concert, and she was the last person whom, at this moment, he cared to see. His low spirits rapidly increased. He got terribly nervous, and felt perfectly miserable. At last he drove to White's.

The House had just broke up, and the political members had just entered, and in clusters, some standing, and some yawning, some stretching their arms, and some stretching their legs, presented symptoms of an escape from boredom. Among others, round the fire, was a young man dressed in a rough great-coat all cords and sables, with his hat bent aside, a shawl tied round his neck with great boldness, and a huge oaken staff clenched in his left hand. With the other he held the Courier, and reviewed with a critical eye the report of the speech which he had made that afternoon. This was Lord Darrell.

I have always considered the talents of younger brothers as an unanswerable argument in favour of a Providence. Lord Darrell was the younger son of the Earl of Darleyford, and had been educated for a diplomatist. A report some years ago had been very current, that his elder brother, then Lord Darrell, was, against the consent of his family, about to be favoured with the hand of Mrs. Dalloway Vere. Certain it is, he was a very devoted admirer of that lady. Of that lady, however, a less favoured rival chose one day to say that which staggered the romance of the impassioned youth. In a moment of rashness, impelled by sacred feelings, it is reported, at least, for the whole is a mystery, he communicated what he had heard with horror to the mistress of his destinies. Whatever took place, certain it is Lord Darrell challenged the indecorous speaker, and was shot through the heart. The affair made a great sensation, and the Darleyfords and their connexions said bitter things of Mrs. Dalloway, and talked much of rash youth and subtle women of discreeter years, and passions shamefully inflamed, and of purposes wickedly egged on. I say nothing of all this; nor will we dwell upon it. Mrs. Dalloway Vere assuredly was no slight sufferer. But she conquered the cabal that was formed against her; for the dandies were her friends, and gallantly supported her through a trial under which some women would have sunk. As it was, at the end of the season,

she did travel, but all is now forgotten; and Hill-Street, Berkeley Square, again contains, at the moment of our story, its brightest ornament.

The present Lord Darrell gave up all idea of being an ambassador, but he was clever; and though he hurried to gratify a taste for pleasure which before had been too much mortified, he could not relinquish the ambitious prospects with which he had, during the greater part of his life, consoled himself for his cadetship. He piqued himself upon being, at the same time, a dandy and a statesman. He spoke in the house, and not without effect. He was one of those who had made himself master of all the great political questions; that is to say, had read a great many reviews and newspapers, and was full of others' thoughts, without ever having thought himself. He particularly prided himself upon having made his way into the Alhambra set.

He was the only man of business among them. The duke liked him,—for it is agreeable to be courted by those who are themselves considered.

Lord Darrell was a great favourite with the women. They like a little intellect. He talked fluently on all subjects. He was what is called “a talented young man.” (O! that odious, canting, un-English word!) Then he had mind, and soul, and all that. The miracles of creation have long agreed that body without soul will not do; and even a coxcomb in these days must be original, or he is a bore. No longer is such a character the mere creation of his tailor and his perfumer. He must dress, certainly; assuredly, he must scent. But he must also let the world hourly feel by that delicate eccentricity which infuses a graceful variety into the monotony of life, that he is entitled to invent a button, or to bathe in violets.

Lord Darrell was an avowed admirer of Lady Caroline St. Maurice, and a great favourite with her parents, who both considered him an oracle on the subjects which respectively interested them. You might dine at Fitz-pompey House, and hear his name quoted at both ends of the table; by the host upon the state of Europe, and by the hostess upon the state of the season. Had it not been for the young duke, nothing would have given Lady Fitz-pompey greater pleasure than to have received him as a son-in-law; but, as it was, he was only kept in store for the second string to Cupid's bow.

Lord Darrell had just quitted the house in a costume which, though rough, was not less studied than the finished and elaborate toilet which, in the course of an hour, he will exhibit in the enchanted halls of Almack's. There he will figure to the last, the most active and the most remarked; and though after these continued exertions, he will not gain his couch perhaps till seven, our lord of the treasury—for he is one,—will resume his official duties at an earlier hour than any functionary in the kingdom.

Yet our friend is a little annoyed now. What is the matter? He dilates to his uncle, Lord Seymour Temple, a gray-headed placeman, on the profligacy of the press. What—what is this! The Virgilian line our orator introduced so felicitously is omitted. He panegyrises the *Mirror of Parliament*, where he has no doubt the missing verse will appear. The quotation was new—“*Timeo Danaos*.”

Lord Seymour Temple begins a long story about Fox and General Fitzpatrick. This is a signal for the general retreat; and the bore, as Sir Boyle Roche would say, like the last rose of summer, remains talking to himself.

CHAPTER VI.

ARUNDEL DACRE was the only child of Mr Dacre's only and deceased brother, and heir to the whole of the Dacre property. His father, a man of violent passions, had married early in life, against the approbation of his family, and had revolted from the Catholic communion. The elder brother, however, mortified by this great deed, which passion had prompted, and not conscience, had exerted his best offices to mollify their exasperated father, and to reconcile the sire to the son. But he had exerted them ineffectually; and, as is not unusual, found, after much harrowing anxiety and deep suffering, that he was not even recompensed for his exertions and his sympathy by the gratitude of his brother. The younger Dacre was not one of those minds whose rashness and impetuosity are counterbalanced, or rather compensated, by a generous candour and an amiable remorse. He was headstrong, but he was obstinate; he was ardent, but he was sullen; he was unwary, but he was suspicious. Every one who opposed him was his enemy: all who combined for his preservation were conspirators. His father, whose feelings he had outraged, and never attempted to soothe, was a tyrant; his brother, who was devoted to his interests, was a traitor.

These were his living and his dying thoughts. While he existed, he was one of those men who, because they have been imprudent, think themselves unfortunate, and mistake their diseased mind for an implacable destiny. When he died, his death-bed was consoled by the reflection that his persecutors might at last feel some compunction: and he quitted the world without a pang, because he flattered himself that his departure would cost them one.

His father, who had died before him, had left him no fortune, and even had not provided for his wife or child. His brother made another ineffectual attempt to accomplish a reconciliation; but his proffers of love and fortune were alike scorned, and himself insulted; and Arundel Dacre seemed to gloat on the idea that he was an outcast and a beggar.

Yet even this strange being had his warm feelings. He adored his wife, particularly because his father had disowned her. He had a friend whom he idolized, and who, treating his occasional conduct as a species of insanity, had never deserted him. This friend had been his college companion, and, in the odd chapter of circumstances, had become a powerful political character. Dacre was a man of talents, and his friend took care that he should have an opportunity of displaying them. He was brought into parliament, and animated by the desire, as he thought, of triumphing over his family, he exerted himself with success. But his infernal temper spoiled all. His active quarrels and his noisy brawls were even more endurable than his sullen suspicions, his dark hints, and his silent hate. He was always offended, and always offending. Such a man could never succeed as a politician,—a character, who, of all others, must learn to endure, to forget, and to forgive. He was soon universally shunned; but his first friend was faithful, though bitterly tried, and Dacre retired from public life on a pension.

His wife had died, and during the latter years of

his life, almost his only companion was his son. He concentrated on this being all that ardent affection which, had he diffused among his fellow-creatures, might have ensured his happiness and his prosperity. Yet even sometimes he would look in his child's face with an anxious air, as if he read incubating treason, and then press him to his bosom with unusual fervour, as if he would stifle the idea, which alone was madness.

This child was educated in an hereditary hate of the Dacre family. His uncle was daily painted as a tyrant, whom he classed in his young mind with Phalaris or Dionysius. There was nothing that he felt keener than his father's wrongs, and nothing which he believed more certain than his uncle's wickedness. He arrived at his thirteenth year, when his father died, and he was to be consigned to the care of that uncle.

Arundel Dacre had left his son as a legacy to his friend; but that friend was a man of the world; and when the elder brother not only expressed his willingness to maintain the orphan, but even his desire to educate and adopt him as his son, he cheerfully resigned all his claims to the forlorn boy, and felt that, by consigning him to his uncle, he had most religiously discharged the trust of his confiding friend.

The nephew arrived at Castle Dacre with a heart equally divided between misery and hatred. It seemed to him that a fate more forlorn than his had seldom been awarded to mortal. Although he found his uncle so diametrically opposite to all that his misled imagination had painted him; although he was treated with a kindness and indulgence which tried to compensate for their too long estranged affections, Arundel Dacre could never conquer the impressions of his boyhood; and had it not been for his cousin May, a creature of whom he had not heard, and of whom no distorted image had therefore haunted his disturbed imagination,—had it not been for this beautiful girl, who greeted him with affection which warmed and won his heart, so morbid were his feelings, that he would in all probability have pined away under a roof which he should have looked upon as his own.

His departure for Eton was a relief. As he grew up, although his knowledge of life and man had long taught him the fallacy of his early feelings—and although he now yielded a tear of pity, rather than of indignation, to the adored names of his father—his peculiar temper, and his first education never allowed him entirely to emancipate himself from his hereditary feelings. His character was combined of many and even of contrary qualities.

His talents were great, but his want of confidence made them more doubtful to himself than to the world; yet, at times, in his solitary musings, he perhaps even exaggerated his powers. He was proud, and yet worldly. He never forgot that he was a Dacre; but he desired to be the architect of his own fortune; and his very love of independence made him, at an early period, meditate on the means of managing mankind. He was reserved and cold, for his imagination required much; yet he panted for a confidant, and was one of those youths with whom friendship is a passion. To conclude, he was a Protestant among Catholics: and although this circumstance, inasmuch as it assisted him in the views which he had early indulged, was not an ungracious one, he felt that, till he was distinguished,

it had lessened his consideration, since he could not count upon the sympathy of hereditary connexions and ancient party. Altogether, he was one who, with the consciousness of ancient blood, the certainty of future fortune, fine talents, great accomplishments, and not slight personal advantages, was unhappy. Yet, although not of a sanguine temper, and occasionally delivered to the darkest spleen, his intense ambition sustained him, and he lived on the hope, and sometimes on the conviction, that a bright era would, some day, console him for the bitterness of his past and present life.

At school and at college he equally distinguished himself, and was everywhere respected and often regarded; yet he had never found that friend on whom his fancy had often busied itself, and which one whose alternations of feeling were so violent peremptorily required. His uncle and himself viewed each other with mutual respect and regard, but confidence did not exist between them. Mr. Dacre, in spite of his long and constant efforts, despaired of raising in the breast of his nephew the flame of filial love; and had it not been for his daughter, who was the only person in the world to whom Arundel ever opened his mind, and who could, consequently, throw some light upon his wants and wishes, it would not have been in his power to evince to his nephew, that this disappointment had not affected his uncle's feelings in his favour.

When his education was completed, Mr. Dacre had wished him to take up his residence in Yorkshire, and, in every sense, to act as his son, as he was his successor. But Arundel declined this proposition. He obtained from his father's old political connexion the appointment of *attaché* to a foreign embassy, and he remained on the Continent, with the exception of a yearly visit to Yorkshire, three or four years. But his views were not in the diplomatic line, and this appointment only served as a political school until he could enter parliament. May Dacre had wormed from him his secret, and worked with energy in his cause. An opportunity appeared to offer itself, and, under the patronage of a Catholic nobleman, he was to appear as a candidate for an open borough. It was on this business that he returned to England; but whether he succeeded or not, this veritable history will relate another time.

CHAPTER VII.

WE will go and make a morning call. The garish light of day, that never suits a chamber, was broken by a muslin veil, which sent its softened twilight through a room of moderate dimensions but of princely decoration, and which opened into a conservatory. The choice saloon was hung with rose-coloured silk, which diffused a delicate tint over the inlaid and costly cabinets. It was crowded with tables, covered with *bijouterie*. Apparently, however, a road had been cut through the furniture, by which you might wind your way up to the divinity of the temple. A ravishing perfume, which was ever changing, wandered through the apartment. Now a violet breeze made you poetical; now a rosy gale called you to love. And

ever and anon the strange but thrilling breath of some rare exotic summoned you, like an angel to opening Eden. All was still and sweet, save that a fountain made you, as it were, more conscious of silence—save that the song of birds made you, as it were, more sensible of sweetness.

Upon a couch, her small head resting upon an arm covered with bracelets which blazed like a sultan's treasure, reclined Mrs. Dallington Vere.

She is in thought. Is her abstracted eye fixed in admiration upon that twinkling foot which, clothed in its morocco slipper, looks like a serpent's tongue, small, red, and pointed; or does a more serious feeling than self-admiration inspire this musing? Ah! a cloud courses over that pellucid brow. 'Tis gone, but it frowned like the harbinger of a storm. Again! A small but blood red blush rises into that clear cheek. It was momentary, but its deep colour indicated that it came from the heart. Her eye lights up with a wild and glittering fire, but the flash vanishes into darkness, and gloom follows the unnatural light. She clasps her hands; she rises from an uneasy seat, though supported by a thousand pillows, and she paces the conservatory.

A guest is announced. It is Sir Lucius Grafton. He salutes her with that studied courtesy which shows they are only friends, but which, when maintained between intimate acquaintance, sometimes makes wicked people suspect that they once perhaps were more. She resumes her seat, and he throws himself into an easy chair which is opposite.

"Your note I this moment received, Bertha, and I am here. You perceive that my fidelity is as remarkable as ever."

"We had a gay meeting last night."

"Very much so. So Lady Araminta has at last shown mercy."

"I cannot believe it."

"I have just had a note from Challoner, preliminary, I suppose, to my trusteeship. You are not the only person who holds my talents for business in high esteem."

"But Ballingford—what will he say?"

"This is his affair; and as he never, to my knowledge, spoke to the purpose, his remarks now, I suppose, are not fated to be much more apropos."

"Yet he can say things. We all know—"

"Yes, yes, we all know, but nobody believes. That is the motto of the present day; and the only way to neutralize scandal and to counteract publicity."

Mrs. Dallington was silent, and looked a little uneasy; and her friend perceiving, that although she had sent to him so urgent a billet, she did not communicate, expressed a little surprise.

"But you wish to see me, Bertha?"

"I do very much, Lucy, and to speak to you. For these many days I have intended it; but I do not know how it is, I have postponed, and postponed our interview. I begin to believe," she added, looking up with a faint smile,—“I am half afraid to speak.”

"Good God!" said the baronet, really alarmed, "you are in no trouble!"

"O no! make yourself easy. Trouble—trouble! No—no! I am not exactly in trouble. I am not in debt; I am not in a scrape; but—but—but I am in something, Lucy—something worse, perhaps—I am in love."

The baronet looked puzzled. He did not for a moment suspect himself to be the hero, yet although

their mutual confidence was illimitable, he did not exactly see why, in the present instance, there had been such urgency to impart an event not altogether either unnatural or miraculous.

"In love!" said Sir Lucius; "a very proper situation for the prettiest woman in London. Everybody is in love with you; and I heartily rejoice that some one of our favoured sex is about to avenge our sufferings."

"*Point de moquerie*, Lucy! I am very miserable."

"Dear little pigeon, what is the matter?"

"Ah me!"

"Speak, speak," said he, in a gay tone; "you were not made for sighs, but smiles. Begin—"

"Well then—the young duke—"

"The devil!" said Lucius, alarmed.

"O! no; make yourself easy," said Mrs. Dallington, smiling; "no counterplot, I assure you, although really you do not deserve to succeed."

"Then who is it?" eagerly asked Sir Lucius.

"You will not let me speak. The young duke—"

"Damn the duke."

"How impatient you are, Lucy! I must begin with the beginning. Well, the young duke has something to do with it."

"Pray, pray be explicit."

"In a word, then," said Mrs. Dallington, in a low voice, but with an expression of earnestness which Sir Lucius had never before remarked, "I am in love, desperately in love with one whom hitherto, in accordance with your wishes, I have been driving into the arms of another. Our views, our interests are opposite; but I wish to act fairly, if possible,—I wish to reconcile them; and it is for this purpose that I have summoned you this morning."

"Arundel Dacre!" said Sir Lucius quietly, and he tapped his cane on his boot. The blood-red spot again arose in his companion's cheek.

There was silence for about a minute. Sir Lucius would not disturb it, and Mrs. Dallington again spoke.

"St. James and the little Dacre have again met. You have my secret, Lucy. I do not ask you—which I might at another time—I do not ask your good services with Arundel; but you cannot expect me to work against myself. Depend, then, no longer on my influence with May Dacre; for, to be explicit, as we have always been, most heartily should I rejoice to see her a dutchess."

"The point, Bertha," said Sir Lucius very quietly, "is not that I can no longer count upon you as an ally; but I must, I perceive, reckon you an opponent."

"Cannot we prevent this?" asked Mrs. Dallington, with energy.

"I see no alternative," said Sir Lucius, shaking his head with great unconcern. "Time will prove who will have to congratulate the other."

"Lucy," said Mrs. Dallington, with briskness and decision, "no affectation between us. Drop this assumed unconcern. You know—you know well, that no incident could occur to you at this moment more mortifying than the one I have communicated, which deranges your plans, and probably may destroy your views. You cannot misconceive my motives in making this, not very agreeable, communication. I might have pursued my object, without your knowledge and permission. In a word, I might have betrayed you. But with me,

every consideration has yielded to friendship. I cannot forget how often and how successfully we have combined. I should grieve to see our ancient and glorious alliance annulled. I am yet in hopes that we may both obtain our objects through its medium."

"I am not aware," said Sir Lucius, with more feeling, "that I have given you any cause to complain of my want of candour. We are in a difficult position. I have nothing to suggest, but I am ready to listen. You know, Bertha, how ready I am to adopt all your suggestions; and I know how seldom you have wanted an expedient."

"The little Dacre, then, must not marry her cousin; but we cannot flatter ourselves that such a girl will not want to marry some one:—I have a conviction that this is her decisive season. She must be occupied. In a word, Lucy, some one must be found."

The baronet started from his chair, and nearly knocked down a table.

"Confound your tables, Bertha," said he, in a pettish tone; "I can never consult in a room full of tables." He walked into the conservatory, and she followed him. He seemed plunged in thought. They were again silent. Suddenly he seized her hand, and led her back to the sofa, on which they both sat down.

"My dear friend," he said, in a tone of agitated solemnity, "I will conceal no longer from you what I have sometimes endeavoured to conceal from myself,—I love that girl to distraction."

"You! Lucy!"

"Yes! to distraction. Ever since we first met, her image has haunted me. I endeavoured to crush a feeling which promised only to plunge me into anxiety, and to distract my attention from my important objects; but in vain, in vain. Her unexpected appearance yesterday has revived my passion with triple fervour. I have passed a sleepless night, and rise with the determination to obtain her."

"You know your own power, Lucius, better perhaps than I do, or the world. I rank it high—none higher—yet, nevertheless, I look upon this declaration as insanity."

He raised her hand to his lips, and pressed it with delicate warmth, and summoned his most insinuating tone. "With your aid, Bertha, I should not despair!"

"Lucy, I am your friend, perhaps your best friend,—but these Dacres. Would it were any one but a Dacre! No, no, this cannot be."

"Bertha, you know me *better* than the world—I am a *roué*; and you—*are* my friend; but, believe me, I am not quite so vain as to indulge for a moment in the idea, that May Dacre should be aught to me but what all might approve, and all might honour. Yes, *dove*, I intend her for my wife."

"Your wife, Lucy! You are, indeed, premature."

"Not quite so premature as you perhaps imagine. Know, then, that the great point is on the eve of achievement. Urged by the information which she thinks she unconsciously obtains from Lachen, and harrowed by the idea that I am about to tear her from England, she has appealed to the duke in a manner to which they were both unused. Hitherto, her docile temper has not permitted her to abuse her empire. Now, she exerts her power with an energy to which he believed her a stranger. He is

staggered by his situation. He at the same time repents having so rashly engaged the feelings of a woman, and is flattered that he is so loved. They have more than once consulted upon the expediency of an elopement."

"This is good news."

"O! Bertha, you must feel like me before you can estimate it. Yes!" he clenched his fist with horrible energy,—"there is no hell like a detested wife!"

They were again silent; but when she thought that his emotion had subsided, she again recalled their consideration to the object of their interview.

"You play a bold game, indeed; but it shall not fail, Lucy, from any deficiency on my part.—But how are we to proceed at present? Who is to interest the feelings of the little Dacre at once?"

"Who but her future husband! What I want you to do is this: we shall call; but prepare the house to receive us, not only as acquaintances, but as desirable inmates. You know what to say. I have an idea that the divine creature entertains no very unfavourable opinion of your obedient slave; and with her temper, I care not for what she will not probably hear,—the passing opinion of a third person. I stand at present, thanks to Afy, very high with the public; and you know, although my life has not the least altered, that my indiscretions have now a dash of discretion in them; and a reformed rake, as all agree, is the personification of morality. Prepare my way with the Dacres, and all will go right. And as for this Arundel, I know him not; but you have told me enough to make me consider him the most fortunate of men. I cannot conceive that there can be any difficulty. You have, I suppose, to throw your handkerchief. As for love between cousins, I laugh at it. A glance from you will extinguish the feeble flame, as a sun-beam does a fire: and for the rest, the world does me the honour to believe, that if Lucius Grafton be remarkable for one thing more than another, it is, for the influence he attains over young minds. I will get acquainted with this boy; and for once, let love be unattended by doubt."

Long was their counsel. The plans we have hinted at were analyzed, canvassed, weighed, and finally matured. They parted after a long morning, well aware of the difficulties which awaited their fulfilment, but also full of hope.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUCH able and congenial spirits as Mrs. Dallington Vere and Sir Lucius Grafton, prosecuted their plans with the success which they had a right to anticipate. Lady Aphrodite, who was proud of her previous acquaintance, however slight, with the most distinguished girl in London, and eager to improve it, unconsciously assisted their operations. Society is so constituted, that it requires no little talent, and no slight energy, to repel the intimacy even of those whose acquaintance is evidently not desirable; and there are many people in this world mixing, apparently, with great spirit and self-esteem in its concerns, who really owe their constant appearance and occasional influence in circles of consideration, to no other qualities than their own callous impudence, and the indolence and the irre-

solution of their victims. They, who at the same time have no delicacy and no shame, count fearful odds: and, much as is murmured about the false estimation of riches, there is little doubt that the *parvenu* as often owes his, or rather her, advancement in society to her perseverance as to her self.

When, therefore, your intimacy is courted by those whose intimacy is an honour, and that too with an art which conceals its purpose, you often find that you have, and are, a devoted friend, really before you have felt sufficient gratitude for the opera-box which has been so often lent, the carriage which has been ever at hand, the brother who has received such civilities, or the father who has been requested to accept some of the very unattainable *tokay*, which he has charmed you by admiring at your own table.

The manœuvres and the tactics of society are infinitely more numerous and infinitely finer than those of strategy. Wo betide the rash knight who dashes into the thick of the polished *mêlée* without some slight experience of his barb and his lance! Let him look well to his arms! He will do well not to appear before his helm be plumed with some reputation, however slight. He may be very rich, or even very poor. I have seen that answer with a Belisarius-like air; and more than one hero without an obolus has stumbled upon a fortune, merely from his contempt of riches. If to fight, or write, or dress be above you, why, then, you can ride, or dance, or even skate; but do not think, as many young gentlemen are apt to believe, that *talking* will serve your purpose. That is the quicksand of your young beginners. All can talk in a public assembly, that is to say, all can give us exhortations which do not move, and arguments which do not convince; but to converse in a private assembly is a very different affair, and rare are the characters who can be endured, if they exceed a whisper to their neighbours. But, though mild and silent, be ever ready with the rapier of repartee, and be ever armed with the breastplate of good temper. You will infallibly gather laurels, if you add to these the spear of sarcasm, and the shield of *nonchalance*.

The high style of conversation where eloquence and philosophy emulate each other, where principles are profoundly expounded, and felicitously illustrated—all this has ceased. It ceased in the country with Johnson and Burke, and it requires a Johnson and a Burke for its maintenance. There is no mediocrity in such a discourse,—no intermediate character between the sage and the bore. The second style, where men, not things, are the staple, but where wit, and refinement, and sensibility invest even personal details with intellectual interest, does flourish at present, as it always must in a highly civilized society. S. is, or rather was, a fine specimen of this school, and M. and L. are his worthy rivals. This style is indeed, for the moment, excessively interesting. Then comes your conversation man, who, I confess, is my aversion. His talk is a thing apart, got up before he enters the company from whose conduct it should grow out. He sits in the middle of a large table, and with a brazen voice, bawls out his anecdotes, about Sir Thomas, or Sir Humphry, Lord Blank, or my Lady Blue. He is incessant, yet not interesting; ever varying, yet always monotonous. Even if we are amused, we are no more grateful for the entertain-

ment than we are to the lamp over the table for the light which it universally sheds, and to yield which it was obtained on purpose. We are more gratified by the slight conversation of one who is often silent, but who speaks from his momentary feelings, than by all this hullabaloo. Yet this machine is generally a favourite piece of furniture with the hostess. I have often caught her eye, as he recounts some adventure of the morning, which proves that he not only belongs to every club, but goes to them, light up with approbation: and then, when the ladies withdraw, and the female senate deliver their criticism upon the late actors, she will observe, with a gratified smile, to her confidant, that the dinner went off well, and that Mr. Bellow was very strong to-day!

All this is horrid, and the whole affair is a delusion. A variety of people are brought together, who all come as late as possible, and retire as soon, merely to show they have other engagements. A dinner is prepared for them, which is hurried over, in order that a certain number of dishes should be—not tasted, but seen; and provided that there is no moment that an absolute silence reigns; provided that, besides the bustling of the servants, the clattering of the plates and knives, a stray anecdote is told, which, if good, has been heard before, and which, if new, is generally flat; provided a certain number of certain names of people of consideration are introduced, by which some stranger, for whom the party is often secretly given, may learn the scale of civilization of which he this moment forms a part; provided the senators do not steal out too soon to the House, and their wives to another party, the hostess is congratulated on the success of her entertainment.

And this glare, and heat, and noise—this congeries of individuals without sympathy, and dishes without flavour—this is society! What an effect without a cause! A man must be very green, indeed, to stand this for two seasons. I cannot help thinking, that one consequence of the increased intelligence of the present day will be a great change in the habits of our intercourse.

After all, all conversation is an effort, and all efforts, in the long run, are wearying. The only exception is, when we interchange ideas with some individual with whom we deeply sympathize. This, perhaps, is even superior to revelry: for we express, without artifice, all that we feel, and gauge at the same time the value of our ideas. But such communion must be ever rare. What delightful hours have I not passed in this manner, when pacing the terrace at —, with the amiable and interesting * * *! How readily does his learned spirit supply, at all times, facts for all speculations—develop the imperfect, confirm the doubtful, illustrate the obscure! How beautifully does the calm candour of his philosophic mind repress the passionate inference or the prejudiced conclusion! How agreeably does his deep experience of all his great and good contemporaries mingle with his unrivalled knowledge of the great and good of all ages! In a lot with which I am altogether dissatisfied, there is, to me, no subject of more thorough self-congratulation, than that the being who is entitled to my most devoted affections should not be a bore.

O, my father! in these refined regions, where I breathe clear and classic air, I think of thee. A poor return for infinite affection! And yet, our

friendship is a hallowed joy:—it is my pride, and let it be my solace. O'er the waters that cannot part our souls, I breathe good wishes. Peace brood o'er thy lettered bowers, and Love smile in the cheerful hall, that I shall not forget upon the swift Symplegades, or where warm Syria, with its palmy shore, recalls our holy ancestry!

To our tale—to our tale: we linger. Few who did not know too much of Sir Lucius Grafton could refrain from yielding him their regard when he chose to challenge it, and with the Daecres he was soon an acknowledged favourite. As a new M. P., and hitherto doubtful supporter of the Catholic cause, it was grateful to Mr. Daecre's feelings to find in him an ally, and flattering to Mr. Daecre's judgment, when that ally ventured to consult him on his friendly operations. With Miss Daecre, he was a mild, amiable man, who knew the world; thoroughly good, but void of cant, and owner of a virtue not less to be depended on because his passions had once been strong, and he had once indulged them. His experience of life made him value domestic felicity; because he knew that there was no other source of happiness which was at once so pure and so permanent. But he was not one of those men who consider marriage as an extinguisher of all those feelings and accomplishments which throw a lustre on existence; and he did not consider himself bound, because he had plighted his faith to a beautiful woman, immediately to terminate the very conduct which had induced her to join him in the sacred and eternal pledge. His gaiety still sparkled, his wit still flashed; still he hastened to be foremost among the courteous; and still his high and ready gallantry indicated that he was not prepared to yield the fitting ornament of his still blooming youth. A thousand unobtrusive and delicate attentions which the innocent now received from him without a thought, save of Lady Aphrodite's good fortune; a thousand gay and sentimental axioms, which proved not only how agreeable he was, but how enchanting he must have been; a thousand little deeds which struggled to shun the light, and which palpably demonstrated that the gaiety of his wit, the splendour of his accomplishments, and the tenderness of his soul were only equalled by his unbounded generosity and unparalleled good temper,—all these combined had made Sir Lucius Grafton, to many, always a delightful, often a dangerous, and sometimes a fatal companion. He was one of those whose candour is deadly. It was when he least endeavoured to conceal his character that his hideousness least appeared. He confessed sometimes so much, that you yielded that pity which ere the shrived culprit could receive, by some fatal alchemy was changed into passion. His smile was a lure, his speech was a spell; but it was when he was silent, and almost gloomy, when you caught his serious eye, charged, as it were, with passion, gazing on yours, that if you had a guardian sylph, you should have invoked its aid; and, I pray, if ever you meet the man of whom I write, your invocation may not be forgotten, or be, what is more likely—too late.

The Daecres, this season, were the subject of universal conversation. She was the distinguished beauty, and the dandies all agreed that his dinners were worthy of his daughter. Lady Fitz-pompey was not behind the welcoming crowd. She was

too politic a leader not to feel anxious to enlist under her colours a recruit who was so well calculated to maintain the reputation of her forces. Fitz-pompey House must not lose its character for assembling the most distinguished, the most agreeable, and the most refined,—and May Daecre was a divinity who would summon many a crowd to her niche in this pantheon of fashion.

If any difficulty were for a moment anticipated in bringing about this arrangement, a fortunate circumstance seemed sufficient to remove it. Lord St. Maurice and Arundel Daecre had been acquainted at Vienna, and though the intimacy was slight, it was sweet. St. Maurice had received many favours from the *attaché*, and as he was a man of family, and reputation, had been very happy to greet him on his arrival in London. Before the Daecres made their appearance in town for the season, Arundel had been initiated in the mysteries of Fitz-pompey House, and therefore a desire from that mansion to cultivate the good graces of his Yorkshire relations seemed not only not forced, but extremely natural. So, the families met, and, to the surprise of each other, became even intimate,—for May Daecre and Lady Caroline soon evinced a mutual regard for each other. Female friendships are of rapid growth, and in the present instance, when there was nothing on each side which was not loveable, it was quite miraculous, and the friendship, particularly on the part of Lady Caroline, shot up in one night like a blooming aloe.

I think there is nothing more lovely than the love of two beautiful women, who are not envious of each other's charms. How delightfully they impart to each other the pattern of a cap, or flounce, or frill! how charmingly they intrust some slight, slender secret about tinting a flower, or netting a purse! Now one leans over the other, and guides her inexperienced hand, as it moves in the mysteries of some novel work, and then the other looks up with an eye beaming with devotion; and then again the first leans down a little lover, and gently presses her aromatic lips upon her friend's polished forehead. These are sights which we quiet men, who, like "small Jack Horner," know where to take up a safe position, occasionally enjoy, but which your noisy fellows, who think that women never want to be alone—a sad mistake—and consequently must be always breaking or stringing a guitar, or cutting a pencil, or splitting a crow-quill, or overturning the gold ink, or scribbling over a pattern, or doing any other of the thousand acts of mischief, are debarred from.

Not that these bright flowers often bloomed alone—a blossom not less brilliant generally shared with them the same *parterre*. Mrs. Dallington completed the *bouquet*, and Arundel Daecre was the butterfly, who, she was glad to perceive, was seldom absent, when her presence added beauty to the beautiful. Indeed, she had good reason to feel confidence in her attractions. Independent of her charms, which, assuredly, were great, her fortune, which was even greater, possessed, she was well aware, no slight allurements to one who ever trembled when he thought of his dependence, and often glowed when he mused over his ambition. His slight but increasing notice was duly estimated by one who was perfectly acquainted with his peculiar temper, and daily perceived how disregarding he was of all others, except her and his cousin.

But a cousin! She felt perfect confidence in the theory of Sir Lucius Grafton.

And the young duke—have we forgotten him? Sooth to say, he was very seldom with our heroine or heroines. He had called on Mr. Dacre, and had greeted him with marked cordiality, and he had sometimes met him and his daughter in society. But, although invited, he had hitherto avoided being their visitor; and the comparatively secluded life which he now led prevented him from seeing them often at other houses. Mr. Dacre, who was unaware of what had passed between him and his daughter, thought his conduct inexplicable; but his former guardian remembered that it was not the first time that his behaviour had been unusual; and it was never the disposition of Mr. Dacre to promote explanations.

Our hero felt annoyed at his own weakness. It would have been infinitely more worthy of so celebrated, so unrivalled a personage as the Duke of St. James, not to have given the woman who had rejected him this evidence of her power. According to etiquette, he should have called there daily and have dined there weekly, and yet never have given the former object of his adoration the slightest idea that he cared a breath for her presence. According to etiquette he should never have addressed her but in a vein of *persiflage*, and with a smile, which indicated his perfect heartease, and her bad taste. According to etiquette, he should have flirted with every woman in her company, rode with her in the park, walked with her in the gardens, chatted with her at the opera, and champagned with her on the river; and finally, to prove how sincere he was in his former estimation of her judgment, have consulted her on the presents which he should make to some intimate friend of hers, whom he announced as his future bride. This is the way to manage a woman; and the result may be conceived. She stares, she starts, she sighs, she weeps; feels highly offended at her friend daring to accept him; writes a letter of rejection herself to the affianced damsel, which she makes him sign, and then presents him with the hand which she always meant to be his.

But this was above our hero. The truth is, whenever he thought of May Dacre, his spirit sank. She had cowed him; and her arrival in London had made him as dissatisfied with his present mode of life, as he had been with his former career. They had met again, and under circumstances apparently, to him, the most unfavourable. Although he was hopeless, yet he dreaded to think what she might hear of him. Her contempt was bitter; her dislike would even be worse. Yet it seemed impossible to retrieve. He was plunged deeper than he imagined. Embarrassed, entangled, involved, he flew to Lady Afy, half in pique, and half in misery. Passion had ceased to throw a glittering veil around this idol; but she was kind, and pure, and gentle, and devoted. It was consoling to be loved, to one who was so wretched. It seemed to him, that life must ever be a blank without the woman who, a few months ago, he had felt an encumbrance. The recollection of past joys was balm to one who was so forlorn. He shuddered at the thought of losing his only precious possession, and he was never more attached to his mistress than when the soul of friendship rose from the body of expired love.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Duke of St. James dines to-day with Mr. Annesley. Men and things should be our study; and it is universally acknowledged that a dinner is the most important of affairs, and a dandy the most important of individuals. If I liked I could give you a description of the *fete*, which should make all your mouths water,—and my cookery has been admired in its day, which was right; because my gastronomical details were the reminiscences of experience, and not of reading: but every one cooks now, and ekes out his page by robbing Jarrin, and by rifling Dolby.

Charles Annesley was never seen to more advantage than when a host. Then his superciliousness would, if not vanish, at least, subside. He was not less calm, but somewhat less cold, like a summer lake. Therefore we will have an eye upon his party; because, to dine with dandies should be a prominent feature in your career, and must not be omitted in this sketch of the "Life and Times" of our young hero.

The party was of that number which at once secures a variety of conversation, and the impossibility of two persons speaking at the same time. The guests were—his grace, Lord Squib, and Lord Darrell.

The repast, like every thing connected with Mr. Annesley, was refined and exquisite, rather slight than solid, and more novel than various. There was no affectation of *gourmandise*, the vice of male dinners. Your imagination and your sight were not at the same time dazzled and confused by an agglomeration of the peculiar luxuries of every clime and every season. As you mused over a warm and sunny flavour of a brown soup, your host did not dilate upon the milder and moonlight beauties of a white one. A gentle dallying with a whiting—that chicken of the ocean, was not a signal for a panegyric of the darker attraction of a *matelote à la royale*. The disappearance of the first course did not herald a catalogue of discordant dainties. You were not recommended to neglect the *croquettes*, because the *boudins* might claim attention; and while you were crowning your important labours with a quail, you were not reminded that the *pâté de Troyes*, unlike the less reasonable human race, would feel offended if it were not cut. Then the wines were few. Some sherry, with a pedigree like an Arabian, heightened the flavour of the dish, not interfered with it; as a toadey keeps up the conversation which he does not distract. A goblet of Grafenberg, with a bouquet like woman's breath, made you, as you remembered some liquid which it had been your fate to fall upon, suppose that German wines, like German barons, required some discrimination, and that hock, like other titles, was not always the sign of the high nobility of its owner. A glass of claret was the third grace. But if I had been there, I should have devoted myself to one of the sparkling sisters; for I think that one wine, like one woman, is sufficient to interest our feelings for four-and-twenty hours. Fickleness I abhor.

"I observed your riding to-day with the gentle Leonora, St. James," said Mr. Annesley.

"No! her sister."

"Indeed! Those girls are uncommonly alike.

"The fact is, now, that neither face nor figure depends upon nature."

"No," said Lord Squib; "all that the artists of the present day want is a model. Let a family provide one handsome sister, and the hideousness of the others will not prevent them, under good management, from being mistaken, by the best judges, for the beauty, six times in the same hour."

"You are trying, I suppose, to account for your unfortunate error at Cleverley's, on Monday, Squib," said Lord Darrell, laughing.

"Pooh! Pooh! all nonsense."

"What was it?" said Mr. Annesley.

"Not a word true," said Lord Squib, stifling curiosity.

"I believe it," said the duke, without having heard a syllable. "Come, Darrell, out with it!"

"It really is nothing very particular,—only it is whispered that Squib said something to Lady Cleverly, which made her ring the bell, and that he excused himself to his lordship by protesting, that from their similarity of dress and manner, and strong family likeness, he had mistaken the countess for her sister."

Ommes. "Well done, Squib! And were you introduced to the right person?"

"Why," said his lordship, "fortunately, I contrived to fall out about the settlements, and so I escaped."

"So the chaste Diana is to be the new patroness," said Lord Darrell.

"So I understand," rejoined Mr. Annesley. "This is the age of unexpected appointments."

"*On dit*, that when it was notified to the party most interested, there was a rider to the bill, excluding my lord's relations."

"Ha, ha, ha," faintly laughed Mr. Annesley,— "What have they been doing so very particular?"

"Nothing," said Lord Squib. "That is just their fault. They have every recommendation: but when any member of that family is in a room, everybody feels so exceedingly sleepy, that they all sink to the ground. That is the reason that there are so many ottomans at Heavyside House."

"Is it true," asked the duke, "that his grace really has a flapper?"

"Most unquestionably," said Lord Squib. "The other day I was announced, and his attendant was absent. He had left his instrument on a sofa. I immediately took it up, and touched my lord upon his hump. I never knew him more entertaining. He really was quite lively."

"But Diana is a favourite goddess of mine," said Annesley,— "taste that hock."

"Superb! where did you get it?"

"A present from poor Raffenburg."

"Ah! where is he now?"

"At Paris, I believe."

"Paris! and where is she?"

"I liked Raffenburg," said Lord Squib; "he always reminded me of a country inn-keeper who supplies you with pipes and tobacco gratis, provided that you will dine with him."

"He had unrivalled meerschauts," said Mr. Annesley, "and he was most liberal. These are two.—You know, I never use them,—but they are handsome furniture."

"Those Champagnys are fine girls," said the Duke of St. James.

"Very pretty creatures! Do you know, St.

James," said Annesley, "I think the youngest one something like May Dacre?"

"Indeed! I cannot say the resemblance struck me."

"I see old mother Champagny dresses her as much like the Doncaster belle as she possibly can."

"Yes, and spoils her," said Lord Squib; "but old mother Champagny, with all her fuss, was ever a bad cook, and overdid every thing."

"Young Champagny, they say," observed Lord Darrell, "is in a sort of a scrape."

"Ah! what!"

"O! some confusion at head quarters.—A great tallow-chandler's son got into the regiment, and committed some heresy at mess."

"Champagny is in want of the loan of a thousand pounds, I suppose," said Mr. Annesley.

"I do not know the brother," said the duke.

"You are very fortunate, then. He is one of those unendurables fit only for a regiment. To give you an idea of him—suppose you met him here, (which you never will,) he would write to you the next day, 'my dear St. James.'"

"My tailor presented me his best compliments, the other morning," said the duke.

"The world is growing too familiar," said Mr. Annesley.

"There must be some great remedy," said Lord Darrell.

"Yes!" said Lord Squib, with still greater indignation. "Tradesmen, now-a-days, console themselves for not getting their bills paid by asking their customers to dinner."

"It is very shocking," said Mr. Annesley, with a forlorn air: "do you know I never enter society now without taking as many preliminary precautions as if the plague raged in all our chambers. In vain have I hitherto prided myself on my existence being unknown to the million. I never now stand still in the street, lest my portrait be caught for a lithograph; I never venture to a strange dinner, lest I should stumble upon a fashionable novelist: and even with all this vigilance, and all this denial, I have an intimate friend whom I cannot cut, and who, they say, writes for the *Court Journal*."

"But why cannot you cut him?" asked Lord Darrell.

"He is my brother; and, you know, I pride myself upon my domestic feelings."

"Yes!" said Lord Squib,— "to judge from what the world says, one would think, Annesley, you were a Brummel!"

"Squib, not even in jest, couple my name with one whom I will not call a savage, merely because he is unfortunate."

"What did you think of little Eugenie, Annesley, last night?" asked the duke.

"Very well—very well, indeed—something like Brocard's worst."

"I was a little disappointed in her *début*, and much interested in her success. She was rather a favourite of mine at Paris, so I took her home to the Alhambra yesterday, with a whole bevy, and Claudius Piggott and Co. I had half a mind to pull you in, but I know you do not much admire Piggott."

"On the contrary, I have been in Piggott's company, without being very much offended."

"I think Piggott improves," said Lord Darrell.

"It was those waistcoats which excited such a prejudice against him when he first came over"

"What! a prejudice against Peacock Piggott!" said Lord Squib—"pretty Peacock Piggott! Tell it not in Gath: whisper it not in Askelon—and above all, insinuate it not to Lady de Courcy."

"There is not much danger of my insinuating any thing to her," said Mr. Annesley.

"Your compact, I hope, is religiously observed," said the duke.

"Yes—very well. There was a slight infraction once, but I sent Henry Fitzroy as an ambassador, and war was not declared."

"Do you mean," asked Lord Squib, "when your cabriolet broke down before her door, and she sent out to request that you would make yourself quite at home?"

"I mean that fatal day," replied Mr. Annesley.

"I afterwards discovered she had bribed my tiger."

"Do you know Eugenie's sister, St. James?" asked Lord Darrell.

"Yes: she is very clever, indeed—very popular at Paris. But I like Eugenie because she is so good-natured. That girl always laughs so! One good grin from her always cures my spleen!"

"You should buy her, then," said his host, "for she must be invaluable. For my part, I consider existence a bore."

"So it is," said Lord Squib. "Do you remember that girl at Madrid, Annesley?"

"What, Isidora! She is coming over."

"But I thought it was high-treason to plunder the grandees' dove-cotes?"

"Why, all our regular official negotiations have failed. She is not permitted to treat with a foreign manager! but the new ambassador has a secretary, and that secretary has a *penchant*, and so—Isidora is to be smuggled over."

"In a red box, I suppose," said Lord Squib.

"I rather admire our Adele," said the Duke of St. James.

"O! certainly; she is a favourite of mine."

"But I like that wild little Ducie," said Lord Squib. "She puts me in mind of a wild-eat."

"And Marunia of a Bengal tiger," said his grace.

"She is a fine woman, though," said Lord Darrell.

"I think your cousin, St. James," said Lord Squib, "will get into a scrape with Marunia. I remember Chatwynd telling me,—and he was not apt to complain on that score,—that he never should have broken up, if it had not been for her."

"But he was a most extravagant scoundrel," said Mr. Annesley: "he called me in at his *boulevercement* for advice, as I have the reputation of a good economist. I do not know how it is, though I see these things perpetually happen; but why men, and men of small fortunes, should commit such follies, really exceeds my comprehension. Ten thousand pounds for trinkets, and half as much for old furniture! Why this is worse than Squib's bill of seventeen hundred pounds for snuff!"

"It was not seventeen hundred pounds, Annesley: that included cigars."

"Chetwynd kept it up for a good many years, though, I think," said Lord Darrell. "I remember going to see his rooms when I first came over. You recollect his mother-of-pearl fountain of Cologne water?"

"Mille Colonnes fitted up his place, I think?"

asked the young duke,—"but it was before my time."

"O! yes, little Bijou," said Annesley. "He has done you justice, St. James. I think the Alhambra much the prettiest thing in town."

"I was attacked the other day most vigorously, by Mrs. Dallington to obtain a sight," said Lord Squib. "I referred her to Lucy Grafton.—Do you know, St. James, I have half a strange idea, that there is a renewal in that quarter?"

"So they say," said the duke; "if so, I confess I am surprised." But they remembered Lord Darrell, and the conversation turned.

"These are pretty horses of Lincoln Graves'," said Mr. Annesley.

"Neat cattle, as Bagshot says," observed Lord Squib.

"Is it true that Bag is going to marry one of the Wrekins?" asked the duke.

"Which?" asked Lord Squib; "not Sophy, surely! I thought she was to be your cousin. I dare say," he added, "a false report. I suppose to use a Bagshotism, his governor wants it; but I should think Lord Cub would not yet be taken in. By-the-by, he says you have promised to propose him at White's, St. James."

"Oppose him, I said," rejoined the duke. "Bag really never understands English. However, I think it as probable that he will lounge in the bow-window, as on the treasury bench. That was his 'governor's' last shrewd plan."

"Darrell," said Lord Squib, "is there any chance of my being a commissioner for any thing? It struck me last night that I had never been in office."

"I do not think, Squib, that you ever will be in office, if even you be appointed."

"On the contrary, my good fellow, my punctuality would surprise you. I should like very much to be a lay-lord, because I cannot afford to keep a yacht, and theirs, they say, are not sufficiently used, for the admirals think it spoony, and the land-lubbers are always sick."

"I think myself of sporting a yacht this summer," said the Duke of St. James. "Be my, captain Squib."

"Agreed! Really, if you be serious, I will commence my duties to-morrow."

"I am serious. I think it will be rather amusing. I give you full authority to do exactly what you like, provided, in two month's time, I have the best vessel in the club; copper-bottom, crack crew, and ten knots an hour."

"You are all witnesses," said Lord Squib, "and so I begin to press. Annesley, your dinner is so good, that you will be purser; and Darrell, you are a man of business,—you shall be purser's clerk. For the rest, I think St. Maurice may claim a place, and—"

"Peacock Piggott, by all means," said the duke. "A gay sailor is quite the thing."

"And Henry Fitzroy," said Annesley, "because I am under obligation to him, and promised to have him in my eye."

"And Bagshot for a butt," said the duke.

"And Backbite for a buffoon," said Mr. Annesley.

"And for the rest," said the young duke, "the rest of the crew I vote shall be women. The Cham-pagnys will just do."

"And the little Trevors," said Lord Darrell.

"And Long Harrington," said Lord Squib. "She is my beauty."

"And the young Ducie," said Annesley. "And Mrs. Dallington of course, and Caroline St. Maurice, and Charlotte Bloomerly, really, she was dressed most prettily last night; and, above all, the queen-bee of the hive—May Daere, eh! St. James! and I have another proposition," said Annesley, with increased and unusual animation. "May Daere won the St. Leger and ruled the course; and May Daere shall win the cup, and rule the waves. Our yacht shall be christened by the Lady-bird of Yorkshire."

"What a delightful thing it would be," said the Duke of St. James, "if throughout life, we might always choose our crew; cull the beauties, and banish the bores."

"But that is impossible," said Lord Darrell. "Every ornament of society is counterbalanced by some accompanying blur. I have invariably observed that the ugliness of a *chaperon* is exactly in proportion to the charms of her charge; and that if a man be distinguished for his wit, his appearance, his style, or any other good quality, he is sure to be saddled with some family or connexion, who require all his popularity to gain them a passport into the crowd."

"One might collect a very unexceptionable *coterie* from our present crowd," said Mr. Annesley. "It would be curious to assemble all the pet lambs of the flock."

"Is it impossible?" asked the duke.

"Burlington is the only man who dare try," said Lord Darrell.

"I doubt whether any individual would have sufficient pluck," said Lord Squib.

"Yes," said the duke, "it must, I think, be a joint-stock company to share the glory and the odium. Let us do it!"

There was a start, and a silence, broken by Annesley in a low voice.

"By heavens, it would be sublime—if practicable; but the difficulty does indeed seem insurmountable."

"Why, we would not do it," said the young duke, "if it were not difficult. The first thing is to get a frame for our picture, to hit upon some happy pretence for assembling in an impromptu style, the young and gay. Our purpose must not be too obvious. It must be something to which all expect to be asked, and where the presence of all is impossible; so that in fixing upon a particular member of a family, we may seem influenced by the wish, that no circle should be neglected. Then, too, it should be something like a water-party or a *fête-champêtre*, where colds abound, and fits are always caught, so that a consideration for the old and the infirm may authorize us not to invite them; then, too—"

"Omnes. Bravo! bravo! St. James. It shall be! it shall be!"

"It must be a *fête-champêtre*," said Annesley, decidedly, "and as far from town as possible."

"Twickenham is at your service," said the duke.

"Just the place, and just the distance. The only objection is, that by being yours, it will saddle the enterprise too much upon you. We must all bear our share in the uproar, for, trust me, there will be one; but there are a thousand ways by which our resp^s sibility may be insisted upon. For instance,

let us make a list of all our guests, and then let one of us act as secretary and sign the invitations, which shall be like tickets. No other name need appear, and the hosts will indicate themselves at the place of rendezvous."

"My lords," said Lord Squib, "I rise to propose the health of Mr. Secretary Annesley, and I think if any one carry the business through, it will be he."

"I accept the trust. At present, gentlemen, be silent as night; for we have too much to mature, and our success depends upon our secrecy."

CHAPTER X.

ARUNDEL DACRE, though little apt to cultivate an acquaintance with any one, called on the young duke the morning after their meeting. The truth is, his imagination was touched by our hero's appearance. His grace possessed all that accomplished manner of which he painfully felt the want, and to which he eagerly yielded his admiration. He earnestly desired the duke's friendship, but with his usual *mauvaise honte*, their meeting did not advance his wishes. He was as shy and constrained as usual, and being really desirous of appearing to advantage, and leaving an impression in his favour, his manner was even divested of that somewhat imposing coldness which was not altogether ineffective. In short, he was extremely disagreeable. The duke was courteous, as he usually was, and ever to the Daeres, but he was not cordial. He disliked Arundel Daere,—in a word, he looked upon him as his favoured rival. The two young men occasionally met, but did not grow more intimate. Studiously polite the young duke ever was both to him and to his lovely cousin, for his pride concealed his pique, and he was always afraid lest his manner should betray his mind.

In the mean time, Sir Lucius Grafton apparently was running his usual course of triumph. It is fortunate that those who will watch and wonder about every thing are easily satisfied with a reason, and are ever quick in detecting a cause: so Mrs. Dallington Vere was the fact that duly accounted for the baronet's intimacy with the Daeres. All was right again between them. It was unusual, to be sure—these *rifucimentos*; still she was a charming woman; and it was well known that Lucius had spent twenty thousand on the county. Where was that to come from, they should like to know, but from old Dallington Vere's Yorkshire estates, which he had so wisely left to his pretty wife by the pink paper codicil!

And this lady of so many loves,—how felt she! Most agreeably, as all dames do who dote upon a passion which they feel convinced will be returned, but which still waits for a response. Arundel Daere would yield her a smile from a face more worn by thought than joy; and Arundel Daere, who was wont to muse alone, was now ever ready to join his cousin and her friends in the ride or the promenade. Miss Daere, too, had noticed to her a kindly change in her cousin's conduct to her father. He was more cordial to his uncle, sought to pay him deference, and seemed more desirous of gaining his goodwill. The experienced eye, too, of this pretty woman allowed her often to observe that her hero's

presence was not particularly occasioned, or particularly inspired, by his cousin. In a word, it was to herself that his remarks were addressed, his attentions devoted, and often she caught his dark and liquid eye fixed upon her beaming and refulgent brow.

Sir Lucius Grafton proceeded with that strange mixture of craft and passion which characterized him. Each day his heart yearned more for the being on whom his thoughts should never have pondered. Now exulting in her increased confidence, she seemed already his victim; now awed by her majestic spirit, he despaired even of her being his bride. Now melted by her unsophisticated innocence, he cursed even the last unhallowed of his purposes; and now enchanted by her consummate loveliness, he forgot all but her beauty and his own passion.

Often had he dilated to her, with the skill of an arch deceiver, on the blessings of domestic joy; often, in her presence, had his eye sparkled, when he watched the infantile graces of some playful children. Then he would embrace them with a soft care and gushing fondness, enough to melt the heart of any mother whom he was desirous to seduce, and then, with a half-murmured sigh, he regretted, in broken accents, that he too was not a father.

In due time, he proceeded even further. Dark joints of domestic infelicity broke unintentionally from his ungoverned lips. May Dacre stared. He quelled the tumult of his thoughts, struggled with his outbreathing feelings, and triumphed; yet not without a tear, which forced its way down a face not formed for grief, and quivered upon his fair and downy cheek. Sir Lucius Grafton was well aware of the magic of his beauty, and used his charms to betray, as if he were a woman.

May Dacre, whose soul was sympathy, felt in silence for this excellent, this injured, this unhappy, this agreeable man. Ill could even her practised manner check the current of her mind, or conceal from Lady Aphrodite that she possessed her dislike. As for the young duke, he fell into the lowest abyss of her opinions, and was looked upon as alike frivolous, heartless, and irreclaimable.

But how are the friends with whom we dined yesterday? Frequent were the meetings, deep the consultations, infinite the suggestions, innumerable the expedients. In the morning, they met and breakfasted with Annesley; in the afternoon, they met and lunched with Lord Squib; in the evening, they met and dined with Lord Darrell; and at night, they met and supped at the Alhambra. Each council only the more convinced them, that the scheme was feasible, and must be glorious. At last their ideas were matured, and Annesley took steps to break the great event to the world, who were on the eve of being astonished.

He repaired to Lady Bloomerly. The world sometimes talked of her ladyship and Mr. Annesley, the world were quite wrong, as they often are on this subject. Mr. Annesley knew the value of a female friend. By Lady Bloomerly's advice, the plan was intrusted in confidence to about a dozen dames equally influential. Then a few of the most considered male friends heard a strange report. Lord Darrell dropped a rumour at the Treasury, but with his finger on his mouth, and leaving himself out of the list, proceeded to give his favourable opinion of the project, merely as a

disinterested and expected guest. Then the duke promised Peacock Piggott one night at the Alhambra, but swore him to solemn secrecy over a vase of sherbet. Then Squib told his tailor, in consideration that his bill should not be sent in, and finally, the Bird of Paradise betrayed the whole affair to the musical world, who were, of course, all agog. Then, when rumour began to wag its hundred tongues, the twelve peeresses found themselves bound in honour to step into the breach, yielded the plan their decided approbation, and their avowed patronage, puzzled the grumblers, silenced the weak, and sneered down the obstinate.

The invitations began to issue, and the outcry against them burst forth. A *fronde* was formed, but they wanted De Retz; and many kept back, with the hope of being bribed from joining it. The four cavaliers soon found themselves at the head of a strong party; and then, like a faction who have successfully struggled for toleration, they now openly maintained their supremacy. It was too late to cabal. The uninvited could only console themselves by a passive sulk, or an active sneer; but this would not do, and their bilious countenances betrayed their chagrin.

The difficulty now was, not to keep the bores away, but to obtain a few of the beauties who hesitated. A *chaperon* must be found for one; another must be added on to a party, like a star to the cluster of a constellation. Among those whose presence was most ardently desired, but seemed most doubtful, was May Dacre. An invitation had been sent to her father; but he was out of town, and she did not like to join so peculiar a party without him; but it was unanimously agreed that without her the affair would be a failure; and Charles Annesley was sent, envoy extraordinary, to arrange. With the good aid of his friend Mrs. Dallington, all was at length settled; and fervid prayers that the important day might be ushered in by a smiling sun were offered up during the next fortnight, at half-past six every morning, by all civilized society, who then hurried to their night's rest.

CHAPTER XI.

THE *fête* at the "Pavilion"—such was the title of the Twickenham villa—though the subject of universal interest, was anticipated by no one with more eager anxiety than by Sir Lucius Grafton, for that day, he determined, should decide the fate of the Duke of St. James. He was sanguine as to the result—nor without reason. For the last month he had, by his dark machinery, played desperately upon the feelings of Lady Aphrodite; and more than once had she despatched rapid notes to her admirer, for counsel and for consolation. The duke was more skilful in soothing her griefs than in devising expedients for their removal. He treated the threatened as a distant evil! and wiped away her tears in a manner which is almost an encouragement to weep.

At last the eventful morn arrived, and a scorching sun made those exult to whom the barge and the awning promised a progress equally calm and cool. Wo to the dusty britchska!—wo to the molten furnace of the crimson cabriolet!

They came, as the stars come out from the heavens, what time the sun is in his first repose—now a single hero, brilliant as a planet—now a splendid party clustering like a constellation. Music is on the waters, and perfume on the land: each moment a bark glides up with its cymbals—each moment a cavalcade bright with bouquets!

Ah! gathering of brightness!—ah! meeting of lustre!—why, are you to be celebrated by one so obscure and dull as I am! Ye Lady Carolines, and ye Lady Franceses—ye Lady Barbaras, and ye Lady Banches, is it my fault?

O! graceful Lord Francis, why, why have you left us—why, why have you exchanged your Ionian lyre for an Irish harp! You were not made for politics—leave them to clerks. Fly—fly back to pleasure, to frolic, and fun! Confess, now, that you sometimes do feel a little queer. I say nothing of the difference between May Fair and Donnybrook.

And thou, too, Luttrell—gayest hard that ever threw off a triplet amid the clattering of cabs and the chattering of clubs—art thou, too, mute? Where—where dost thou linger? Is our druid among the oaks of Amphil—or, like a truant Etonian, is he lurking among the beeches of Burnham? What! has the immortal letter, unlike all other good advice, absolutely not been thrown away!—or is the jade incorrigible? Whichever be the case, you need not be silent. There is yet enough to do, and yet enough to instruct. Teach us, that wealth is not elegance; that profusion is not magnificence; and that splendour is not beauty. Teach us, that taste is a talisman, which can do greater wonders than the millions of the loan-monger. Teach us, that to vie is not, to rival; and to imitate not to invent. Teach us, that pretension is a bore. Teach us, that wit is excessively good-natured, and, like Champagne, not only sparkles, but is sweet. Teach us the vulgarity of malignity. Teach us, that envy spoils our complexions, and that anxiety destroys our figure. Catch the fleeting colours of that sly chameleon, cant, and show what excessive trouble we are ever taking to make ourselves miserable and silly. Teach us all this, and Aglaia shall stop a crow in its course, and present you with a pen—Thalia hold the golden fluid in a Sevre vase—and Euphrosyne support the violet-coloured scrawl.

The four hosts greeted the arrivals, and assisted the disembarkations, like the famous four sons of Aymon. They were all dressed alike, and their costume excited great attention. At first, it was to have been very plain,—black and white, and a single rose; but it was settled that simplicity had been overdone and, like a country-girl after her first season, had turned into a most affected baggage,—so they agreed to be regal; and fancy uniforms, worthy of the court of Oberon, were the order of the day. I shall not describe them, for the description of costume is the most inventive province of our historical novelists, and I never like to be malar, or trench upon my neighbour's lands or rights; but the Alhambra button indicated a mystical confederacy, and made the women quite frantic with curiosity.

The guests wandered through the gardens, always various, and now a paradise of novelty. There were fair brothers, fresh from the wildest recesses of the Carpathian mount, who threw out such woodnotes wild, that all the artists stared; and it was universally agreed, that had they not been

a French chorus-singers, they would have been quite a miracle. But the Lapland sisters were the true prodigy, who danced the mazurka in the national style. There was also a fire-eater; but some said he would never set the river in flames, though he had an antidote against all poisons! But, then, our Mithridates always tried its virtues on a stuffed poodle, whose bark evinced its vitality. There also was a giant in the wildest parts of the shrubbery, and a dwarf, on whom the ladies showered their sugar-plums, and who, in return, offered them tobacco. But it was not true that the giant sported stilts, or that the dwarf was a sucking babe. Some people are so suspicious. Then a bell rang, and assembled them in the concert-room; and the Bird of Paradise, who, to-day, was consigned to the cavaliership of Peacock Piggott, condescended to favour them with a new song, which no one had ever heard, and which, consequently, made them feel more intensely all the sublimity of exclusiveness. Shall I forget the panniers of shoes which Melnotte had placed in every quarter of the gardens? I will say nothing of Maradan's cases of caps, because, for this incident, Lord Bagshot is my authority.

On a sudden, it seemed that a thousand bugles broke the blue air, and they were summoned to a *déjeuner* in four crimson tents, worthy of Sardapalus. Over each waved the scutcheon of the president. Glittering were the glories of the hundred quarterings of the house of Darrell. "*Si non è vero è ben trovato*," was the motto. Lord Darrell's grandfather had been a successful lawyer. Lord Squib's emblazonry was a satire on its owner. "*Holdfast*" was the motto of a man who had let loose. Annesley's simple shield spoke of the conquest: but all paled before the banner of the house of Hauteville, for it indicated an alliance with royalty. The attendants of each pavilion wore the livery of its lord.

Shall I attempt to describe the delicacy of this banquet, where imagination had been racked for novel luxury? Through the centre of each table ran a rivulet of rose-water, and gold and silver fish glanced in its unrivalled course. The bouquets were exchanged every half-hour, and music soft and subdued, but constant and thrilling, wound them up by exquisite gradations to that pitch of refined excitement which is so strange a union of delicacy and voluptuousness, when the soul, as it were, becomes sensual, and the body, as it were, dissolves into spirit. And in this choice assembly, where all was youth, and elegance, and beauty, was it not right that every sound should be melody, every sight a sight of loveliness, and every thought a thought of pleasure?

They arose, and assembled on the lawn, where they found to their surprise had arisen in their absence a Dutch fair. Numerous were the booths,—innumerable were the contents. The first artists had arranged the picture and the costumes: the first artists had made the trinkets and the toys. And what a very agreeable fair where all might suit their fancy without the permission of that sulky tyrant,—a purse! All were in excellent humour, and no *mauvaise honte* prevented them from plundering the *boutiques*. The noble proprietors set the example. Annesley offered a bouquet of precious stones to Charlotte Bloomer, and it was accepted; and the Duke of St. James showered a sack of whimsical *breloques* among a scrambling

crowd of laughing beauties. Among them was May Dacre. He had not observed her. Their eyes met, and she laughed. It seemed that he had never felt happiness before.

Ere the humours of the fair could be exhausted, they were summoned to the margin of the river, where four painted and gilded galleys, which might have sailed down the Cydnus, and each owning its peculiar chief, prepared to struggle for pre-eminence in speed. All betted; and the duke, encouraged by the smile, hastened to Miss Dacre to try to win back some of the Doncaster losses; but Arundel Dacre had her arm in his, and she was evidently delighted with his discourse. His grace's blood turned, and he walked away.

It was sunset when they returned to the lawn; and then the ball-room presented itself; but the twilight was long, and the night was warm; there were no hateful dews, no odious mists, and therefore a great number danced on the lawn. The fair was illuminated, and all the little *marchandes* and their lusty porters walked about in their costume.

The duke again rallied his courage, and seeing Arundel Dacre with Mrs. Dallington Vere, he absolutely asked May Dacre to dance. She was engaged. He doubted, and walked into the house disconsolate; yet if he had waited one moment he would have seen Sir Lucius Grafton rejoin her, and lead her to the *cotillon* that was forming on the turf. The duke sauntered to Lady Aphrodite, but she would not dance,—yet she did not yield his arm, and proposed a stroll. They wandered away to the extremity of the grounds. Fainter and fainter grew the bursts of the revellers, yet neither of them spoke much, for both were dull.

Yet at length her ladyship did speak, and amply made up for her previous silence. All former scenes, to this, were but as the preface to the book. All she knew and all she dreaded, all her suspicions, all her certainties, all her fears, were poured forth in painful profusion. This night was to decide her fate. She threw herself on his mercy, if he had forgotten his love. Out dashed all those arguments, all those appeals, all those assertions, which they say are usual under these circumstances. She was a woman; he was a man. She had staked her happiness on this venture; he had a thousand cards to play. Love, and first love with her, as with all women, was every thing; he and all men, at the worst, had a thousand resources. He might plunge into politics,—he might game,—he might fight,—he might ruin himself in innumerable ways, but she could only ruin herself in one. Miserable woman! Miserable sex! She had given him her all. She knew it was little: would she had more! She knew she was unworthy of him: would she were not! She did not ask him to sacrifice himself to her: she could not expect it; she did not even desire it. Only, she thought he ought to know exactly the state of affairs and of consequences, and that certainly if they were parted, which assuredly they would be, most decidedly she would droop, and fade, and die. She wept, she sobbed; his entreaties alone seemed to prevent hysterics.

These scenes are painful at all times, and even the callous, they say, have a twinge; but when the actress is really beautiful and pure, as this lady was, and the actor young, and inexperienced, and amiable, as this actor was, the consequences are more serious than is usual. The Duke of St. James was unhappy—he was discontented—he was dis-

satisfied with himself. He did not love this lady, if love were the passion which he entertained for May Dacre,—but she loved him. He knew that she was beautiful, and he was convinced that she was excellent. The world is malicious,—but the world had agreed that Lady Aphrodite was an unblemished pearl; yet this jewel was reserved for him! Intense gratitude almost amounted to love. In short, he had no idea at this moment that feelings are not in our power. His were captive, even if entrapped. It was a great responsibility to desert this creature, the only one from whom he had experienced devotion. To conclude: a season of extraordinary dissipation, to use no harsher phrase, had somewhat exhausted the nervous powers of our hero: his energies were deserting him; he had not heart, or heartlessness enough to extricate himself from this dilemma. It seemed that if this being, to whom he was indebted for so much joy, were miserable he must be unhappy; that if she died, life ought to have—could have no charms for him. He kissed away her tears—he pledged his faith—and Lady Aphrodite Grafton was his betrothed!

She wonderfully recovered. Her deep but silent joy seemed to repay him even for this bitter sacrifice. Compared with the late racking of his feelings, the present calm, which was merely the result of suspense being destroyed, seemed happiness. His conscience whispered approbation, and he felt that, for once, he had sacrificed himself to another.

They re-entered the villa, and he took the first opportunity of wandering alone to the least frequented parts of the grounds:—his mind demanded solitude, and his soul required soliloquy.

“So the game is up! Truly, a most lame and impotent conclusion! And this, then, is the result of all my high fancies and indefinite aspirations! Verily, I am a very distinguished hero, and have not abused my unrivalled advantages in the least! What! am I bitter on myself? There will be enough to sing my praises, without myself joining in this chorus of congratulation. O! fool, fool! Now I know what folly is. But barely fifteen months since, I stepped upon these shores, full of hope and full of pride; and now I leave them—how? O! my dishonoured fathers! Even my posterity, which God grant I may not have, will look on my memory with hatred, and on hers with scorn!

“Well, I suppose we must live for ourselves. We both of us know the world; and Heaven can bear witness that we should not be haunted by any uneasy hankering after what has brought us such a headache. If it were for love—if it were for—but away! I will not profane her name. If it were for her that I was thus sacrificing myself, I could bear it—I could welcome it. I can imagine perfect and everlasting bliss in the sole society of one single being—but she is not that being. Let me not conceal it; let me wrestle with this bitter conviction!

“And am I, indeed, bound to close my career thus—to throw away all hope, all chance of felicity, at my age, for a point of honour? No, no, it is not that. After all, I have experienced that with her, and from her, which I have with no other woman; and she is so good, so gentle, and all agree so lovely! How infinitely worse would her situation be, if deserted, than mine is, as her perpetual companion! The very thought makes my heart bleed. Yes! amiable, devoted, dearest Afy, I throw aside these morbid feelings—you shall never repent having

placed your trust in me. I will be proud and happy of such a friend, and you shall be mine forever!"

A shriek broke on the air: he started. It was near: he hastened after the sound. He entered into a small green glade surrounded by shrubs, where had been erected a fanciful hermitage. There he found Sir Lucius Grafton on his knees, grasping the hand of the indignant but terrified May Dacre. The duke rushed forward; Miss Dacre ran to meet him; the baronet rose.

"This lady, Sir Lucius Grafton, is under my protection," said the young duke, with a flashing eye but a calm voice. She clung to his arm; he bore her away. The whole was the affair of an instant.

The duke and his companion proceeded in silence. She tried to hasten, but he felt her limbs shake upon his arm. He stopped:—no one, not even a servant, was near. He could not leave her for an instant. There she stood trembling, her head bent down, and one hand clasping the other which rested on his arm. Terrible was her struggle, but she would not faint, and at length succeeded in repressing her emotions. They were yet a considerable way from the house. She motioned with her left hand to advance; but still she did not speak. On they walked, though more slowly, for she was exhausted, and occasionally stopped for breath, or strength.

At length she said, in a faint voice,—“I cannot join the party. I must go home directly. How can it be done?”

“Your companions,” said the duke—

“Are of course engaged, or not to be found; but surely, somebody, I know, is departing. Manage it—manage it: say I am ill.”

“O! Miss Dacre, if you knew the agony of my mind!”

“Do not speak—for Heaven’s sake do not speak!”

He turned off from the lawn, and approached by a small circuit the gate of the ground. Suddenly, he perceived a carriage on the point of going off. It was the Dutchess of Shropshire’s.

“There is the Dutchess of Shropshire! You know her—but not a minute is to be lost. There is such a noise, they will not hear. Are you afraid to stop here one instant by yourself? I shall not be out of sight, and not away a second. I run very quick.”

“No—no, I am not afraid. Go—go!”

Away rushed the Duke of St. James, as if his life were on his speed. He stopped the carriage, spoke, and was back in an instant.

“Lean—lean on me with all your strength. I have told every thing necessary to Lady Shropshire. Nobody will speak a word, because they believe you have a terrible headach. I will say every thing necessary to Mrs. Dallington and your cousin. Do not give yourself a moment’s uneasiness. And, O! Miss Dacre, if I might say one word!”

She did not stop him.

“If,” continued he, “it be your wish that the outrage of to-night should be known only to myself and him, I pledge my word it shall be so; though willingly, if I were authorized, I would act a different part in this affair.”

“It is my wish.” She spoke in a low voice, with her eyes still upon the ground—“And I thank you for this, and for all.”

They had now joined the Shropshires; but it was now discovered Miss Dacre had no shawl; and sundry other articles were wanting, to the evident dismay of the Ladies Wrekin. They offered theirs, but their visiter refused, and would not allow the duke to fetch her own. Off they drove; but when they had proceeded about half a mile, a continued shout on the road, which the fat coachman, for a long time, would not hear, stopped them, and up came the Duke of St. James, covered with dust, and panting like a racer, with Miss Dacre’s shawl.

CHAPTER XII.

So much time was occupied by this adventure of the shawl, and by making requisite explanations to Mrs. Dallington Vere, that almost the whole of the guests had retired, when the duke found himself again in the saloon. His brother-hosts, too, were off with various parties, to which they had attached themselves. He found the Fitz-pompeys, and a few still lingering for their carriages; and Arundel Dacre and his fair admirer. His grace had promised to return with Lady Afy, and was devising some scheme by which he might free himself from this, now not very suitable engagement, when she claimed his arm. She was leaning on it, and talking to Lady Fitz-pompey, when Sir Lucius approached, and with his usual tone, put a note into the duke’s hand, saying at the same time, “This appears to belong to you. I shall go to town with Piggot;”—and then he walked away.

With the wife leaning on his arm, the young duke had the pleasure of reading the following lines, written with the pencil of the husband.

“After what has just occurred, only one more meeting can take place between us, and the sooner that takes place the better for all parties. This is no time for etiquette. I shall be in Kensington Gardens, in the grove on the right side of the summer-house, at half-past six to-morrow morning, and shall doubtless find you there.”

Sir Lucius was not out of sight when the duke had finished reading his cartel. Making some confused excuse to Lady Afy, which was not expected, he ran after the baronet, and soon reached him.

“Sir Lucius Grafton, I shall be punctual: but there is one point on which I wish to speak to you at once. The cause of this meeting may be kept, I hope, a secret?”

“As far as I am concerned, an inviolable one,” bowed the baronet, very stiffly; and they parted.

The duke returned satisfied, for Sir Lucius Grafton ever observed his word—to say nothing of the great interest which he surely had this time in maintaining his pledge.

Our hero thought that he never should reach London. The journey seemed a day; and the effort to amuse Lady Afy, and to prevent her from suspecting, by his conduct, that any thing had occurred, was most painful. Silent, however, he at last became; but her mind too was engaged;

and she supposed that her admirer was quiet only because, like herself, he was happy. At length they reached her house, but he excused himself from entering, and drove on immediately to Annesley. He was at Lady Bloomerly's. Lord Darrell had not returned, and his servant did not expect him. Lord Squib was never to be found. The duke put on a great-coat over his uniform, and drove to White's: it was really a wilderness. Never had he seen fewer men there in his life, and there were none of his set. The only young-looking man was old Colonel Carlisle, who, with his skillfully enamelled cheek, flowing auburn locks, shining teeth, and tinted whiskers, might have been mistaken for gay twenty-seven, instead of gray seventy-two; but the colonel had the gout, to say nothing of any other objections.

The duke took up the Courier, and read three or four advertisements of quack medicines—but nobody entered. It was nearly midnight: he got nervous. Somebody came in—Lord Hounslow for his rubber. Even his favoured child, Bagshot, would be better than nobody. The duke protested that the next acquaintance who entered should be his second, old or young. His vow had scarcely been registered, when Arundel Dacre came in alone. He was the last man to whom the duke wished to address himself, but fate seemed to have decided it, and the duke walked up to him.

"Mr. Dacre, I am about to ask of you a favour to which I have no claim."

Mr. Dacre looked a little confused, and murmured his willingness to do any thing.

"To be explicit, I am engaged in an affair of honour of a very urgent nature. Will you be my friend?"

"With the greatest willingness." He spoke with more ease. "May I ask the name of the other party,—the—the cause of the meeting?"

"The other party is Sir Lucius Grafton."

"Hum!" said Arundel Dacre, as if he were no longer curious about the cause. "When do you meet?"

"At half past six, in Kensington Gardens, to-morrow—I believe I should say, this morning."

"Your grace must be wearied," said Arundel, with unusual ease and animation. "Now, follow my advice. Go home at once, and get some rest. Give yourself no trouble about preparations: leave every thing to me. I will call upon you at half past five precisely, with a chaise and post-horses, which will divert suspicion. Now, good-night!"

"But, really, your rest must be considered—and then all this trouble!"

"O! I have been in the habit of sitting up all night. Do not think of me,—nor am I quite inexperienced in these matters, in too many of which I have unfortunately been engaged in Germany."

The young men shook hands with great cordiality, and the duke hastened home. Fortunately, the Bird of Paradise was at her own establishment in Baker street, a bureau where her secretary, in her behalf, transacted business with the various courts of Europe, and the numerous cities of Great Britain. Here many a negotiation was carried on for opera engagements at Vienna, or Paris, or Berlin, or St. Petersburg. Here many a diplomatic correspondence conducted the fate of the musical festivals of York, or Norwich, or Exeter.

CHAPTER XIII.

LET us return to Sir Lucius Grafton. He is as mad as any man must be who feels that the imprudence of a moment has dashed to the ground all the plans, and all the hopes, and all the great results over which he had so often pondered. The great day from which he had expected so much had passed, nor was it possible for four-and-twenty hours more completely to have reversed all his feelings, and all his prospects. May Dacre had shared the innocent but unusual and excessive gayety, which had properly become a scene of festivity at once so agreeable, so various, and so novel. Sir Lucius Grafton had not been insensible to the excitement. On the contrary, his impetuous passions seemed to recall the former and more fervent days of his career, and his voluptuous mind dangerously sympathized with the beautiful and luxurious scene. He was elated too with the thought, that his freedom would perhaps be sealed this evening, and still more by his almost constant attendance on his fascinating companion. As the particular friend of the Dacre family, and as the secret ally of Mrs. Dallington Vere, he in some manner contrived always to be at May Dacre's side. With the laughing but insidious pretence that he was now almost too grave and staid a personage for such scenes, he conversed with few others, and humorously maintaining that his "dancing days were over," danced with none but her. Even when her attention was engaged by a third person, he lingered about, and with his consummate knowledge of the world, easy wit, and constant resources, generally succeeded in not only sliding into the conversation, but engrossing it. Arundel Dacre, too, although that young gentleman had not departed from his usual coldness in favour of Sir Lucius Grafton, the baronet would most provokingly consider as his particular friend: never seemed to be conscious that his reserved companion was most punctilious in his address to him, but on the contrary called him in return, "Dacre," and sometimes "Arundel." In vain young Dacre struggled to maintain his position. His manner was no match for that of Sir Lucius Grafton. Annoyed with himself, he felt confused, and often quitted his cousin that he might be free of his friend. Thus Sir Lucius Grafton contrived never to permit Miss Dacre to be alone with Arundel, and to her he was so courteous, so agreeable, and so useful, that his absence seemed always a blank, or a period in which something ever went wrong.

The triumphant day rolled on, and each moment Sir Lucius felt more sanguine and more excited. We will not dwell upon the advancing confidence of his desperate mind. Hope expanded into certainty,—certainty burst into impatience. In a desperate moment he breathed his passion.

May Dacre was the last girl to feel at a loss in such a situation. No one would have rung him out of a saloon with an air of more contemptuous majesty. But the shock,—the solitary strangeness of the scene,—the fear, for the first time, that none were near, and perhaps, also, her exhausted energy, frightened her, and she shrieked. One only had heard that shriek, yet that one was Legion. Sooner might the whole world know the worst, than this

person suspect the least. Sir Lucius was left silent with rage, mad with passion, desperate with hate.

He gasped for breath. Now his brow burnt,—now the cold dew ran off his countenance in streams. He clenched his fist,—he stamped with agony,—he found at length his voice, and he blasphemed to the unconscious woods.

His quick brain flew to the results like lightning. The duke had escaped from his mesh; his madness had done more to win this boy May Dacre's heart than an age of courtship. He had lost the idol of his passion, he was fixed for ever with the creature of his hate. He loathed the idea. He tottered into the hermitage, and buried his face in his hands.

Something must be done. Some monstrous act of energy must repair this fatal blunder. He appealed to the mind which had never deserted him. The oracle was mute. Yet vengeance might even slightly redeem the bitterness of despair. This fellow should die; and his girl—for already he hated May Dacre—should not triumph in her minion. He tore a leaf from his tablets, and wrote the lines we have already read.

The young duke reached home. You expect, of course, that he sat up all night making his will and answering letters. By no means. The first object that caught his eye was an enormous ottoman. He threw himself upon it without undressing and without speaking a word to Luigi, and in a moment was fast asleep. He was fairly exhausted. Luigi started, and called Spiridion to consult. They agreed that they dare not go to bed, and must not leave their lord; so they played *écarté*, till at last they quarrelled and fought with the candles over the table. But even this did not wake their unreasonable master; so Spiridion threw down a few chairs by accident; but all in vain. At half-past five there was a knocking at the gate, and they hurried away.

Arundel Dacre entered with them, woke the duke, and praised him for his punctuality. His grace thought that he had only dozed a few minutes; but time pressed; five minutes arranged his toilet, and they were first on the field.

In a moment Sir Lucius and Mr. Piggot appeared. Arundel Dacre, on the way, had anxiously inquired as to the probability of reconciliation, but was told at once it was impossible, so now he measured the ground and loaded the pistols with a calmness which was admirable. They fired at once; the duke in the air, and the baronet in his friend's side. When Sir Lucius saw his grace fall his hate vanished. He ran up with real anxiety and unfeigned anguish.

"Hav' I hit you, by h—ll!"

His grace was of course magnanimous, but the case was urgent. A surgeon gave a favourable report, and extracted the ball on the spot. The duke was carried back to his chaise, and in an hour was in the state bed, not of the Alhambra—but of his neglected mansion.

Arundel Dacre retired when he had seen his friend home, but gave urgent commands that he should be kept quiet. No sooner was the second out of sight, than the principal ordered the room to be cleared with the exception of Spiridion, and then, rising in his bed, wrote this note, which the page was secretly to deliver.

"— House, —, 182—.

"DEAR MISS DACRE,—A very unimportant but somewhat disagreeable incident has occurred. I have been obliged to meet Sir Lucius Grafton, and our meeting has fortunately terminated without any serious consequences. Yet, I wish that you should hear of this first from me, lest you might imagine that I had not redeemed my pledge of last night, and that I had placed for a moment my own feelings in competition with yours. This is not the case, and never shall be, dear Miss Dacre, with one whose greatest pride is to subscribe himself

"Your most obedient and faithful servant,

"Sr. JAMES."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE world talked of nothing but the duel between the Duke of St. James and Sir Lucius Grafton. It was a thunderbolt; and the phenomenon was accounted for by every cause but the right one. Yet even those who most confidently solved the riddle were the most eagerly employed in investigating its true meaning. The seconds were of course applied to. Arundel Dacre was proverbially unpumpable; but Peacock Piggott, whose communicative temper was an adage, how came he on a sudden so diplomatic? Not a syllable oozed from a mouth which was ever open: not a hint from a countenance which never could conceal its mind. He was not even mysterious, but really looked just as astonished, and just as curious as themselves. Fine times these for "The Universe," and "The New World!" All came out about Lady Afy; and they made up for their long and previous ignorance, or, as they now boldly blustered, their long and considerate forbearance. Sheets given away gratis,—edition on Saturday night for the country, and wood-cuts of the Pavilion fête;—the when, the how, and the wherefore. A. The summer-house, and Lady Aphrodite meeting the young duke. B. The hedge behind which Sir Lucius Grafton was concealed. C. Kensington Gardens, and a cloudy morning; and so on. Cruikshanks did wonders.

Let us endeavour to ascertain the feelings of the principal agents in this odd affair. Sir Lucius now was cool, and the mischief being done, took a calm review of the late mad hours. As was his custom, he began to inquire whether any good could be elicited from all evil. He owed his late adversary sundry moneys, which he had never contemplated the possibility of repaying to the person who had eloped with his wife. Had he shot his creditor, the account would equally have been cleared; and this consideration, although it did not prompt, had not dissuaded the late desperate deed. As it was, he now appeared still to enjoy the possession both of his wife and his debts, and had lost his friend. Bad generalship, Sir Lucy! Reconciliation was out of the question. The duke's position was a good one. Strongly intrenched with a flesh wound, he had all the sympathy of society on his side: and after having been confined for a few weeks, he could go to Paris for a few months, and then return, as if the Graftons had never crossed his eye, rid of a troublesome

mistress and a troublesome friend. His position was certainly a good one, but Sir Lucius was astute, and he determined to turn this Shumla of his grace. The quarrel must have been about her ladyship. Who could assign any other cause for it? And the duke must now be weak with loss of blood and anxiety, and totally unable to resist any appeal, particularly a personal one, to his feelings. He determined, therefore, to drive Lady Afy into his grace's arms. If he could only get her into the house for an hour, the business would be settled.

These cunning plans were, however, nearly being crossed by a very simple incident. Annoyed at finding that her feelings could be consulted only by sacrificing those of another woman, May Dacre, quite confident that, as Lady Aphrodite was innocent in the present instance, she must be immaculate, told every thing to her father, and stifling her tears, begged him to make all public; but Mr. Dacre, after due consideration, enjoined silence.

In the mean time, the young duke was not in so calm a mood as the baronet. Rapidly the late extraordinary events dashed through his mind, and already those feelings which had prompted his soliloquy in the garden were no longer his. All forms, all images, all ideas, all memory, melted into May Dacre. He felt that he loved her with a perfect love; that she was to him what no other woman had been, even in the factitious delirium of early passion. A thought of her seemed to bring an entirely novel train of feelings, impressions, wishes, hopes. The world with her must be a totally different system, and his existence in her society a new and another life. Her very purity refined the passion which raged even in his exhausted mind. Gleams of virtue, morning streaks of duty, broke upon the horizon of his hitherto clouded soul; an obscure suspicion of the utter worthlessness of his life whispered in his hollow ear; he darkly felt that happiness was too philosophical a system to be the result, or the reward, of impulse, however unbounded, and that principle alone could create, and could support, that bliss which is our being's end and aim.

But when he turned to himself, he viewed his situation with horror and yielded almost to despair. What—what could she think of the impure libertine who dared to adore her? If ever time could bleach his own soul, and conciliate hers, what—what was to become of Aphrodite? Was his new career to commence by a new crime? Was he to desert this creature of his affections, and break a heart which beat only for him? It seemed that the only compensation he could offer for a life which had achieved no good, would be to establish the felicity of the only being whose happiness seemed in his power. Yet what a prospect! If before he had trembled—now—

But his harrowed mind and exhausted body no longer allowed him even anxiety. Weak, yet excited, his senses fled; and when Arundel Dacre returned in the evening he found his friend delirious. He sat by his bed for many hours. Suddenly the duke speaks. Arundel Dacre rises:—he leans over the sufferer's couch.

Ah! why turns the face of the listener so pale—and why gleam those eyes with terrible fire? The perspiration courses down his clear but sallow cheek: he throws his dark and clustering curls aside, and passes his hand over his damp brow, as

if to ask whether he, too, had lost his senses from this fray.

The duke is agitated. He waves his arm in the air, and calls out in a tone of defiance and of hate. His voice sinks; it seems that he breathes a milder language, and speaks to some softer being. There is no sound, save the long-drawn breath of one on whose countenance is stamped infinite amazement. Arundel Dacre walks the room disturbed; often he pauses, plunged in deep thought. 'Tis an hour past midnight, and he quits the bedside of the young duke.

He pauses at the threshold, and seems to respire even the noisome air of the metropolis as if it were Eden. As he proceeds down Hill Street, he stops, and gazes for a moment on the opposite house. What passes in his mind we know not. Perhaps he is reminded that in that mansion dwell beauty, wealth and influence—and that all might be his. Perhaps love prompts that gaze—perhaps ambition. Is it passion or is it power? or does one struggle with the other?

As he gazes, the door opens, but without servants; and a man, deeply shrouded in his cloak, comes out. It was night, and the individual was disguised; but there are eyes which can pierce at all seasons, and through all concealments,—and Arundel Dacre marked with astonishment Sir Lucius Grafton.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN it was understood that the Duke of St. James had been delirious, public feeling reached what is called its height; that is to say, the curiosity and the ignorance of the world were about equal. Everybody was indignant,—not so much because the young duke had been shot, but because they did not know why. If the sympathy of women could have consoled him, our hero might have been reconciled to his fate. Among these, no one appeared more anxious as to the result, and more ignorant as to the cause, than Mrs. Dallington Vere. Arundel Dacre called on her the morning ensuing his midnight observation, but understood that she had not seen Sir Lucius Grafton, who, they said, had quitted London, which she thought probable. Nevertheless, Arundel thought proper to walk down Hill Street at the same hour, and, if not at the same minute, yet, in due course of time, he discovered the absent baronet.

In two or three days the young duke was declared out of immediate danger, though his attendants must say, he remained exceedingly restless, and by no means in a satisfactory state; yet, with their aid, they had a right to hope the best. At any rate, if he were to go off, his friends would have the satisfaction of remembering, that all had been done that could be. So saying, Dr. X. took his fee, and Surgeons Y. and Z. prevented his conduct from being singular.

Now began the operations on the Grafton side. A letter from Lady Aphrodite full of distraction. She was fairly mystified. What could have induced Lucy suddenly to act so puzzled her, as well it might. Her despair, and yet her confidence in his grace, seemed equally great. Some talk there was of going off to Cleve at once. Her husband, on the whole, maintained a rigid silence and studied

coolness. Yet he had talked of Vienna and Florence, and even murmured something about public disgrace and public ridicule. In short, the poor lady was fairly worn out, and wished to terminate her harassing career at once, by cutting the Gordian knot. In a word, she proposed coming on to her admirer, and, as she supposed, her victim; and having the satisfaction of giving him his cooling draughts and arranging his bandages.

If the meeting between the young duke and Sir Lucius Grafton had been occasioned by any other cause than the real one, I cannot say what might have been the fate of this proposition. My own opinion is, that this work would have been in two volumes; for the requisite morality would have made out the present one: but, as it was, the image of May Dacre hovered above our hero as his guardian genius. He despaired of ever obtaining her; but yet he determined not wilfully to crush all hope. Some great effort must be made to right his position. Lady Aphrodite must not be deserted—the very thought increased his fever. He wrote, to gain time; but another billet, in immediate answer, only painted increased terrors, and described the growing urgency of her persecuted situation. He was driven into a corner; but even a stag at bay is awful—what then must be a young duke, the most noble animal in existence?

Ill as he was, he wrote these lines, not to Lady Aphrodite, but to—her husband.

“MY DEAR GRAFTON:—You will be surprised at hearing from me. I trust you will not be displeased. Is it necessary for me to assure you, that my interference on a late occasion was quite accidental? And can you, for a moment, maintain that, under the circumstances, I could have acted in a different manner? I regret the whole unhappy business; but most I regret that we were placed in collision.

“I am ready to cast all memory of it into oblivion; and as I most unintentionally offended, I indulge the sweet hope that, in this conduct, you will bear me company.

“Surely men like us are not to be dissuaded from following our inclinations by any fear of the opinion of the world. The whole affair is, at present, a mystery; and, I think, with our united fancies, some explanation may be hit upon which will render the mystery quite impenetrable, while it professes to offer a satisfactory solution.

“I do not know whether this letter expresses my meaning, for my mind is somewhat agitated and my head not very clear; but if you be inclined to understand it in the right spirit, it is sufficiently lucid. At any rate, my dear Grafton, I have once more the pleasure of subscribing myself, faithfully yours,
ST. JAMES.”

This letter was marked “immediate,” consigned to the custody of Luigi, with positive orders to deliver it personally to Sir Lucius; and if not at home, to follow till he found him.

He was not at home, and he was found at ———’s club-house. Sullen, dissatisfied with himself, doubtful as to the result of his fresh manoeuvres, and brooding over his infernal debts, Sir Lucius had stepped into ———, and passed the whole morning gaming desperately with Lord Hounslow and Baron de Berghen. Never had he experienced such a smashing morning. He had long far exceeded his

banker’s account, and was proceeding with a vague idea that he should find money somehow or other, when this note was put into his hand, as it seemed to him, by Providence. The signature of Semiramis could not have imparted more exquisite delight to the mysterious Mr. Upcott, or lucid Dawson Turner, whose letter is not forgotten among the Apennines. (6) Were his long views, his complicated objects, and doubtful results, to be put in competition a moment with so decided, so simple, and so certain a benefit? Certainly not, by a gamester. He rose from the table, and with strange elation wrote these lines.

“MY DEAREST FRIEND:—You forgive me—but can I forgive myself? I am plunged in the most overwhelming grief. Shall I come on? You mad but devoted friend,
LUCIUS GRAFTON.”

“The Duke of St. James,”

&c. &c. &c.

They met the same day. After a long consultation, it was settled that Peacock Piggott should be intrusted, in confidence, with the secret of the affair—merely a drunken squabble, “growing out” of the Bird of Paradise. Wine, jealousy, an artful woman, and headstrong youth, will account for any thing—they accounted for the present affair. The story was believed, because the world were always puzzled at Lady Aphrodite being the cause. The baronet proceeded with promptitude to make the version pass current. He indicted “The Universe” and “The New World;” he prosecuted the caricaturists; and was seen everywhere with his wife “The Universe” and “The New World” revenged themselves on the signora; and then she indicted them. They could not now even libel an opera-singer with impunity—where was the boasted liberty of the press?

In the mean time, the young duke, once more easy in his mind, wonderfully recovered; and on the eighth day after the Ball of Beauty, he returned to the Pavilion, which had now resumed its usual calm character, for fresh air and soothing quiet.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON the morning of the young duke’s departure for Twickenham, as Miss Dacre and Lady Caroline St. Maurice were sitting together at the house of the former, and moralizing over the last night’s ball, Mr. Arundel Dacre was announced.

“You have just arrived in time to offer your congratulations, Arundel, on an agreeable event,” said Miss Dacre. “Lord St. Maurice is about to lead to the hymeneal altar——”

“Lady Sophy Wrekin—I know it.”

“How extremely diplomatic! The *attaché* in your very air. I thought, of course, I was to surprise you; but future ambassadors have such extraordinary sources of information.”

“Mine is a very simple one. The dutchess, imagining, I suppose, that my attentions were directed to the wrong lady, warned me some weeks past. However, my congratulations shall be duly paid. Lady Caroline St. Maurice, allow me to express——”

“All that you ought to feel,” said Miss Dacre. “But men at the present day pride themselves on insensibility.”

"Do you think I am insensible, Lady Caroline?" asked Arundel.

"I must protest against unfair questions," said her ladyship.

"But it is not unfair. You are a person who have now seen me more than once, and therefore, according to May, you ought to have a perfect knowledge of my character. Moreover, you do not share the prejudices of my family. I ask you, then, do you think I am so heartless as May would insinuate?"

"Does she insinuate so much?"

"Does she not call me insensible, because I am not in raptures that your brother is about to marry a young lady, who, for aught she knows, may be the object of my secret adoration?"

"Arundel, you are perverse," said Miss Dacre.

"No, May, I am logical."

"I have always heard that logic is much worse than wilfulness," said Lady Caroline.

"But Arundel always was both," said Miss Dacre. "He is not only unreasonable, but he will always prove that he is right. Here is your purse, sir," she added, with a smile, presenting him with the result of her week's labour.

"This is the way she always bribes me, Lady Caroline. Do you approve of this corruption?"

"I must confess, I have a slight, though secret, kindness for a little bribery. Mamma is now on her way to Mortimer's, on a very corrupt embassy. The *nouvelle mariée*, you know, must be reconciled to her change of lot by quite a new set of playthings. I can give you no idea of the necklace that our magnificent cousin, in spite of his wound, has sent Sophy."

"But, then, such a cousin!" said Miss Dacre. "A young duke, like the young lady in the fairytale, should scarcely ever speak without producing brilliants."

"Sophy is highly sensible of the attention. As she musingly observed, except himself marrying her, he could scarcely do more. I hear the carriage. Adieu, love! Good morning, Mr. Dacre."

"Allow me to see you to your carriage. I am to dine at Fitz-pompey House to-day, I believe."

Arundel Dacre returned to his cousin, and seating himself at the table, took up a book, and began reading it the wrong side upwards; then he threw down a ball of silk, then he cracked a netting-needle, and then, with a husky sort of voice, and a half-blush, and altogether an air of infinite confusion, he said, "This has been an odd affair, May, of the Duke of St. James and Sir Lucius Grafton."

"A very distressing affair, Arundel."

"How singular that I should have been his second, May!"

"Could he have found any one more fit for that office, Arundel?"

"I think he might. I must say this; that had I known at the time the cause of the fray, I should have refused to attend him."

She was silent, and he resumed.

"An opera singer at the best! Sir Lucius Grafton showed more discrimination. Peacock Piggott was just the character for his place, and I think my principal, too, might have found a more congenial sprite. What do you think, May?"

"Really, Arundel, this is a subject of which I know nothing."

"Indeed! Well, it is very odd, May; but do you

know? I have a queer suspicion that you know more about it than anybody else?"

"I! Arundel!" she exclaimed, with marked confusion.

"Yes, *you*, May," he repeated, with great firmness, and looked her in the face with a glance which would read her soul. "Ay! I am sure you do."

"Who says so?"

"O! do not fear that you have been betrayed. No one says it; but I know it. We future ambassadors, you know, have such extraordinary sources of information."

"You jest, Arundel, on a grave subject."

"Grave!—yes, it is grave, May Dacre. It is grave that there should be secrets between us; it is grave, that our house should have been insulted; it is grave that you, of all others, should have been outraged; but O! it is much more grave, it is bitter, that any other arm than this should have avenged the wrong." He rose from his chair, he paced the room in fearful agitation, and gnashed his teeth with an expression of vindictive hate, that he tried not to suppress.

"O! my cousin, my dear, dear cousin! spare me, spare me!" She hid her face in her hands, yet she continued speaking in a broken voice, "I did it for the best. It was to suppress strife, to prevent bloodshed. I knew your temper, and I feared for your life—yet I told my father, I told him all; and it was by his advice that I have maintained throughout the silence which I, perhaps too hastily, at first adopted."

"My own dearest May! spare me, spare me. I cannot mark a tear from you without a pang. How I came to know this, you wonder. It was the delirium of that person who should not have played so proud a part in this affair, and who is yet our friend; it was his delirium that betrayed all. In the madness of his excited brain, he reacted the frightful scene, declared the outrage, and again avenged it. Yet, believe me, I am not tempted by any petty feeling of showing I am not ignorant of what is considered a secret, to declare all this. I know, I feel your silence was for the best,—that it was prompted by sweet and holy feelings for my sake. Believe me, my dear cousin, if any thing could increase the infinite affection with which I love you, it would be the consciousness that, at all times, whenever my image crosses your mind, it is to muse for my benefit, or to extenuate my errors."

"Dear May, you, who know me better than the world, know well my heart is not a mass of ice; and you, who are ever so ready to find a good reason even for my most wilful conduct, and an excuse for my most irrational, will easily credit, that in interfering in an affair in which you are concerned, I am not influenced by an unworthy, an officious, or a meddling spirit. No, my own May, it is because I think it better for you that we should speak upon this subject, that I venture to treat upon it. Perhaps, I broke it in a crude, but, credit me, not in an unkind spirit. I am well conscious I have a somewhat ungracious manner; but you, who have pardoned it so often, will excuse it now. To be brief, it is of your companion to that accused *fête* that I would speak."

"Mrs. Dallington?"

"Surely, she. Avoid her, May. I do not like that woman. You know I seldom speak at hazard; if I do not speak more distinctly now, it is because I will never magnify suspicions into certainties,

which we must do even if we mention them. But I suspect—greatly suspect. An open rupture would be disagreeable—would be unwarrantable—would be impolitic. The season draws to a close. Quit town somewhat earlier than usual, and, in the mean time, receive her, if necessary—but, if possible, never alone. You have many friends; and, if no other, Lady Caroline St. Maurice is worthy of your society.”

He bent down his head, and kissed her forehead: she pressed his faithful hand.

“And now, dear May, let me speak of a less important object,—of myself. I find this borough a mere delusion. Every day new difficulties arise; and every day my chance seems weaker. I am wasting precious time, for one who should be in action. I think, then, of returning to Vienna, and at once. I have some chance of being appointed secretary of legation, and I then shall have achieved what was the great object of my life—independence.”

“This is always a sorrowful subject to me, Arundel. You have cherished such strange—do not be offended if I say such erroneous ideas on the subject of what you call independence, that I feel that, upon it, we can consult neither with profit to you nor satisfaction to myself. Independence! Who is independent, if the heir of Dacre bow to any one? Independence! Who can be independent, if the future head of one of the first families in this great country will condescend to be the secretary even of a king?”

“We have often talked of this, May, and perhaps I have carried a morbid feeling to some excess; but my paternal blood flows in these veins, and it is too late to change. I know not how it is, but I seem misplaced in life. My existence is a long blunder.”

“Too late to change, dearest Arundel! O! thank you for those words. Can it, can it ever be too late to acknowledge error? Particularly if, by that very acknowledgment, we not only secure our own happiness, but that of those we love, and those who love us.”

“Dear May! when I talk with you, I talk with my good genius; but I am in closer and more constant converse with another mind, and of that I am the slave. It is my own. I will not conceal from you, from whom I have concealed nothing, that doubts and dark misgivings of the truth and wisdom of my past feelings and my past career will ever and anon flit across my fancy, and obtrude themselves upon my consciousness. Your father—yes! I feel that I have not been to him what nature intended, and what he deserved.”

“O, Arundel!” she said, with streaming eyes, “he loves you like a son. Yet, yet, be one!”

He seated himself on the sofa by her side, and took her small hand, and bathed it with his kisses.

“My sweet and faithful friend—my very sister. I am overpowered with feelings to which I have hitherto been a stranger. There is a cause for all this contest of my passions. It must out. My being has changed. The scales have fallen from my sealed eyes, and the fountain of my heart o’erflows. Life seems to have a new purpose, and existence a new cause. Listen to me, listen; and if you can, May, comfort me!”

CHAPTER XVII.

AT Twickenham, the young duke recovered rapidly. Not altogether displeased with his recent conduct, his self-complacency assisted his convalescence. Sir Lucius Grafton visited him daily. Regularly, about four or five o’clock, he galloped down to the Pavilion, with the last *on dit*: some gay message from the bow-window, a *mot* of Lord Squib, or a trait of Charles Annesley. But while he studied to amuse the wearisome hours of his imprisoned friend, in the midst of all his gayety an interesting contrition was ever breaking forth, not so much by words as looks. It was evident that Sir Lucius, although he dissembled his affliction, was seriously affected by the consequence of his rash passion; and his amiable victim, whose magnanimous mind was incapable of harbouring an inimical feeling, and ever responded to a soft and generous sentiment, felt actually more aggrieved for his unhappy friend than for himself. Of Arundel Dacre the duke had not seen much. That gentleman never particularly sympathized with Sir Lucius Grafton, and now he scarcely endeavoured to conceal the little pleasure which he received from the baronet’s society. Sir Lucius was the last man not to detect this mood; but as he was confident that the duke had not betrayed him, he could only suppose that Miss Dacre had confided the affair to her family, and therefore, under all circumstances, he thought it best to be unconscious of any alteration in Arundel Dacre’s intercourse with him. Civil, therefore, they were when they met; the baronet was even courteous; but they both mutually avoided each other.

At the end of three weeks the Duke of St. James returned to town in perfect condition, and received the congratulations of his friends. Mr. Dacre had been of the few who had been permitted to visit him at Twickenham. Nothing had then passed between them on the cause of his illness; but his grace could not but observe, that the manner of his valued friend was more than commonly cordial. And Miss Dacre, with her father, was among the first to hail his return to health and the metropolis.

The Bird of Paradise, who, since the incident, had been several times in hysterics, and had written various notes, of three or four lines each, of inquiries and entreaties to join her noble friend, had been kept off from Twickenham by the masterly tactics of Lord Squib. She, however, would drive to the duke’s house the day after his arrival in town, and was with him when sundry loud knocks, in quick succession, announced an approaching levee. He locked her up in his private room, and hastened to receive the compliments of his visitors. In the same apartment, among many others, he had the pleasure of meeting, for the first time, Lady Aphrodite Grafton, Lady Caroline St. Maurice, and Miss Dacre, all women whom he had either promised, intended, or offered to marry. A curious situation this! And really, when our hero looked upon them once more, and viewed them, in delightful rivalry, advancing with their congratulations, he was not surprised at the feelings with which they inspired him. Far, far exceeding the *bonhomie* of Macheath, the duke could not resist remembering, that had it been his fortune to have lived in the land in which his historiographer will soon be wandering—in short,

to have been a pasha instead of a peer, he might have married all three.

A prettier fellow and three prettier women had never met since the immortal incident of *Ida*.

It required the thorough breeding of Lady *Afy* to conceal the anxiety of her passion; May *Dacre's* eyes showered triple sunshine, as she extended a hand not too often offered; but Lady *Caroline* was a cousin, and consanguinity, therefore, authorized as well as accounted for the warmth of her greeting.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A VERY few days after his return, the Duke of *St. James* dined with *Mr. Dacre*. It was the first time that he had dined with him during the season. The *Fitz-pompeys* were there; and, among others, his grace had the pleasure of again meeting a few of his *Yorkshire* friends.

Once more he found himself at the right hand of *May Dacre*. All his career, since his arrival in *England*, flitted across his mind. *Doncaster*, dear *Doncaster*, where he had first seen her, teemed only with delightful reminiscences to a man whose favourite had bolted. Such is the magic of love! Then came *Castle Dacre* and the *Orange Terrace*, and their elegant romps, and the delightful party to *Hauteville*; and then *Dacre Abbey*. An involuntary shudder seemed to damp all the ardour of his soul; but when he turned and looked upon her beaming face he could not feel miserable.

He thought that he had never been at so agreeable a party in his life: yet it was chiefly composed of the very beings whom he daily execrated for their powers of boredom. And he himself was not very entertaining. He was certainly more silent than loquacious, and found himself very often gazing with mute admiration on the little mouth, every word breathed forth from which seemed inspiration. Yet he was happy; O! what happiness is his who jotes upon a woman! Few could observe from his conduct what was passing in his mind; yet the quivering of his softened tones, and the mild lustre of his mellowed gaze; his subdued and quiet manner; his unperceived yet infinite attentions; his memory of little incidents, that all but lovers would have forgotten; the total absence of all compliment, and gallantry, and repartee—all these, to a fine observer, might have been gentle indications of a strong passion; and to her to whom they were addressed, sufficiently intimated that no change had taken place in his feelings, since the warm hour in which he first whispered his o'erpowering love.

The ladies retired, and the Duke of *St. James* fell into a reverie. A political discourse of the most elaborate genus now arose. *Lord Fitz-pompey* got parliamentary. *Young Faulcon* made his escape, having previously whispered to another youth, not unheard by the Duke of *St. James*, that his mother was about to depart, and he was convoy. His grace, too, had heard *Lady Fitz-pompey* say that she was going early to the opera. Shortly afterward, parties evidently retired. But the debate still raged. *Lord Fitz-pompey* had caught a stout *Yorkshire* squire, and was delightedly astounding, with official graces, his stern opponent. A sudden thought occurred to the duke: he stole out of the room, and gained the saloon.

He found it almost empty. With sincere pleasure, he bid *Lady Balmont*, who was on the point of departure, farewell, and promised to look in at her box. He seated himself by *Lady Greville Nugent*, and dexterously made her follow *Lady Balmont's* example. She withdrew with the conviction that his grace would not be a moment behind her. There was only old *Mrs. Hungerford* and her rich daughter remaining. They were in such raptures with *Miss Dacre's* singing, that his grace was quite in despair; but chance favoured him. Even old *Mrs. Hungerford* this night broke through her rule of not going to more than one house, and she drove off to *Lady de Courcy's*.

They were alone. It is sometimes an awful thing to be alone with those we love.

"Sing that again!" asked the duke, imploringly "It is my favourite air; it always reminds me of *Dacre*."

She sang, she ceased; she sang with beauty, and she ceased with grace; but all unnoticed by the tumultuous soul of her adoring guest. His thoughts were intent upon a greater object. The opportunity was sweet; and yet those boisterous wassailers, they might spoil all.

"Do you know that this is the first time that I have seen your rooms lit up?" said the duke.

"Is it possible! I hope they gain the approbation of so distinguished a judge."

"I admire them exceedingly. By-the-by, I see a new cabinet in the next room. *Swaby* told me the other day that you were one of his lady patronesses. I wish you would show it me. I am very curious in cabinets."

She rose, and they advanced to the end of another and a longer room.

"This is a beautiful saloon," said the duke. "How long is it?"

"I really do not know; but I think, between forty and fifty feet."

"O! you must be mistaken. Forty or fifty feet. I am an excellent judge of distances. I will try. Forty or fifty feet. Ah! the third room included. Let us walk to the end of the next room. Each of my paces shall be one foot and a half."

They had now arrived at the end of the third room.

"Let me see," resumed the duke; "you have a small room to the right. O! did I not hear that you had made a conservatory? I see—I see it—lit up too! Let us go in. I want to gain some hints about *London conservatories*."

It was not exactly a conservatory; but a balcony of large dimensions had been fitted up on each side with coloured glass, and was open to the gardens. It was a rich night of fragrant *June*. The moon and stars were as bright as if they had shone over the terrace of *Dacre*, and the perfume of the flowers reminded him of his favourite orange trees. The mild, cool scene was such a contrast to the hot and noisy chamber they had recently quitted, that for a moment they were silent.

"You are not afraid of this delicious air?" asked his grace.

"Midsummer air," said *Miss Dacre*, "must surely be harmless."

Again there was silence; and *Miss Dacre*, after having plucked a flower and tendered a plant, seemed to express an intention of withdrawing. Suddenly he spoke, and in a gushing voice of heartfelt words.

"Miss Daere, you are too kind, too excellent to be offended, if I dare to ask whether any thing could induce you to view with more indulgence one who sensibly feels how utterly he is unworthy of you?"

"My lord, you are the last man whose feelings I should wish to hurt. Let us not revive a conversation to which, I can assure you, neither of us looks back with satisfaction."

"Is there then no hope? Must I ever live with the consciousness of being the object of your scorn?"

"O! no, no! My lord, as you will speak, let us understand each other. However I may approve of my decision, I have lived quite long enough to repent the manner in which it was conveyed. I cannot, without the most unfeigned regret—I cannot for a moment remember, that I have addressed a bitter word to one to whom I am under the greatest obligations. If my apologies—"

"Pray, pray be silent!"

"I must speak. If my apologies, my most complete, my most humble apologies, can be any compensation for treating with such lightness feelings which I now respect, and offers by which I now consider myself honoured,—accept them!"

"O! Miss Daere, that fatal word—respect!"

"My lord, we have warmer words in this house for you. You are now our friend."

"I dare not urge a suit which may offend you; yet if you could read my heart, I sometimes think that we might be happy. Let me hope!"

"My dear Duke of St. James, I am sure you will not ever offend me, because I am sure you will not ever wish to do it. There are few people in this world for whom I entertain a more sincere regard than yourself. I am convinced, I am conscious, that when we met, I did sufficient justice neither to your virtues nor your talents. It is impossible for me to express with what satisfaction I now feel, that you have resumed that place in the affections of this family to which you have a hereditary right. I am grateful, truly, sincerely grateful for all that you feel with regard to me individually; and believe me, in again expressing my regret that it is not in my power to view you in any other light than as a valued friend, I feel that I am pursuing that conduct which will conduce as much to your happiness as my own."

"My happiness, Miss Daere!"

"Indeed, such is my opinion. I will not again endeavour to depreciate the feelings which you entertain for me, and by which, ever remember, I feel honoured; but these very feelings prevent you from viewing their object as dispassionately as I do."

"I am at a loss for your meaning—at least, favour me by speaking explicitly:—you see, I respect your sentiments, and do not presume to urge that on which my very happiness depends."

"To be brief, then, my lord, I will not affect to conceal that marriage is a state which has often been the object of my meditations. I think it the duty of all women that so important a change in their destiny should be well considered. If I know any thing of myself, I am convinced that I should never survive an unhappy marriage."

"But why dream of any thing so utterly impossible?"

"So very probable,—so very certain, you mean, my lord. Ay! I repeat my words, for they are truth. If I ever marry, it is to devote every feeling, and every thought, each hour, each instant of exist-

ence, to a single being for whom I alone live. Such devotion I expect in return; without it, I should die, or wish to die; but such devotion can never be returned by you."

"You amaze me! I! who live only on your image."

"My lord, your education, the habits in which you have been brought up, the maxims which have been instilled into you from your infancy, the system which each year of your life has more matured, the worldly levity with which every thing connected with woman is viewed by you and your companions; whatever may be your natural dispositions,—all this would prevent you—all this would render it a perfect impossibility,—all this will ever make you utterly unconscious of the importance of the subject on which we are now conversing. My lord, pardon me for saying it—you know not of what you speak. Yes! however sincere may be the expression of your feelings to me this moment, I shudder to think on whom your memory dwelt but yesterday, even this hour. I never will peril my happiness on such a chance; but there are others, my lord, who do not think as I do."

"May Daere! save me, save me! If you knew all, you would not doubt. This moment is my destiny."

"My lord, save yourself. There is yet time. You have my prayers."

"Let me then hope—"

"Indeed, indeed, it cannot be. Here our conversation on this subject ends forever."

"Yet we part friends!" He spoke in a broken voice.

"The best and truest!" She extended her arm; he pressed her hand to his impassioned lips, and quitted the house, mad with love and misery.

This scene should have been touching: but, I know not why, when I read it over it seems to me a tissue of half-meanings. What I meant is stamped upon my brain, if indeed I have a brain; but I have lost the power of conveying what I feel, if indeed that power were ever mine. I write with an aching head and quivering hand; yet I must write, if but to break the solitude, which is to me a world quick with exciting life: I scribble to divert a brain which, though weak, will struggle with strong thoughts, and lest my mind should muse itself to madness.

The mind is an essence, there is no doubt, and infinitely superior to the grosser body. Yet somehow that rebel will turn round upon its chief, and wonderfully mar our great careers. Mind is a fine thing, I won't deny it, and mine was once as full of pride and hope as infant empire. But where are now my deeds and aspirations, and where the fame I dreamed of when a boy? I find the world just slipping through my fingers, and cannot grasp the jewel ere it falls. I quit an earth where none will ever miss me, save those whose blood requires no laurels to make them love my memory. My life has been a blunder and a blank, and all ends by my adding one more slight ghost to the shadowy realm of fatal precocity! These are the rubs that make us feel the vanity of life—the littleness of man. Yet I do not groan, and will not murmur. My punishment is no caprice of tyranny. I brought it on myself, as greater men have done before. Prometheus is a lesson how to bear torture; but I think my case is most like Nebuchadnezzar's.

But this is dull. I know not how it is: but, as is the custom to observe, when something is about

to be said particularly flat, I have "a shrewd suspicion," that our light tale is growing tragical. When men have been twice rejected, their feelings are somewhat strange; and when men feel keenly, they act violently. I have half a mind to give it up, and leave these volumes in imperfect beauty, like two lone columns on an Argive plain.

Perhaps it is the hour,—perhaps the place; but I am gloomy. The moon is in her midnight bower, and from the walls of the huge hall in which I sit many a marble chief and canvass cardinal frown, as it were, upon the intrusive stranger, who sits scribbling in their presence, and whom, if they were alive, they would no more think of stabbing, poisoning, or burning, than of eating flesh in Lent. A moan is heard, too, in the lengthening galleries, and doors slam in chambers which none e'er enter. There is nothing so vast and desolate as an Italian palace.

I am a great votary of the genus loci: it is a doctrine I have often proved. Now, if I were seated in some Albanian chambers, all varnished mahogany, and crimson damask, round tables, and square couches, with dwarf bookcases, which hold not too many volumes, and ever and anon crowned with a bronze or bust, some slight antique, which just reminds us that had we lived at Athens or at Rome we are of the select few who would have joined Aspasian coteries and Horatian suppers,—or if even I had taken refuge in a temporary apartment in dingy Jermyn Street, or sly St. James's Palace, some little room, small, snug, and smoky, cozy, neat, and warm, and *very comfortable*,—why then affairs would alter. I'd snuff my candles, and I'd poke my fire, and, with a pen brisk as the morn, glance off a chapter which might make some people stare; for even the critics, never much my friends, confess I have shown a considerable turn for satire.

But after one-and-twenty, men grow mild—at least I did. And so this rare gift gets thrown by with cricket, boxing, fencing, foils, and fives,—all pursuits, excellence in which, as in satire, depends on hitting hard. So a little calm gayety is all I now allow myself, and after that, I am ever doubly serious, as thrifty housewives occasionally indulge in a slight debauch, and tax the ensuing week the butcher's bill.

I said the critics were never much my friends, which I regret, and which has occasioned me many a headache. Because we all know, that they are always right, and never make a miss. So, their approbation is a feather in an author's cap, and infinitely to be preferred to public sympathy and private praise.

I don't know how it was, but certainly I did not hit the fancy of these gentry. I suppose I tried to mount the throne without the permission of the Prætorians. In the literary as in all other worlds, the way to rise is to be patronised. "Talent" is admired; but then it must be docile, and defer. In spite of my many faults, the cant of the clique was wanting, and the freemasons discovered I was not a brother. I am sure I had no wish, and no intention to mingle in their ranks. I dressed some crude inventions in a thoughtless style, without any idea my page would live beyond the week that gave it birth. I was brought up in due abhorrence of this unthrifty life, and was kept from ink as some boys are kept from wine, or from what grave signors think even worse.

There also was a rumour ripe and deep, that I

had ventured to doubt the inspiration of some exalted bards, whose seats upon Parnassus were so high, that I suppose they were covered with the clouds, for I had never yet detected their divinity-ships. But nevertheless it was voted, *nem. con.*, that innocent I must be the blaspheming rogue, and so all Grub street sent its toothless mastiffs at my heretic feet. There is nothing so virulent as an irritated dunce, particularly if he be on a wrong scent. In short, I was voted quite a dangerous character—one of those who would not cry *ὦρκα* o'er a genius not yet found, or fall into ecstasies at the originality of an echo.

I understand that it was settled that I should be written down. I wonder why these kind gentlemen did not succeed. I am sure I did every thing I could to help them. Sometimes I was very fine, and sometimes much too witty. Then, I have seen even purer English than my earliest page; but perhaps my foreign slip-slop made up for that, which indicated the travelled man.

But the public backed me, as we back the weaker party in a boisterous row. The public will sometimes read the book they ought not. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis 'tis truec.'" But this blundering brings gall to the critic's lip, and many a bilious "article" flows from a pen which itself has failed where the stigmatised has succeeded. When I begin again I shall know better. I am not one of those minds on which experience is thrown away. I will get a magazine or so to say something for me sweet and soft. Who knows then what I may not come to! Perhaps some congenial editor may some day hail me as "a talented young man!" Perhaps, in the long perspective of my glory, I may even in time be reckoned a supernumerary of the "two thousand most distinguished writers of the day." And, after all, it is amusing to find even my boyish nonsense, the flagrant defects of which could only be excused by the speedy oblivion which awaited them, upon the Rhine, the Danube, and the Elbe. I have had my back, too, patted on the Seine, and shrugged my shoulders over indiscretions which had travelled even as far as where the mountains shoot the turbid Arno from their dark green womb.

If I might be permitted to give an opinion, which I never do, I should say that bluster was scarcely the right way to stifle youth. A sneer is the most active hostility that I should recommend under such circumstances; but the best would be silence. As we advance, quiet is the *τὸ καλὸν* of existence; but when we are juvenals, and think the world a great matter, and ourselves not altogether the most insignificant part of it, we are but too ready to put on the gloves, and young blood is not exactly the fluid to be bullied. I am sure that my first literary offence would have been my last, if I had not been dared; but when scribbling became a point of honour, I set to, and would not prove a raven.

The public backed me: I am very willing to ascribe their support merely to their good nature, for I have found mankind far more amiable than, misled by books, I once dared to hope. But lest this cause alone should be considered a slur upon their discrimination, I will believe, that some few sparks of feeling rose from my false inventions, some slight flame of truth broke out from my dark crudities, and won their sympathy.

In this artificial world, we pine for nature, and we sigh for truth. It is this that makes us hasten to fictitious worlds to find what in our own should be,

and yet is not. It is this that makes us prize the page that makes us feel. It is this that bows us down before the magic of creative mind, whose inspiration is but the voice of disabused humanity. He who, while he shares the passions of his race, yet muses deeply on their deep results, and searching into his own breast, can transform experience into existence, and create past passions into present life—he who can do all this without the cynic's sneer or sophist's gloss, is a rare being;—but where is he?

Since the Thunderer sank to night in Misolonghi's fatal marsh, the intellectual throne has remained vacant. His chiefs and rivals will neither claim nor yield the proud pre-eminence. Each feels that supremacy must be the meed of novel conquests; and it is too late for that. Some, like Napoleon's marshals, have grown fat and rich; some, which is much worse, lean and gray. So, these heroes divide the provinces, and repose under their laurels, that is to say, they amuse themselves with some slight deeds, which, by their contrast, keep alive the memory of their great achievements. One founds a school; another writes a school-book. Having enchanted the fathers, they condescend to conjure before the children.

Moore alone, like Murat charging in the hottest fight, still maintains the war. O! long may victory poise on his unsullied plume! long may the trenchant sabre of his wit gleam in our ranks, and long his trumpet sound to triumph! Methinks that whenever he may leave us—on that day, the sun will be less warm, the stars less bright, the moon less soft;—that a cloud will burst over the gardens of Cashmere, and the peris grow pale in the palaces of Amrabad;—that every nightingale will pine, and every rose will fade!

But while the Paladins surround the throne with their broad shields, and in oligarchical disdain support the literary regency, a far different scene opens without the pale. There I view a vast tumultuous crowd, mad with the lust of praise, and fierce with the ungorged appetite of insatiable vanity. Fired with the glory that the great captains have won in long campaigns, and flushed with the prospect of the distant crown, bands rush to fight, and, as they hope, to conquer. How wide the combat! How innumerable the combatants! What infinite rashness! What unprecedented self-confidence! What vast variety of manœuvres! What complicated tactics! What bootless and yet unceasing stratagems! What deceitful exultation! What idle boasting! What false triumph! What struggling, what panting, what cursing, and what a dust!

But when that dust subsides,—as ever and anon a calm will hang o'er battle,—what see we then? The throne still empty, and the guard unbroken; and the plain strewn only with the exhausted bodies and brittle armour of the hot but weak assailants. Then the game begins again. A fresh hero darts on the field, amid the hired cheers of hollow tribes; but ere their leader throws his boastful lance, he turns a craven. Each moment has its miracle, that proves a cheat; each hour its fresh prophet, that predicts the past.

I say nothing, because I am no judge; but I will say this, that *all* cannot be the right man. The minds of men are, on the whole, very similar, and genius is, whatever some may think, a very rare production. When I watch this scene of ineffect-

ual strife, and mark them chasing shadows, in spite of all their high fantastic tricks, their elaborate caprice, their affected novelty, their disguised and salted staleness, their stolen beauty and their studied grace, first as I would be, to hail a master-sprite, I see nothing but the Protean forms of a multiplied mediocrity. They are too many. As in the last days of the fated city, each alley has its prophet. All I hope is, that before I eat a kabob in Persia, they will have discovered the true leader; and that when I return, if I do return, I may find a good literary creed, strong, vehement, and infallible.

I wash my hands of any participations in this contest. What I am I know not, nor do I care. I have that within me which man can neither give nor take away, which can throw light on the darkest passages of life, and draw, from a discordant world, a melody divine. For it I would live, and for it alone. O! my soul, must we then, part? Is this the end of all our conceptions, all our musings, our panting thoughts, our gay fancies, our bright imaginings, our delicious reveries, and exquisite communing? Is this the end, the great and full result, of all our sweet society? I care not for myself; I am a wretch beneath even pity. My thousand errors, my ten thousand follies, my infinite corruption, have well deserved a bitterer fate than this. But thou!—feel I have betrayed thee. Hast thou been the inmate of more spiritual clay, bound with a brain less headstrong, and with blood less hot, thou mightest have been glorious. I care not for myself, but thou—the bright friend that ne'er was wanting, that in my adversity hast softened sorrow, and in my days of joy have tripled rapture, who hast made obscure an empire, and common life a pageant—thou, Haram of my life, to whose inviolable shrine I fled in all my griefs, and found a succour, must we then part indeed, my delicate Ariel! and must thou quit this earth without a record! O! mistress, that I have ever loved!—O! idol, that I have ever worshipped! how like a fond wife, who clings even closer when we wrong her most, how faithful art thou, even in this hour of need, and how consoling is thy whispering voice!

Where are we? I think I was saying, that 'tis difficult to form an opinion of ourselves. They say it is impossible; which sounds like sense, and probably is truth. And yet, I sometimes think I write a pretty style, though spoiled by that confounded puppyism; but then mine is the puppy age, and that will wear off. Then, too, there are my vanity, my conceit, my affectation, my arrogance, and my egotism; all very heinous, and painfully contrasting with the imperturbable propriety of my fellow-scribblers,—“All gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.” But I may mend, or they fall off, and then the odds will be more equal.

Thank heavens! I am emancipated. It was a hard struggle, and cost me dear. Born in the most artificial country of this most artificial age, was it wonderful that I imbibed its false views, and shared its fatal passions? But I rode out the storm, and found a port, although a wreck. I look back with disgust upon myself,—on them, with pity. A qualm comes over me when, for a moment, I call to mind their little jealousies and their minute hatreds, their wretched plans, and miserable purposes; their envy, their ignorance, and their malice; their strife, their slander, their struggles, their false excitement, and their fictitious rapture; their shortsighted views, and long delusions.

Is it not wisdom, then, to fly from all this hot anxiety and wearing care, and to forget these petty griefs, and pettier joys, by the soft waters of this southern sea? Here I find all that I long have thirsted for. Here my soul throws off the false ideas of vulgar life, and recurs to its own nature. Here each beam is rapture, and each breeze is bliss. Here my days are reveries, and my nights are dreams. Here, each warm morn, I muse o'er exquisite creation; and, when the twilight blushes in the west, I hear a whispering sound that nature sends, which tells me secrets man cannot invent. O! why cannot life be passed in perpetual thought, and in the excitement of beautiful ideas!

And here, as far as converse is concerned, I now could live without mankind; but I should miss their exquisite arts, which render existence more intense. Ah! that my earliest youth had wandered here! Ah! that my fathers ne'er had left their shores! I check the thought, for while I muse, my memory wanders to another region, and too well I feel that, even amid the blue *Ægean* isles, my thoughts will fly to a remoter land and colder sea.

O, England!—O! my country—not in hate I left thee—not in bitterness am I wandering here. My heart is thine, although my shadow falls upon a foreign strand; and although full many an eastern clime and southern race have given me something of their burning blood, it flows for thee! I rejoice that my flying fathers threw their ancient seed on the stern shores which they have not dishonoured: I am proud to be thy child. Thy noble laws have fed with freedom a soul that ill can brook constraint. Among thy hallowed hearths, I own most beautiful affections. In thy abounding tongue my thoughts find music; and with the haughty fortunes of thy realm my destiny would mingle!

What though the immortal glory which here shoots forth from out the tombs of empires, bathes with no lambent gleams thy immemorial cliffs! Still there we proudly witness the more active sublimity of great and growing empire. What Rome and Carthage were, thou art conjoined, my country! In each eternal zone there floats the sovereign standard of St. George, and each vast deep groans with the haughty bulwarks of the globe. Earth has none like unto thee, thou queen of universal waters! Europe watches thy nod. The painted Indian veils his feathery crown to thee. Thee sultry Afric fears; and dusky Asia is thy teeming dower!

What though no purple skies, no golden suns, gild in thy land the olive and the vine—yet beauty lingers in thy quiet vales, and health still wanders on thy peaceful plains, rich with no human gore. Nature has given thee much; and all that she has denied, is the quick tribute of the hastening climes. Free are thy sons, and high their rising hearts, that pant for power; and whom in the harams of the glowing earth, whither I bend my fated steps, shall I find to match the dazzling daughters of my native land!

Alas! that hot anxiety should spoil the noblest nation that ever rose to empire! O! my countrymen, think—think ere it is too late, that life is love, and love is heaven. Feel—feel, that wealth is but a means, and power an instrument. Away, then, with the short-sighted views of harsh utility! Our hours are few,—they might be beautiful. Our life is brief,—but pleasure lengthens days. Man is

made for absolute enjoyment. "It is thy vocation, Hal!" and they may preach and groan, growl and hiss, but for this we live, and sooner or later to this we shall recur. The new philosophy that is at hand is but an appeal to our five senses. I may not live to hear its gay decrees, nor may my son; but I feel confident the golden age is not far off. The world is round, so is eternity, and so is time. The iron age must cease, although by polish we have contrived to make it steel. Man can bear it no longer,—and then King Saturn will hold his court again. We have had enough of bloody Jupiter. And so, farewell my country! Few can love thee better than he who traces here these idle lines. Worthier heads are working for thy glory and thy good; but if ever the hour shall call, my brain and life are thine.

Meantime, I cast my fortune on the waters. Let them waft me where they wist. Where'er my fate may urge me, I can view the world with a deep passion, that can extract a moral from the strange and draw from loneliness delight.

My gentle reader!—gentle you have been to me, and ever kind—broad seas and broader lands divide us. We no longer meet. Take, then, these pages as a morning call. Methinks, even as I write, my faithful steed stops at thy cherished door. Once more thy smoky knocker soils my rosy glove; once more thy portal opens, and the geranium gale heralds the sweetness of thy chambers. We meet, and while you net a purse, or some small work, which exercises at the same time the body and the mind, you are also excessively amusing. How amiable is your scandal! How piquant your morality! Aurelia is about to be married, but she herself is not sure to which brother: she is so good-natured! And Brilliant says, that Louisa's eyebrows fell off in the agitation of a new dance,—but he is not to be believed: he is so ill-natured! And thus glides on an hour in easy chat, until a pealing knock drives me away—a nervous man who shuns a strange incursion. We part with the hope, that the park or the opera may again bring together, in the course of four-and-twenty hours, the two most amusing people in town.

Dreams! dreams! O! why from out the misty caves of memory call I these visions to the light of life? And yet there is a charm in just remembering we have been charmed. There is something soft and soothing in the reminiscence of a lounging hour. But, hark! The convent bell sends forth a matin peal. I hear the wakening of an early bird—I feel the freshness of the growing morn. I have exceeded all bounds, and shall get reported, for I have a spy in my establishment. That I have long discovered. I think it must be my valet; but he vows it is the cook, who again protests—but I'll unearth the traitor, and put him on board-wages for his pains. In the mean time, I must prepare for a rowing letter by return of post.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE duke threw himself into his carriage in that mood which fits us for desperate deeds. What he intended to do, indeed, was doubtful, but something very vigorous, very decided, perhaps very terrible. An indefinite great effort danced, in misty magnificence, before the visions of his mind. His whole

being was to be changed—his life was to be revolutionized. Such an alteration was to take place, that even she could not doubt the immense, yet incredible result. Then despair whispered its cold-blooded taunts, and her last hopeless words echoed in his ear. But he was too agitated to be calmly miserable, and, in the poignancy of his feelings, he even meditated death. One thing, however, he could obtain—one instant relief was yet in his power—solitude. He panted for the loneliness of his own chamber, broken only by his agitated musings.

The carriage stopped; the lights and noise called him to life. This, surely, could not be home! Whirled open the door, down dashed the steps, with all that prompt precision which denotes the practised hand of an aristocratic retainer.

"What is all this, Symmons? Why did you not drive home?"

"Your grace forgets that Mr. Annesley and some gentlemen sup with your grace to-night at the Alhambra."

"Impossible! Drive home."

"Your grace perhaps forgets that your grace is expected," said the experienced servant, who knew when to urge a master, who, to-morrow, might blame him for permitting his caprice.

"What am I to do? Stay here. I will run up stairs and put them off!"

He ran up into the crush-room. The opera was just over, and some parties, who were not staying the ballet, had already assembled there. As he passed along, he was stopped by Lady Fitz-pompey, who would not let such a capital opportunity escape of exhibiting Caroline and the young duke together.

"Bulkley," said her ladyship, "there must be something wrong about the carriage." An experienced, middle-aged gentleman, who jobbed on in society by being always ready, and knowing his cue, resigned the arm of Lady Caroline St. Maurice, and disappeared.

"George," said Lady Fitz-pompey, "give your arm to Carry, just for one moment."

If it had been anybody but his cousin, the duke would have easily escaped; but Caroline he invariably treated with marked regard; perhaps because his conscience occasionally reproached him that he had not treated her with a stronger feeling. At this moment, too, she was the only being in the world, save one, whom he could remember with satisfaction. He felt that he loved her most affectionately, but, somehow, she did not inspire him with those peculiar feelings which thrilled his heart at the recollection of May Dacre.

In this mood he offered an arm, which was accepted; but he could not in a moment assume the tone of mind befitting his situation and the scene. He was silent; for him a remarkable circumstance.

"Do not stay here," said Lady Caroline, in a soft voice, which her mother could not overhear. "I know you want to be away. Steal off."

"Where can I be better than with you, Carry?" said the young duke, determined not to leave her, and loving her still more for her modest kindness; and thereon he turned round, and, to show that he was sincere, began talking with his usual spirit. Mr. Bulkley, of course, never returned, and Lady Fitz-pompey felt as satisfied with her diplomatic talents as a plenipotentiary who has just arranged an advantageous treaty.

And Dacre came up, and spoke to Lady

Fitz-pompey. Never did two persons converse together who were more dissimilar in their manner and their feelings; and yet Arundel Dacre did contrive to talk—a result which he could not at all ways accomplish, even with those who could sympathize with him. Lady Fitz-pompey listened to him with attention; for Arundel Dacre, in spite of his odd manner, or perhaps in some degree in consequence of it, had obtained a distinguished reputation both among men and women; and it was the great principle of Lady Fitz-pompey to attach to her the distinguished youth of both sexes. She was pleased with this public homage of Arundel Dacre; because he was one who, with the reputation of talents, family, and fashion, seldom spoke to any one, and his attentions elevated their object. Thus she maintained her empire.

St. Maurice now came up to excuse himself to the young duke for not attending at the Alhambra to-night. "Sophy could not bear it," he whispered; "she had got her head full of the most ridiculous fancies, and it was in vain to speak: so he had promised to give up that, as well as Crockford's."

This reminded our hero of his party, and the purpose of his entering the opera. He determined not to leave Caroline till her carriage was called; and he began to think that he really must go to the Alhambra after all. He resolved to send them off at an early hour.

"Any thing new to-night, Henry?" asked his grace of Lord St. Maurice. "I have just come in."

"O! then you have seen them?"

"Seen whom?"

"The most knowing *forestieri* we ever had. We have been speaking of nothing else the whole evening. Has not Caroline told you? Arundel Dacre introduced me to them."

"Who are they?"

"I forget their names. Dacre, how do you call the heroes of the night? Dacre never answers. Did you ever observe that? But, see! there they come."

The duke turned, and observed Lord Darrell advancing with two gentlemen, with whom his grace was well acquainted. These were Prince Charles de Whiskerburg and Count Frill.

None of your paltry ***** princes, none of your seamy ***** counts, but nobles such as Hungary and Britain can alone produce. M. de Whiskerburg was the eldest son of a prince, who, besides being the premier noble of the empire, possessed in his own country a very pretty park of two or three hundred miles in circumference, in the boundaries of which the imperial mandate was not current, but hid its diminished head before the supremacy of a subject worshipped under the title of John the Twenty-fourth. M. de Whiskerburg was a very young man, very tall, with a very fine figure, and very fine features. In short, a sort of Hungarian Apollo; only his beard, his mustachios, his whiskers, his *favoris*, his padishas, his sultanas, his mignonettas, his dulcebellas, did not certainly entitle him to the epithet of *imberbis*, and made him rather an after-representative of the Hungarian Hercules.

Count Frill was a very different sort of personage. He was all rings and ringlets, ruffles, and a little rouge. Much older than his companion, short in stature, plump in figure, but with a most defined waist, fair, blooming, with a multiplicity

of long light curls, and a perpetual smile playing upon his round countenance, he looked like the Cupid of an opera Olympus.

The Duke of St. James had been very intimate with these distinguished gentlemen in their own country, and had received from them many and most distinguished attentions. Often had he expressed to them his sincere desire to greet them in his native land. Their mutual anxiety of never again meeting was now removed. If his heart, instead of being bruised, was absolutely broken, still honour, conscience, the glory of his house, his individual reputation, alike urged him not to be cold or backward at such a moment. He advanced, therefore, with a due mixture of grace and warmth, and congratulated them on their arrival. At this moment Lady Fitz-pompey's carriage was announced. Promising to return to them in an instant, he hastened to his cousin; but Mr. Arundel Dacre had already offered his arm, which, for Arundel Dacre, was really pretty well.

The duke was now glad that he had a small reunion this evening, as he could at once pay a courtesy to his foreign friends. He ran into the signora's dressing-room, to assure her of his presence. He stumbled upon Peacock Piggott as he came out, and summoned him to fill the vacant place of St. Maurice, and then sent him with a message to some ladies who yet lingered in their box, and whose presence he thought might be an agreeable addition to the party.

You entered the Alhambra by a Saracenic cloister, from the ceiling of which an occasional lamp threw a gleam upon some eastern arms hung up against the wall. This passage led to the armoury, a room of moderate dimensions, but hung with rich contents. Many an inlaid breastplate—many a Mameluke scimitar and Damascus blade—many a geumed pistol and pearl-embroidered saddle might there be seen, though viewed in a subdued and quiet light. All seemed hushed, and still, and shrouded in what had the reputation of being a palace of pleasure.

In this chamber assembled the expected guests. His grace and the Bird of Paradise arrived first, with their foreign friends. Lord Squib, and Lord Darrell, Sir Lucius Grafton, Mr. Annesley, and Mr. Peacock Piggott, followed, but not alone. There were two ladies who, by courtesy, if by no other right, bore the titles of Lady Squib, and Mrs. Annesley. There was also a pseudo Lady Aphrodite Grafton. There was Mrs. Montfort, the famous *blonde*, of a beauty which was quite ravishing, and dignified as beautiful. Some said, (but really people say such things,) that there was a talk, (I never believe any thing I hear,) that had not the Bird of Paradise flown in, (these foreigners pick up every thing,) Mrs. Montfort would have been the Dutchess of St. James. How this may be I know not: certain, however, this superb and stately donna did not openly evince any spleen at her more fortunate rival. Probably, although she found herself a guest at the Alhambra instead of being the mistress of the palace: probably, like many other ladies, she looked upon this affair of the singing-bird as a freak that must end—and then, perhaps, his grace, who was a charming young man, would return to his senses. There, also, was her sister, a long, fair girl, who looked sentimental, but was only silly. There was a little French actress, like a highly-finished miniature; and a Spanish

danseuse, tall, dusky, and lithe, glancing like a lynx, and graceful as a jennet.

Having all arrived, they proceeded down a small gallery to the banquetting-room. The doors are thrown open. Pardon me, if for a moment I do not describe the chamber; but really the blaze affects my sight. The room was large and lofty. It was fitted up as an eastern tent. The walls were hung with scarlet cloth, tied up with ropes of gold. Round the room crouched recumbent lions richly gilt, who grasped in their paw a lance, the top of which was a coloured lamp. The ceiling was emblazoned with the Hauteville arms, and was radiant with burnished gold. A cresset lamp was suspended from the centre of the shield, and not only emitted an equable flow of soft though brilliant light, but also, as the aromatic oil wasted away, distilled an exquisite perfume.

The table blazed with golden plate, for the Bird of Paradise loved splendour. At the end of the room, under a canopy and upon a throne, the shield and vases lately executed for his grace now appeared. Every thing was gorgeous, costly, and imposing; but there was no pretence, save in the original outline, at maintaining the oriental character. The furniture was French; and opposite the throne Canova's Hebe, by Bartolini, bounded with a golden cup from a pedestal of *ormolu*.

The guests are seated; but after a few minutes the servants withdraw. Small tables of ebony and silver, and dumb-waiters of ivory and gold, conveniently stored, are at hand, and Spiridon never leaves the room. The repast was most refined, most exquisite, and most various. It was one of those meetings where all eat. When a few persons, easy and unconstrained, unencumbered with cares, and of dispositions addicted to enjoyment, get together at past midnight, it is extraordinary what an appetite they evince. Singers also are proverbially prone to gormandise; and though the Bird of Paradise unfortunately possessed the smallest mouth in all Singingland, it is astonishing how she pecked! But they talked as well as feasted, and were really gay. It was amusing to observe,—that is to say, if you had been a dumb-waiter, and had time for observation,—how characteristic was the affectation of the women. Lady Squib was witty, Mrs. Annesley refined, and the pseudo Lady Afy fashionable. As for Mrs. Montfort, she was, as her wont, somewhat silent, but excessively sublime. The Spaniard said nothing, but no doubt indicated the possession of Cervantic humour by the sly calmness with which she exhausted her own waiter, and pillaged her neighbours'. The little Frenchwoman scarcely ate any thing, but drank Champagne and chatted, with equal rapidity and equal composure.

"Prince," said the duke, "I hope Madame de Harestein approves of your trip to England!"

The prince only smiled, for he was of a silent disposition, and therefore wonderfully well suited his travelling companion.

"Poor Madame de Harestein!" exclaimed Count Frill. "What despair she was in when you left Vienna, my dear duke! Ah! *mon Dieu!* I did what I could to amuse her. I used to take my guitar, and sing to her morning and night, but without the least effect. She certainly would have died of a broken heart, if it had not been for the dancing-dogs."

"The dancing-dogs!" minced the pseudo Lady Aphrodite. "How shocking!"

"Did they bite her?" asked Lady Squib, "and so inculcate her with gayety?"

"O! the dancing-dogs, my dear ladies! everybody was mad about the dancing-dogs. They came from Peru, and danced the mazaruka in green jackets with a *jabot*. O! what a *jabot*!"

"I dislike animals excessively," remarked Mrs. Annesley.

"Dislike the dancing-dogs!" said Count Frill. "Ah! my good lady, you would have been enchanted. Even the kaiser fed them with pistachio nuts. O! so pretty! delicate leetle things, soft, shining little legs, and pretty little faces! so sensible, and with such *jabots*!"

"I assure you, they were excessively amusing," said the prince, in a soft, confidential under-tone to his neighbour, Mrs. Montfort, who, admiring his silence, which she took for state, smiled and bowed with fascinating condescension.

"And what else has happened very remarkable, count, since I left you?" asked Lord Darrell.

"Nothing, nothing, my dear Darrell. This *bêtise* of a war has made us all serious. If old Clamstandt has not married that gipsy little Dugiria, I really think I should have taken a turn to Belgrade."

"You should not eat so much, Poppet!" drawled Charles Annesley to the Spaniard.

"Why not!" said the little French lady, with great animation, always ready to fight anybody's battle, provided she could get an opportunity to talk. "Why not, Mr. Annesley? You never will let anybody eat—I never eat myself, because every night, having to talk so much, I am dry, dry, dry,—so I drink, drink, drink. It is an extraordinary thing, that there is no language which makes you so thirsty as French. I always have heard that all the southern languages, Spanish and Italian, make you hungry."

"What can be the reason?" seriously asked the pseudo Lady Afy.

"Because there is so much salt in it," said Lord Squib.

"Delia," drawled Mr. Annesley, "you look very pretty to-night!"

"I am charmed to charm you, Mr. Annesley. Shall I tell you what Lord Bon Mot said of you?"

"No, *ma mignonne*! I never wish to hear my own good things."

"Spoiled, you should add," said Lady Squib, "if Bon Mot be in the case."

"Lord Bon Mot is a most gentlemanly man," said Delia, indignant at an admirer being attacked. "He always wants to be amusing. Whenever he dines out, he comes and sits with me for half an hour to catch the air of a Parisian badinage."

"And you tell him a variety of little things?" asked Lord Squib, insidiously drawling out the secret tactics of Bon Mot.

"*Beaucoup, beaucoup*," said Delia, extending two little white hands sparkling with gems. "If he come in ever so—how do you call it? heavy—Not that—in the damps—Ah! it is that—if ever he come in the damps, he goes out always like a *soufflé*."

"As empty, I have no doubt," said Lady Squib. "And as sweet, I have no doubt," said Lord Squib; "for Delcroix complains sadly of your excesses, Delia."

"Mr. Delcroix complain of me! That, indeed, is too bad. Just because I recommended Mont-

morency de Versailles to him for an excellent customer, ever since he abuses me, merely because Montmorency has forgot, in the hurry of going off, to pay his little account."

"But he says you have got all the things," said Lord Squib, whose great amusement was to put Delia in a passion.

"What of that?" screamed the little lady. "Montmorency gave them me."

"Don't make such a noise," said the Bird of Paradise. "I never can eat when there is a noise. St. James," continued she, in a fretful tone, "they make such a noise!"

"Annesley, keep Squib quiet."

"Delia, leave that young man alone. If Isidora would talk a little more, and you eat a little more, I think you would be the most agreeable little ladies I know. Poppet! put those *bouillons* in your pocket. You should never eat sugarplums in company."

Thus talking agreeable nonsense, tasting agreeable dishes, and sipping agreeable wines, an hour ran on. Sweetest music from an unseen source ever and anon sounded, and Spiridion swung a censer full of perfumes round the chamber. (7) At length the duke requested Count Frill to give them a song. The Bird of Paradise would never sing for pleasure, only for fame and a slight check. The count begged to decline, and at the same time asked for a guitar. The signora sent for hers; and his excellency, preluding with a beautiful simper, gave them some slight thing to this effect:

I.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a gay little girl is charming Bignetta!
She dances, she prattles,
She rides and she rattles;
But she always is charming—that charming Bignetta!

II.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a wild little witch is charming Bignetta!
When she smiles I'm all madness;
When she frowns I'm all sadness;
But she always is smiling—that charming Bignetta!

III.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a wicked young rogue is charming Bignetta!
She laughs at my shyness,
And flirts with his highness;
Yet still she is charming—that charming Bignetta!

IV.

Charming Bignetta! charming Bignetta!
What a dear little girl is charming Bignetta!
"Think me only a sister,"
Said she trembling: I kiss'd her.
What a charming young sister is—charming Bignetta.

He ceased; and although

"—the Ferrarese
To choicer music chimed his gay guitar
In Este's halls,"

or Casti himself, or rather Mr. Rose, choicely sings, yet still his song served its purpose, for it raised a smile.

"I wrote that for Madame Sapiépha, at the congress of Verona," said Count Frill. "It has been thought amusing."

"Madame Sapiépha!" exclaimed the Bird of Paradise. "What! that pretty little woman who has such pretty caps!"

"The same! Ah! what caps! *Mon Dieu!* what taste! what taste!"

"You like caps, then?" asked the Bird of Paradise, with a sparkling eye.

"O! if there be any thing more than that which I know most, it is the cap. Here, *voici!*" said he, rather oddly unbuttoning his waistcoat, "you see what lace I have got. *Voici! voici!*"

"Ah! me! what lace! what lace!" exclaimed the Bird, in rapture. "St. James, look at his lace. Come here, come here, sit next me. Let me look at that lace." She examined it with great attention, then turned up her beautiful eyes with a fascinating smile. "*Ah! c'est jolie, n'est-ce pas?* But you like caps. I tell you what, you shall see my caps. Spiridion, go, *mon cher*, and tell Ma'amselle to bring my caps—all my caps—one of each set."

In due time entered the Swiss, with the caps—all the caps—one of each set. As she handed them in turn to her mistress, the Bird chirped a panegyric upon each.

"That is pretty, is it not—and this also? but this is my favourite. What do you think of this border! *c'est belle, cette garniture? et ce jabot, c'est très seduisant, n'est-ce pas?* Mais *voici*, the cap of Princess Lichtenstein. *C'est superb, c'est mon favori*. But I also love very much this of the Duchesse de Berri. She gave me the pattern herself. And, after all, this *cornette à petite santé* of Lady Blaze is a dear little thing; then, again, this *coiffe à dentelle* of Lady Macaroni is quite a pet."

"Pass them down," said Lord Squib; "we want to look at them." Accordingly they were passed down. Lord Squib put one on.

"Do I look superb, sentimental, or only pretty?" asked his lordship. The example was contagious, and most of the caps were appropriated. No one laughed more than their mistress, who, not having the slightest idea of the value of money, would have given them all away on the spot; not from any good-natured feeling, but from the remembrance that to-morrow she might amuse half an hour in buying others.

While some were stealing, and she remonstrating, the duke clapped his hands like a caliph. The curtain at the end of the apartment was immediately withdrawn, and the ball-room stood revealed.

It was the same size as the banquetting-hall. Its walls exhibited a long perspective of gilt pilasters, the frequent piers of which were entirely of plate-looking glass, save here, occasionally, a picture had been, as it were inlaid in its rich frame. Here was the Titian Venus of the Tribune, deliciously copied by a French artist; there, the Roman Fornarina, with her delicate grace, beamed like the personification of Raffaello's genius. Here, Zuleikah, living in the light and shade of that magician Guercino in vain summoned the passions of the blooming Hebrew; and there, Cleopatra, preparing for her last immortal hour, proved by what we saw that Guido had been a lover.

The ceiling of this apartment was richly painted and richly gilt; from it were suspended three lustres of golden cords, which threw a softened light upon the floor of polished and curiously inlaid woods. At the end of the apartment was an orchestra, and here the pages, under the direction of Carlstein, offered a very efficient domestic band.

Round the room waltzed the elegant revellers. Softly and slowly, led by their host, they glided along like spirits of air; but each time that the duke passed the musicians, the music became

livelier, and the motion more brisk, till at length you might have mistaken them for a college of spinning dervishes. One by one, an exhausted couple slunk away. Some threw themselves on a sofa, some monopolized an easy chair; but in twenty minutes all the dancers had disappeared. At length Peacock Piggott gave a groan, which denoted returning energy, and raised a stretching leg in air, bringing up, though most unwittingly, upon his foot, one of the Bird's sublime and beautiful caps.

"Halloo! Piggott, armed *cap au pied*, I see," said Lord Squib. This joke was a signal for general resuscitation.

The Alhambra formed a quadrangle; all the chambers were on the basement story. In the middle of the court of the quadrangle was a most beautiful fountain; and the court was formed by a conservatory, which was built along each side of the interior square, and served, like a cloister or covered way, for a communication between the different parts of the building. To this conservatory they now repaired. It was very broad, full of the rarest and most delicious plants and flowers, and brilliantly illuminated. Busts and statues were intermingled with the fairy grove; and a rich, warm hue, by the skilful arrangement of a coloured lamp, was thrown over many a nymph and fair divinity,—many a blooming hero and beardless god. Here they lounged in different parties, talking on such subjects as idlers ever fall upon; now and then plucking a flower,—now and then listening to the fountain,—now and then lingering over the distant music,—now and then strolling through a small apartment which opened to their walks, and which bore the title of the Temple of Gnidus. Here, Canova's Venus breathed an atmosphere of perfume and of light—that wonderful statue whose full-charged eye is not very classical, to be sure—but then how true!

While thus they were whiling away their time, Lord Squib proposed a visit to the theatre, which he had ordered to be lit up. To the theatre they repaired. They rambled over every part of the house, amused themselves, to the horror of Mr. Annesley, with a visit to the gallery, and then collected behind the scenes. They were excessively amused with the properties; and Lord Squib proposed they should dress themselves. Enough Champagne had been quaffed to render any proposition palatable, and in a few minutes they were all in costume. A crowd of queens and chambermaids, Jews and chimney-sweepers, lawyers and charleys, Spanish Dons, and Irish officers, rushed upon the stage. The little Spaniard was Almaviva, and fell into magnificent attitudes, with her sword and plume. Lord Squib was the old woman of Brentford,—and very funny. Sir Lucius Grafton, Harlequin; and Darrell, Grimaldi. The prince and the count, without knowing it figured as watchmen. Squib whispered Annesley, that Sir Lucius O'Trigger might appear in character, but was prudent enough to suppress the joke.

The band was summoned, and they danced quadrilles with infinite spirit, and finished the night, at the suggestion of Lord Squib, by breakfasting on the stage. By the time this meal was despatched, the purple light of morn had broken into the building, and the ladies proposed an immediate departure. Mrs. Montfort and her sister were sent home in one of the duke's carriages; and

the foreign guests were requested by him to be their escort. The respective parties drove off. Two cabriolets lingered to the last, and finally carried away the French actress and the Spanish dancer, Lord Darrell, and Peacock Piggott; but whether the two gentlemen went in one and the two ladies in the other, I cannot aver. I hope not.

There was at length a dead silence, and the young duke was left to solitude and the signora!

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE arrival of the two distinguished foreigners reanimated the dying season. All vied in testifying their consideration, and the Duke of St. James exceeded all. He took them to see the alterations at Hauteville House, which no one had yet witnessed; and he asked their opinion of his furniture, which no one had yet decided upon. Two *filés* in the same week established, as well as maintained, his character as the archduke of fashion. Remembering, however, the agreeable month which he had spent in the kingdom of John the Twenty-fourth, he was reminded with annoyance, that his confusion at Hauteville prevented him from receiving his friends *en grand seigneur* in his hereditary castle. Metropolitan magnificence, which, if the *parvenu* could not equal, he at least could imitate, seemed a poor return for the feudal splendour and imperial festivity of a Hungarian magnate. While he was brooding over these reminiscences, it suddenly occurred to him that he had never made a progress into his western territories. Pen Bronnock Palace was the boast of Cornwall, though its lord had never paid it a visit. The Duke of St. James sent for Sir Carte Blanche.

Besides entertaining the foreign nobles, the young duke could no longer keep off the constantly recurring idea, that something must be done to entertain himself. He shuddered to think where and what he should have been, had not these gentlemen so providentially arrived. As for again repeating the farce of last year, he felt that it would no longer raise a smile. Yorkshire he shunned. Doncaster made him tremble. A week with the Duke of Burlington at Marringworth; a fortnight with the Fitz-pompeys at Malthrope; a month with the Graftons at Cleve; and so on—he shuddered at the very idea. Who can see a pantomime more than once? Who could survive a pantomime the twentieth time? All the shifting scenes, and fitting splendour—all the motley crowds of sparkling characters—all the quick changes, and full variety, are, once, enchantment. But when the splendour is discovered to be monotony; the change, order; and the caprice, a system; when the characters play ever the same part, and the variety never varies; how dull, how weary, how infinitely flat, is such a world to that man who requires from its converse, not occasional relaxation, but constant excitement!

Pen Bronnock was a new object. At this moment in his life novelty was indeed a treasure. If

he could cater for a month, no expense should be grudged; as for the future, he thrust it from his mind. By taking up his residence, too, at Pen Bronnock, he escaped from all invitations,—and so, in a word, the worthy knight received orders to make all preparations at the palace for the reception of a large party in the course of three weeks.

Sir Carte, as usual, did wonders. There was, fortunately for his employer, no time to build or paint, but some dingy rooms were hung with scarlet cloth: cart-loads of new furniture were sent down; the theatre was reburnished; the stables put in good order; and, what was of infinitely more importance in the estimation of all Englishmen, the neglected pile was “well aired.”

CHAPTER II.

I THINK—at least, I think I think, for I have been too often wrong to be ever sure, and never back my opinion with a bet, the only test;—but I do think, that we have had some very agreeable *villeggiaturas* in these immortal volumes. For how do I know that they are not immortal? Fame is half an accident. I always hope the best; and if I be wrong, why, then, I must put up instead with three months' praise and some slight profit. Our reunions too have, I trust, been various in their character as well as in their number. I never take the reader into the country merely for change of air; but because at different houses one sometimes catches a different trait. The politician, and the sportsman, and the fashionist, have all their caste; and although in the blending of society these characters often meet, still at their mansions, and particularly in the provinces, the ruling passion will predominate. Men pass their autumns, some in slaughtering birds,—some in retailing the faded graces of the faded spring,—some in anticipating the coming struggles of the approaching Houses. And such is life! What is! Heaven knows, not I! Philosophers have preached, and vowed that human life is the simplest compound, except clear water, that e'er was offered for the draught of man; but I must say, who always speak the truth when I can get clear of lies, which is difficult, for in this world they are like the air we breathe,—without us, we should die; I say, that I have been very desirous of discovering the mysteries of our beings and our wills,—and what have I gained? A clouded genius, and an aching head.

For life, I am clear, is no simple cate, mild in its flavour, easy of digestion; but a made dish—sometimes perhaps a calf's-head surprised. Its ardent sauces and its fragrant spices; its skin and bone, its richness and its leanness, are all so many different tastes and morsels, which are, unhappily, unfairly served. And so one vows the dinner is right good, while others execrate the bungling cook; but for my part, although I don't complain, I care but little for this early course, and if not served exactly as I wish, console myself for the unsavoury fare, by the anticipation of the dessert.

We are in the country, and such a country, that even in Italy I think of thee, native Hesperia! Here myrtles grow, and fear no blasting north, or

blighting east. Here the south wind blows with that soft breath which brings the bloom to flesh. Here the land breaks in gentle undulations; and here blue waters kiss a verdant shore. Hail! to thy thousand bays and deep-red earth, thy marble quarries and thy silver veins! Hail! to thy far extending landscape, whose sparkling villages and streaky fields no clime can match!

Some gales I owe to thee of balmy breath, some gentle hours when life had fewest charms. And I am grateful for all this—to say nothing of your cider and your junkets.

The duke arrived just as the setting sun crowned the proud palace with his gleamy rays. It was a pile which the immortal Inigo had raised in sympathy with the taste of a noble employer, who had passed his earliest years in Lombardy. Of stone, and sometimes even of marble, with pediments and balustrades, and ornamented windows, and richly chased keystones, and flights of steps, and here and there a statue, the structure was quite Palladian, though a little dingy, and, on the whole, very imposing.

There were suites of rooms which had no end, and staircases which had no beginning. In this vast pile nothing was more natural than to lose your way—an agreeable amusement on a rainy morning. There was a collection of pictures, very various,—by which phrase we understand not select. Yet they were amusing; and the Canalettis were unrivalled. There was a regular ball-room, and a theatre; so resources were at hand. The scenes, though dusty, were numerous; and the duke had provided new dresses. The park was not a park; by which I mean, that it was rather a chase than the highly-finished enclosure which we associate with the first title. In fact, Pen Bronnock Chase was the right name of the settlement; but some monarch travelling, having been seized with a spasm, recruited his strength under the roof of his loyal subject, then the chief seat of the house of Hauteville, and having in his urgency been obliged to hold a privy council there, the supreme title of palace was assumed by right.

The domain was bounded on one side by the sea; and here a yacht and some slight craft rode at anchor in a small green bay, and offered an opportunity for the adventurous, and a refuge for the wearied. When you have been bored for an hour or two on earth, it sometimes is a change to be bored for an hour or two on water.

The house was soon full, and soon gay. The guests, and the means of amusing them, were equally numerous. But this was no common *villeggiatura*,—no visit to a family with their regular pursuits and matured avocations. The host was as much a guest as any other. The young duke appointed Lord Squib master of the ceremonies, and gave orders for nothing but constant excitement. Constant excitement his lordship managed to maintain, for he was experienced, clever, careless and gay, and, for once in his life, had the comfort of unbounded resources. He ordered, he invited, he prepared, and he expended. They danced, they hunted, they sailed, they feasted, they masqueraded; and when they became wearied of themselves, and their diversion gradually vanished, a new diversion was given twice a-week to the west of England invited to the same ideas; new fir

were delighted with the young duke,—and flattery from novel quarters will for a moment whet even the appetite of the satiated. Simplicity, too, can interest. There were some Misses Gayweather who got unearthed, who never had been at London, though nature had given them sparkling eyes and springing persons. This tyranny was too bad. Papa was quizzed, mamma flattered, and the daughters' simplicity amused these young lordlings. Rebellion was whispered in the small ears of the Gayweathers. The little heads too of the Gayweathers were turned. They were the constant butt and the constant resource of every lounging dandy.

The Bird of Paradise also arranged her professional engagements, so as to account with all possible propriety for her professional visit at Pen Bronnock. The musical meeting at Exeter over, she made her appearance, and some concerts were given, which electrified all Cornwall. Count Frill was very strong here; though, to be sure, he also danced, and acted, in all varieties. He was the soul, too, of a masked ball; but when complimented on his accomplishments, and thanked for his exertions, he modestly deprecated his worth, and panegyricized the dancing-dogs.

As for the prince, on the whole, he maintained his silence; but it was at length discovered by the fair sex that he was not stupid, but sentimental. When this was made known he rather lost ground with the brown sex, who, before thinking him thick, had vowed that he was a devilish good fellow; but now, being really envious, had their tale and hint, their sneer and sly joke. M. de Whiskerburg had one active accomplishment—this was his dancing. His gallopade was declared to be divine: he absolutely sailed in the air. His waltz, at his will, either melted his partner into a dream, or whirled her into a frenzy! Dangerous M. de Whiskerburg!

CHAPTER III.

It is said that the conduct of refined society, in a literary point of view, is, on the whole, productive but of slight interest; that all we can aspire to is, to trace a brilliant picture of brilliant manners; and that when the dance and the festival have been duly inspired by the repartee and the sarcasm, and the gem, the robe and the plume adroitly lighted up by the lamp and the lustre, our cunning is exhausted. And so your novelist generally twists this golden thread with some substantial silken cord, for use, and works up, with the light dance, and with the heavy dinner, some secret marriage, or some shrouded murder. And thus, by English plots and German mysteries, the

on, or jolts, till, in the end, justice will

the two ... com-

and manners. Bodies of men who pursue the same object must ever resemble each other: the life of the majority must ever be imitation. Thought is a labour to which few are competent; and truth requires for its development as much courage as acuteness. So conduct becomes conventional, and opinion is a legend; and thus all men act and think alike.

But this is not peculiar to what is called fashionable life—it is peculiar to civilization, which gives the passions less to work upon. Mankind are not more heartless because they are clothed in ermine; it is, that their costume attracts us to their characters, and we stare because we find the prince or the peeress neither a conqueror nor a heroine. The great majority of human beings, in a country like England, glide through existence in perfect ignorance of their natures, so complicated and so controlling is the machinery of our social life! Few can break the bonds that tie them down, and struggle for self-knowledge; fewer, when the talisman is gained, can direct their illuminated energies to the purposes with which they sympathize.

A mode of life which encloses in its circle all the dark and deep results of unbounded indulgence, however it may appear to some who glance over the sparkling surface, does not exactly seem to me one either insipid or uninteresting to the moral speculator; and, indeed, I have long been induced to suspect, that the seeds of true sublimity lurk in a life which, like this book, is half fashion and half passion.

Not that they will germinate here, for the seed, to rise, requires the burning sunbeam and the moistening shower; and passions, to be put in action, demand a more blazing brain and bubbling pulse than heat my torpid soul. In the mean time, I drop the hint for others, and proceed to sketch a feeling or to catch a trait.

I know not how it was, but about this time an unaccountable, almost an imperceptible coolness seemed to spring up between our hero and Lady Aphrodite. If I were to puzzle my brains for ever, I could not give you the reason. Nothing happened—nothing had been said or done, which could indicate its origin. Perhaps this *was* the origin; perhaps the duke's conduct had become, though unexceptionable, too negative. But here I only throw up a straw. Perhaps,—if I must go on suggesting, anxiety ends in callousness.

His grace had thought so much of her feelings, that he had quite forgotten his own, or worn them out. Her ladyship, too, was perhaps a little disappointed at the unexpected reconciliation. When we have screwed our courage up to the sticking point, we like not to be balked. Both too, perhaps,—I go on *perhapsing*—both, too, I repeat, perhaps, could not help mutually viewing each other as the cause of much mutual care and mutual anxiousness. Both, too, perhaps, were a little tired—but without knowing it. The most curious thing, and which would have augured worse to a calm judge, was, that they silently seemed to agree

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what any alteration
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much, and those explanations entered upon which explain so little.

After all, I may be mistaken, and they may be on the very best terms. Time alone can show, which can do all things, even write this book, which, whether it ever be written or not, is doubtful, and also not of the slightest importance. Yet, 'tis agreeable to find this certain existence, in all other respects, one great uncertainty. Where we may be to-morrow, or what do, is just a mystery. For aught we know, the world may end. Now think one moment on that single line. Methinks I hear the restless brooding of the panting waters. What a catastrophe!

And should not this, my friends, teach us well not to think over-much of coming days, and more, much more, of ourselves? From ourselves all those feelings spring, and in ourselves all centre, which are our happiness. There is that within us duly competent, whatever be our lot in life, to fulfil its divine and beautiful ordination, and each man might be, if he chose, without a care. But we will not listen to the monitor,—we fly from the Delphi of our breasts, and we aspire after all science, but that knowledge which alone can be perfect.

Alas! alas! for fallen man! Would—would that I could raise him! And sometimes, as I pace my lonely hall, I will not quite despair, but dare to muse o'er things I will not whisper. But soon the glow flies from my faded cheek, and soon my fluttering pulse subsides again to languor. The drooping pen falls from my powerless hand, and I feel—I keenly feel myself what indeed I am—far the most prostrate of a fallen race!

Could I recall the power, when, like a conqueror from a mountain height, I gazed upon a new and opening world, I would dare the trial. Ah! if our energy and our experience were born but twins, we should be gods! As it is, we are, at the best, but Titans, and so get crushed, as is but just.

There is no characteristic of this age of steel to me more fearful than its total neglect of moral philosophy. And here I would dilate on greater things than some imagine; but, unfortunately, I am engaged. For Newmarket calls Sir Lucius and his friends. We will not join them, having lost enough. His grace half promised to be one of the party; but when the day came, just remembered the Shropshires were expected, and was very sorry,—and the rest. Lady Aphrodite and himself parted with a warmth which remarkably contrasted with their late intercourse, and which neither of them could decide whether it were reviving affection, or factitious effort.

M. de Whiskerbury and Count Frill departed with Sir Lucius, being extremely desirous to be initiated in the mysteries of the turf, and, above all, to see a real English jockey.

CHAPTER IV.

wspapers continued to announce the de-
the v visitors to the Duke of St.
upon the protracted and
Bronnock. But while
his lot, and hundreds

aspiring to share it, what indeed was the condition of our hero!

A month or two had rolled on, and if he had not absolutely tasted enjoyment, at least he had thrust off reflection; but as the autumn wore away, and as each day he derived less diversion or distraction from the repetition of the same routine, carried on by different actors, he could no longer control feelings which would be predominant, and those feelings were not such as, perhaps, might have been expected from one who was receiving the homage of an admiring world. In a word, the Duke of St. James was the most miserable wretch that ever treated.

"Where is this to end?" he asked himself. "Is this year to close, to bring only a repetition of the past? Well! I have had it all—and what is it? My restless feelings are, at last, laid—my indefinite appetites are, at length, exhausted. I have known this mighty world; and where am I! Once all prospects, all reflections merged in the agitating, the tremulous, and panting lust with which I sighed for it. Have I been deceived? Have I been disappointed? Is it different from what I expected? Has it fallen short of my fancy? Has the dexterity of my musings deserted me? Have I under-acted the hero of my reveries? Have I, in short, mismanaged my *début*? Have I blundered? No, no, no! Far—far has it gone beyond even my imagination, and *my* life has, if no other, realized its ideas!

"Who laughs at me? Who does not burn in effluence before my shrine? What appetite have I not gratified? What gratification has proved bitter? My vanity! Has it been, for an instant, mortified? Am I not acknowledged the most brilliant hero of the most brilliant society in Europe? Intense as is my self-love, has it not been gorged? Luxury and splendour were my youthful dreams, and have I not realized the very romance of indulgence and magnificence! My career has been one long triumph. My palaces, and my gardens, and my jewels, my dress, my furniture, my equipage, my horses, and my festivals—these used to be my meditations, when I could only meditate! My determinations proved a delusion in the admiring world!

"And now for the great point to which I was to tend, which all this was to fascinate, to subdue, to adorn, to embellish, to delight, to glorify—Woman! O! when I first dared, among the fields of Eton, to dwell upon the soft yet agitating fancy, that some day my existence might perhaps be rendered more intense, by the admiration of these maddening but then mysterious creatures—could I have dreamed of what has happened? Is not this the very point in which my career has most out-topped my lofty hopes?

"I have read, and sometimes heard, of satiety. It must then be satiety that I feel."

"More like a doom."

"Of blood and."

"What then?"

"Satiety."

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as bitter results, perhaps as bitter a fate—fate—fate! I am half tempted at this moment to myself from off the cliff—and so end all.

"Why should I live? For virtue and for—to compensate for all my folly, and to some slight good end with my abused and beleaguered means. Ay! it is all vastly and vastly sublime,—but it is too late. I feel that my position is above me. I am a lost man.

"We cannot work without a purpose. I had mine, although it was a failure. I succeeded. Had I one now, I might try again—but my heart is a dull void. —that gentle girl will not give me and to offer her but half a heart and I would not bruise that delicate my dukedom. Those sad, silly things have already done mischief enough to see Darrell, and will at least give me him, and will make him my God! God! why am I not content with her, and all will change. I could give the power. I could give the power."

"Now see what a fare you have! Heaven knows how! I like me soon and I dread to in my temper myself than facility which guarantee of others are, at least tainly render me to hear the busy my demon. No! I shall die like and."

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CHAPTER V.

SOUTHEY, that virtuous man, whom wisdom calls own, somewhere thanks God that he was not to a great estate. I quite agree with the seer swick: it is a bore. Provided a man can every personal luxury, what profits it that ng waves on castles you never visit, and that int rents which you never receive? And e are some things which your miserable, incomes cannot command, and which one to have—for instance, a band.

ete, a consummate band, in uniforms of velvet, with a highly-wrought gold tipped with a single pink topaz, seems *et al.* When I die, "band" will be ed upon my heart, like "frigate" on on. The negroes should have their ll as their ears, and hung with he kettledrums should be of sil-

a great estate, no doubt it to get free of them, the estate d then it is even worse. Elec- t your members are thrown lected influence. Agricultu- all your omms are thrown d'

Harassed by l mines, you are orn out by these ing it somewhat undred thousand r enjoyment, you o-manages every i his energy, his inated by your in- disappearance of duce him ment; his

much; but when, as you well know, my only ob- ject has been to keep things square, it is most an- noying. One thing may console us,—I cannot live cheaper.

There is Antonio: you know Antonio well! He is quite a treasure, and really costs me nothing. Those Italians are most invaluable, and live on air. Then there is Luigi: I could not do without Luigi, since you have taken away my English groom. He is quite my right-hand. I am sure Luigi is just the servant that you'd quite approve. Then there's my Greek: he is plump, to be sure, and lazy; but *entre nous*, such a favourite with the sex, that his perquisites are so great, I mean to cut him down. I doubt whether my table costs me a sequin a week.

"So, on my honour, sir, as I'm a sinner,
I rather gain than lose by every dinner."

Then there are my horses. As you desired it, I have cut down one; though, to be sure, as I have bought two more, there is no great saving yet upon that head. But I mean to breed. I find the fellows here will give a long figure for an English horse. I have got a mare from an officer at Malta; so we may consider this as part of our plan of retrenchment, and quite another account. Therefore, per- haps, you will permit me to draw for this alone.

I give only five-and-twenty pounds a year for my palace, and let out lodgings to an English fam- ily. I could not live in London in a garret for that price: therefore, you see, I am saving desperately. I fear, however, I must turn out my tenants. Their maids corrupt the morals of my men; and when I am scribbling something very fine, the little Tom- kinses play at battledore.

I buy no pictures, cameos, or mosaics, and never patronise the *belle arti*. They think me here quite an ultra-montane, sir. Lady Albania Silky vows she never saw one so barbarous who was so clever.

I hope, therefore, you will take into considera- tion the various topics I presume to hint. I flatter myself, that, upon reflection, you'll thank your stars the matter is no worse. Our friends, I hope, re well: my compliments to all. When next you by the post, send me some news, and keep owing for the envoy's bag.

where is our hero? Is he forgotten? Never! the dumps, blue devils, and so on. A little it may be, and dull. He scarcely would you at this moment. So I come forward a graceful bow—the jack-pudding of our doc- who is behind.

short, that is to say, in long,—for what is the f this affected brevity? When this tale is done, have you got? So let us make it last. I repent of having intimated so much: in fu- it is my intention to develope more, and to de- and to delineate, and to define, and, in short, ore. You know the model of this kind of —Richardson, whom I shall revive. In ru- ball, as a novelist, take Clarendon's Rebel-

ny hero's notes, or
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It was the dreary end of dull November, and the last company were breaking off. The Bird of Paradise, according to her desire, had gone to Brighton, where his grace had presented her with a tenement, neat, light, and finished; and though situated amid the wilds of Kemptown, no more than one hyena on a night ventured to come down from the adjacent mountains. He had half promised to join her, because he thought he might as well be there as here, and consequently he had not invited a fresh supply of visitors from town, or rather from the country. As he was hesitating about what he should do, he received a letter from his bankers which made him stare. He sent for the groom of the chambers, and was informed the house was clear, save that some single men yet lingered, as is their wont. They never take a hint. His grace ordered his carriage; and, more alive than he had been for the last two months, dashed off to town.

CHAPTER VI.

THE letter from his bankers informed the Duke of St. James that not only was the half-million exhausted, but, in pursuance of their powers, they had sold out all his stock, and, in reliance on his credit, had advanced even beyond it. They were ready to accommodate him in every possible way, and to advance as much more as he could desire—at five per cent. Sweet five per cent.! O! magical five per cent.! Lucky the rogue now who gets three. Nevertheless, they thought it but proper to call his grace's attention to the circumstance, and to put him in possession of the facts. I always know something unpleasant is coming when men are anxious to tell the truth.

The Duke of St. James had never affected to be a man of business; still he had taken it for granted, that pecuniary embarrassment was not ever to be counted among his annoyances. He wanted something to do, and determined to look into his affairs, merely to amuse himself.

The bankers were most polite. They brought their books, also several packets of papers most neatly tied up, and were ready to give every information. The duke asked for results. He found that the turf, the Alhambra, the expenses of his outfit in purchasing the lease and furniture of his mansion, liveries, carriages, and the rest, had, with his expenditure, exhausted his first year's income; but he reconciled himself to this, because he chose to consider them extraordinary expenses. Then the festivities of Pen Bronnock counterbalanced the economy of his more scrambling life the preceding year; yet he had not exceeded his income—much. Then he came to Sir Carte's account. He began to get a little frightened. Two hundred and fifty thousand had been swallowed by Hauteville Castle; one hundred and twenty thousand by Hauteville House. Ninety-six thousand had been paid for furniture. There were also some awkward miscellanies which, in addition, exceeded the half million.

This was smashing work; but castles and palaces, particularly of the correctest style of architecture, are not to be had for nothing. The duke had always devoted the half-million to this object; but he had intended that sum to be sufficient. What

puzzled and what annoyed him was a queer suspicion, that his resources had been exhausted without his result being obtained. He sent for Sir Carte, who gave every information, and assured him, that had he had the least idea that a limit was an object, he would have made his arrangements accordingly. As it was, he assured the young duke that he would be the lord of the most sumptuous and accurate castle, and of the most gorgeous and tasteful palace in Europe. He was proceeding with a cloud of words, when his employer cut him short by a peremptory demand of the exact sum requisite for the completion of his plans. Sir Carte was confused, and requested time. The estimates should be sent in as quickly as possible. The clerks should sit up all night, and even his own rest should not be an object, any more than the duke's purse. So they parted.

The duke determined to run down to Brighton for change of scene. He promised his bankers to examine every thing on his return; in the mean time, they were to make all necessary advances, and honour his drafts to any amount.

He found the city of chalk and shingles not quite so agreeable as last year. He discovered that it had no trees. There was there, also, just everybody that he did not wish to see. It was one great St. James's street, and seemed only an anticipation of that very season which he dreaded. He was half inclined to go somewhere else, but could not fix upon any spot. London might be agreeable, as it was empty—but then those confounded accounts awaited him. The Bird of Paradise was a sad bore. He really began to suspect that she was little better than an idiot: then, she ate so much, —and he hated your eating women. He gladly shuffled her off on that fool, Count Frill, who daily brought his guitar to Kemptown. They just suited each other. What a madman he had been to have embarrassed himself with this creature! It would cost him a pretty ransom now, before he could obtain his freedom. How we change! Already the Duke of St. James began to think of pounds, shillings, and pence. A year ago, as long as he could extricate himself from a scrape by force of cash, he thought himself a lucky fellow.

The Graftons had not arrived, but were daily expected. He really could not stand them. As for Lady Afy, he execrated the green-hornism which had made him feign a passion, and then get caught where he meant to capture. As for Sir Lucius, he wished to Heaven he would just take it into his head to repay him the fifteen thousand he had lent him at that confounded election,—to say nothing of any thing else.

Then, there was Burlington, with his old loves and his new dances. He wondered how the deuce that fellow could be amused with such frivolity, and always look so serene and calm. Then, there was Squib,—that man never knew when to leave off joking; and Annesley, with his false refinement; and Darrell, with his petty ambition. He felt quite sick, and took a solitary ride: but he flew from Scylla to Charybdis. Mrs. Montfort could not forget their many delightful canters last season to Rottindean—and, lo! she was at his side:—he wished her down the cliff.

In this fit of the spleen, he went to the theatre: there were eleven people in the boxes. He listened to "The School for Scandal." Never was slander more harmless. He sat it all out, and was sorry

when it was over, but was consoled by the devils of Der Freischutz. How sincerely, how ardently did he long to sell himself to the demon! It was eleven o'clock, and he dreaded the play to be over, as if he were a child. What to do with himself, or where to go, he was equally at a loss. The door of the box opened, and entered Lord Bagshot. If it must be an acquaintance, this cub was better than any of his refined and lately cherished companions.

"Well, Bag, what are you doing with yourself?"

"O! I don't know: just looking in for a lark. Any game?"

"On my honour, I can't say."

"What's that girl? O! I see; that's little Wilkins. There's Moll Otway. Nothing new. I shall go and rattle the bones a little—eh! my boy?"

"Rattle the bones! what is that?"

"Don't you know?" and here this promising young peer manually explained his meaning.

"What do you play at?" asked the duke.

"Hazard, for my money; but what you like."

"Where?"

"We meet at De Berghem's. There is a jolly set of us. All crack men. When my governor is here, I never go. He is so jealous. I suppose there must be only one gamester in the family, eh!—my covey!" Lord Bagshot, excited by the unusual affability of the young duke, grew quite familiar.

"I have half a mind to look in with you," said his grace, with a careless air.

"O! come along, by all means. They'll be devilish glad to see you. De Berghem was saying, the other day, what a nice fellow you were, and how he should like to know you. You don't know De Berghem, do you?"

"I have seen him. I know enough of him."

The two young noblemen quitted the theatre together, and under the guidance of Lord Bagshot, stopped at a door in Brunswick Terrace. There they found collected a numerous party, but all persons of consideration. The baron, who had once been a member of the diplomatic corps, and now lived in England, by choice, on his pension and private fortune, received them with the most marked courtesy. Proud of his companion, Lord Bagshot's hoarse, coarse, idiot voice seemed ever braying. His frequent introductions of the Duke of St. James were execrating, and it required all the freezing of a finished manner to pass through this fiery ordeal. His grace was acquainted with most of the guests by sight, and to some he even bowed. They were chiefly men of a certain age, with the exception of two or three young peers like himself.

There was the Earl of Castlefort, plump and luxurious, with a youthful wig, who, though a sexagenarian, liked no companion better than a mirror. His lordship was the most amiable man in the world, and the most lucky; but the first was his merit, the second was not his fault. There was the juvenile Lord Dice, who boasted of having done his brothers out of their miserable 5000*l.* patrimony, and all in one night. But the wrinkle that had already ruffled his once clear brow, his sunken eye, and his convulsive lip had been thrown, I suppose, into the bargain, and, in my opinion, made it a dear one. There was Temple Grace, who had run through four fortunes, and ruined four sisters. Withered, though only thirty, one thing alone remained to be lost—what he called his honour,

which was already on the scent to play booty. There was Cogit, who, when he was drunk, swore that he had had a father; but this was deemed the only exception to *in vino veritas*. Who he was, the goddess of chance could alone decide; and I have often thought that he might bear the same relation to her, as Æneas to the goddess of beauty. His age was as great a mystery as any thing else. He dressed still like a boy,—yet some vowed he was eighty. He must have been Salathiel. Property he never had,—and yet he contrived to live; connexion he was not born with,—yet he was upheld by a set. He never played, yet he was the most skilful dealer going. He did the honours of a *rouge et noir* table to a miracle; and looking, as he thought, most genteel in a crimson waistcoat and a gold chain, raked up the spoils, or complacently announced *après*. Lord Castlefort had few secrets from him; he was the jackal to these prowling beasts of prey; looked out for pigeons,—got up little parties to Richmond or Brighton,—sang a song when the rest were too anxious to make a noise, and yet desired a little life, and yet perhaps could cog a die, arrange a looking-glass, or mix a tumbler.

Unless the loss of an occasional Napoleon at a German watering-place is to be so stigmatized, gaming had never formed one of the numerous follies of the Duke of St. James. Rich, and gifted with a generous, sanguine, and luxurious disposition, he had never been tempted by the desire of gain, or, as some may perhaps maintain, by the desire of excitement, to seek assistance or enjoyment in a mode of life which stultifies all our fine fancies, deadens all our noble emotions, and mortifies all our beautiful aspirations.

I know that I am broaching a doctrine which many will start at, and which some will protest against, when I declare my belief, that no person, whatever be his rank, or apparent wealth, ever yet gained, except from the prospect of immediate gain. We hear much of want of excitement, of *ennui*, of satiety; and then the gaming-table is announced as a sort of substitute for opium, wine, or any other mode of obtaining a more intense vitality at the cost of reason. Gaming is too active, too anxious, too complicated, too troublesome,—in a word, *too sensible* an affair for such spirits, who fly only to a sort of dreamy and indefinite distraction. The fact is, gaming is a matter of business. Its object is tangible, clear, and evident. There is nothing high, or inflammatory, or exciting; no false magnificence, no visionary elevation, in the affair at all. It is the very antipodes to enthusiasm of any kind. It presupposes in its votary a mind essentially mercantile. All the feelings that are in its train are the most mean, the most commonplace, and the most annoying of daily life; and nothing would tempt the gamester to experience them, except the great object which, as a matter of calculation, he is willing to aim at on such terms. No man flies to the gaming-table in a paroxysm. The first visit requires the courage of a forlorn hope. The first stake will make the lightest mind anxious, the firmest hand tremble, and the stoutest heart falter. After the first stake, it is all a matter of calculation and management, even in games of chance. Night after night will men play at *rouge et noir*, upon what they call a system, and for hours their attention never ceases, any more than it would if they were in the shop, or on the wharf. No manual

labour is more fatiguing, and more degrading to the labourer, than gaming. Every gamester (I speak not of the irreclaimable) feels ashamed. And this vice, this worst vice, from whose embrace moralists daily inform us man can never escape, is just the one from which the majority of men most completely and most often emancipate themselves. Infinite are the men who have lost thousands in their youth, and never dream of chance again. It is this pursuit which, oftener than any other, leads man to self-knowledge. Appalled by the absolute destruction on the verge of which he finds his early youth just stepping—aghast at the shadowy crimes which, under the influence of this life, seem, as it were, to rise upon his soul,—often he hurries to emancipate himself from this fatal thraldom, and with a ruined fortune and marred prospects, yet thanks his Creator that his soul is still white, his conscience clear, and that, once more, he breathes the sweet air of heaven.

And our young duke, I must confess, gamed, as all other men have gamed—for money. His satiety had fled the moment that his affairs were embarrassed. The thought suddenly came into his head, while Bagshot was speaking. He determined to make an effort to recover: and so completely was it a matter of business with him, that he reasoned, that in the present state of his affairs, a few thousands more would not signify,—that these few thousands might lead to vast results, and that, if they did, he would bid adieu to the gaming-table with the same coolness with which he had saluted it.

Yet he felt a little odd, when he first rattled the bones; and his affected *nonchalance* made him constrained. He fancied every one was watching him; while on the contrary, all were too much interested in their own different parties. This feeling, however, wore off.

According to every novelist, and the moralists “our betters,” the Duke of St. James should have been fortunate at least to-night. You always win, at first, you know. If so, I advice said children of fancy and of fact to pocket their gains, and not play again. The young duke had not the opportunity of thus acting. He lost fifteen hundred pounds, and at half past five he quitted the baron’s.

Hot, bilious, with a confounded twang in his mouth, and a cracking pain in his head, he stood one moment and snuffed in the salt sea-breeze. The moon was unfortunately on the waters, and her cool, beneficent light reminded him, with disgust, of the hot, burning glare of the baron’s saloon.

He thought of May Daere, but clenched his fist, and drove her image from his mind.

CHAPTER VII.

HE rose late, and as he was lounging over his breakfast, entered Lord Bagshot and the baron. Already the young duke began to experience one of the gamester’s curses,—the intrusive society of those of whom you are ashamed. Eight-and-forty hours ago, Lord Bagshot would no more have dared to call upon the Duke of St. James than to call at the Pavilion; and now, with that wreckless want of tact which marks the innately vulgar, he seemed to triumph in their unhallowed intimacy, and lounging into his grace’s apartment with that half-shuffling, half-swaggering air indicative of the

“cove,” hat cocked, and thumbs in his great-coat pockets, cast his complacent eye around, and praised his grace’s “rooms.” Lord Bagshot, who for the occasional notice of the Duke of St. James had been so long a ready and patient butt, now appeared to assume a higher character, and addressed his friend in a tone and manner which were authorized by the equality of their rank and the sympathy of their tastes. If this change had taken place in the conduct of the viscount, it was not a singular one. The duke, also, to his surprise, found himself addressing his former butt in a very different style to that which he had assumed in the ball-room of Doncaster. In vain he tried to rally,—in vain he tried to snub. It was indeed in vain. He no longer possessed any right to express his contempt of his companion. That contempt, indeed, he still felt. He despised Lord Bagshot still, but he also despised himself.

The soft and silly baron was a very different sort of personage; but there was something sinister in all his elaborate courtesies and highly artificial manner, which did not touch the feelings of the duke, whose courtesy was but the expression of his noble feelings, and whose grace was only the impulse of his rich and costly blood. Baron de Berghem was too attentive and too deferential. He smiled and bowed too much. He made no allusion to the last night’s scene, nor did his tutored companion, but spoke of very different and lighter subjects, in a manner which at once proved his experience of society, the liveliness of his talents, and the cultivation of his taste. He told many stories, all very short and poignant, and always about princes or princesses. Whatever was broached, he always had his *apropos* of Vienna, and altogether seemed an experienced, mild, tolerant man of the world, not bigoted to any particular opinions upon any subject, but of a truly liberal and philosophic mind.

When they had sat chattering for half an hour, the baron developed the object of his visit, which was to endeavour to obtain the pleasure of his grace’s company at dinner; to taste some wild-boar, and try some tokay. The duke, who longed again for action, accepted the invitation, and then they parted.

Our hero was quite surprised at the feverish anxiety with which he awaited the hour of union. He thought that seven o’clock would never come. He had no appetite for breakfast, and after that he rode, but luncheon was a blank. In the midst of the operation he found himself in a brown study, calculating chances. All day long his imagination had been playing hazard, or *rouge et noir*. Once he thought he had discovered an infallible way of winning at the latter. On the long run he was convinced it must answer, and he panted to prove it.

Seven o’clock at last arrived, and he departed to Brunswick Terrace. There was a brilliant party to meet him: the same set as last night, but select.

He was faint, and did justice to the *cuisine* of his host, which was indeed remarkable. When we are drinking a man’s good wine it is difficult to dislike him. Prejudice decreases with every draught. His grace began to think the baron as good-hearted as agreeable. He was grateful for the continued attentions of old Castlefort, who he now found out, had been very well acquainted with his father, and once even made a trip to Spa with him. Lord Dice he could not manage to endure.

though that worthy was, for him, remarkably courteous, and grinned with his parchment-face, like a good humoured ghoul. Temple Grace and the duke became almost intimate. There was an amiable candour in that gentleman's address, a softness in his tones, and an unstudied and extremely interesting delicacy in his manner, which in this society was remarkable. Tom Cogit never presumed to come near the young duke, but paid him constant attention. He sat at the bottom of the table, and was ever sending a servant with some choice wine, or recommending him, through some third person, some choice dish. It is pleasant to be "made much of," as Shakespeare says, even by scoundrels. To be king of your company is a poor ambition,—yet homage is homage, and smoke is smoke—whether it comes out of the chimney of a palace or of a workhouse.

The banquet was not hurried. Though all wished it finished, no one liked to appear urgent. It was over at last, and they walked up-stairs, where the tables were arranged for all parties and all play. Tom Cogit went up a few minutes before them, like the lady of the mansion, to review the lights and arrange the cards. Feminine Tom Cogit!

The events of to-night were much the same as of the preceding one. The duke was a loser, but his losses were not considerable. He retired about the same hour, with a head not so hot or heavy; and he never looked at the moon, or thought of May Dacre. The only wish that reigned in his soul was a longing for another opportunity, and he had agreed to dine with the baron before he left Brunswick Terrace.

Thus passed a week—one night the Duke of St. James redeeming himself, another falling back to his old position, now pushing on to Madrid, now recrossing the Tagus. On the whole, he had lost four or five thousand pounds, a mere trifle to what, as he had heard, had been lost and gained by many of his companions during only the present season. On the whole, he was one of the most moderate of these speculators, generally played at the large table, and never joined any of those private coteries, some of which he had observed, and some of which he had heard. Yet this was from no prudential resolve or temperate resolution. The young duke was heartily tired of the slight results of all his anxiety, hopes, and plans, and ardently wished for some opportunity of coming to closer and more decided action. The baron also had resolved that an end should be put to this skirmishing,—but he was a calm head, and never hurried any thing.

"I hope your grace has been lucky to-night?" said the baron, one evening, strolling up to the duke: "as for myself, really, if Dice goes on playing, I shall give up banking. That fellow must have a talisman. I think he has broken more banks than any man living. The best thing he did of that kind was the roulette story at Paris. You have heard of that?"

"Was that Lord Dice?"

O, yes! he does every thing. He must have cleared his hundred thousand last year. I have suffered a good deal since I have been in England. Castlefort has pulled in a great deal of my money. I wonder to whom he will leave his property?"

"You think him rich?"

"O! he will cut up very large!" said the baron, elevating his eyebrows. "A pleasant man too! I do not know any man that I would sooner play

with than Castlefort—no one who loses his money with better temper."

"Or wins it," said his grace.

"That we all do," said the baron faintly laughing. "Your grace has lost, and you do not seem particularly dull. You will have your revenge. Those who lose at first are always the children of fortune. I always dread a man who loses at first. All I beg is, that you will not break my bank."

"Why! you see I am not playing now."

"I am not surprised. There is too much heat and noise here," said he. "We will have a quiet dinner some day, and play at our ease. Come to-morrow, and I will ask Castlefort and Dice. I should uncommonly like, *entre nous*, to win some of their money. I will take care that nobody shall be here whom you would not like to meet. By-the-by, whom were you riding with this morning? Fine woman!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE young duke had accepted the invitation of the Baron de Berghem for to-morrow, and accordingly, himself, Lords Castlefort and Dice, and Temple Grace, assembled in Brunswick Terrace at the usual hour. The dinner was studiously plain, and very little wine was drunk; yet every thing was perfect. Tom Cogit stepped in to carve, in his usual silent manner. He always came in and went out of a room without any one observing him. He winked familiarly to Temple Grace, but scarcely presumed to bow to the duke. He was very busy about the wine, and dressed the wild fowl in a manner quite unparalleled. Tom Cogit was the man for a sauce for a brown bird. What a mystery he made of it! Cayenne, and Burgundy, and limes were ingredients; but there was a magic in the incantation, with which he alone was acquainted. He took particular care to send a most perfect portion to the young duke, and he did this, as he paid all attentions to influential strangers, with the most marked consciousness of the sufferance which permitted his presence; never addressing his grace, but audibly whispering to the servant, "Take this to the duke;" or asking the attendant, "whether his grace would try the hermitage?"

After dinner, with the exception of Cogit, who was busied in compounding some wonderful liquid for the future refreshment, they sat down to *écarté*. Without having exchanged a word upon the subject, there seemed a general understanding among all the parties, that to-night was to be a pitched battle, and they began at once, very briskly. Yet, in spite of their universal determination, midnight arrived without any thing very decisive. Another hour passed over, and then Tom Cogit kept touching the baron's elbow, and whispering in a voice that every body could understand. All this meant that supper was ready. It was brought into the room.

Gaming has one advantage—it gives you an appetite; that is to say, as long as you have a chance remaining. The duke had thousands,—for at present his resources were unimpaired, and he was exhausted by the constant attention and anxiety of five hours. He passed over the delicacies, and went to the side-table, and began cutting himself some cold roast-beef. Tom Cogit ran up, not to his grace,

But to the baron, to announce the shocking fact, that the Duke of St. James was enduring great trouble; and then the baron asked his grace to permit Mr. Cogit to serve him. Our hero devoured—I use the word advisedly, as fools say in the House of Commons—he devoured the roast-beef, and rejecting the hermitage with disgust, asked for porter.

They sat to again, fresh as eagles. At six o'clock, accounts were so complicated, that they stopped to make up their books. Each played with his memorandums and pencil at his side. Nothing fatal had yet happened. The duke owed Lord Dice about five thousand pounds, and Temple Grace owed him as many hundreds. Lord Castlefort also was his debtor to the tune of seven hundred and fifty, and the baron was in his books, but slightly. Every half hour they had a new pack of cards, and threw the used one on the floor. All this time Tom Cogit did nothing but snuff the candles, stir the fire, bring them a new pack, and occasionally made a tumbler for them.

At eight o'clock, the duke's situation was worsened. The run was greatly against him, and perhaps his losses were doubled. He pulled up again the next hour or two; but nevertheless, at ten o'clock, owed every one something. No one offered to give over; and every one perhaps felt that his object was not obtained. They made their toilets, and went down stairs to breakfast. In the mean time, the shutters were opened, the room aired,—and in less than an hour they were at it again.

They played till dinner-time without intermission; and though the duke made some desperate efforts, and some successful ones, his losses were, nevertheless, trebled. Yet he ate an excellent dinner, and was not at all depressed: because the more he lost, the more his courage and his resources seemed to expand. At first he had limited himself to ten thousand; after breakfast, it was to have been twenty thousand; then thirty thousand was the ultimatum: and now he dismissed all thoughts of limits from his mind, and was determined to risk or gain every thing.

At midnight, he had lost forty-eight thousand pounds. Affairs now began to be serious. His supper was not so hearty. While the rest were eating, he walked about the room, and began to limit his ambition to recovery, and not to gain. When you play to win back, the fun is over; there is nothing to recompense you for your bodily tortures and your degraded feelings; and the very best result that can happen, while it has no charms, seems to your cowed mind impossible.

On they played, and the duke lost more. His mind was jaded. He floundered—he made desperate efforts, but plunged deeper in the slough. Feeling that, to regain his ground, each card must tell, he acted on each as if it must win, and the consequences of this insanity (for a gamester, at such a crisis, is really insane) were, that his losses were prodigious.

Another morning came, and there they sat, ankle deep in cards. No attempt at breakfast now—no affectation of making a toilet, or airing the room. The atmosphere was hot, to be sure, but it well became such a hell. There they sat, in total, in positive forgetfulness of every thing but the hot game they were hunting down. There was not a man in the room, except Tom Cogit, who could

have told you the name of the town in which they were living. There they sat, almost breathless, watching every turn with the fell look in their cannibal eyes which showed their total inability to sympathize with their fellow-beings. All forms of society had been long forgotten. There was no snuff-box handed about now, for courtesy, admiration, or a pinch; no affectation of occasionally making a remark upon any other topic but the all-engrossing one. Lord Castlefort rested with his arms on the table;—a false tooth had got unbinged. His lordship, who at any other time would have been most annoyed, coolly put it in his pocket. His cheeks had fallen, and he looked twenty years older. Lord Dice had torn off his cravat, and his hair hung down over his callous, bloodless cheeks, straight as silk. Temple Grace looked as if he were blighted by lightning; and his deep blue eyes gleamed like a hyena. The baron was least changed. Tom Cogit, who smelt that the crisis was at hand, was as quiet as a bribed rat.

On they played till six o'clock in the evening, and then they agreed to desist till after dinner. Lord Dice threw himself on a sofa. Lord Castlefort breathed with difficulty. The rest walked about. While they were resting on their oars, the young duke roughly made up his accounts. He found that he was minus about one hundred thousand pounds.

Immense as this loss was, he was more struck—more appalled, let me say—at the strangeness of the surrounding scene, than even by his own ruin. As he looked upon his fellow-gamesters, he seemed, for the first time in his life, to gaze upon some of those hideous demons of whom he had read. He looked in the mirror at himself. A blight seemed to have fallen over his beauty, and his presence seemed accursed. He had pursued a dissipated—even more than a dissipated career. Many were the nights that had been spent by him not on his couch; great had been the exhaustion that he had often experienced; haggard had sometimes even been the lustre of his youth. But when had been marked upon his brow this harrowing care! when had his features before been stamped with this anxiety, this anguish, this baffled desire, this strange, unearthly scowl, which made him even tremble? What! was it possible!—it could not be—that in time he was to be like those awful, those unearthly, those unhalloved things that were around him. He felt as if he had fallen from his state,—as if he had dishonoured his ancestry,—as if he had betrayed his trust. He felt a criminal. In the darkness of his meditations, a flash burst from his lurid mind,—a celestial light appeared to dissipate this thickening gloom, and his soul felt as it were bathed with the softening radiance. He thought of May Dacre, he thought of every thing that was pure, and holy, and beautiful, and luminous, and calm. It was the innate virtue of the man that made this appeal to his corrupted nature. His losses seemed nothing; his dukedom would be too slight a ransom for freedom from these ghouls, and for the breath of the sweet air.

He advanced to the baron, and expressed his desire to play no more. There was an immediate stir. All jumped up, and now the deed was done. Cant, in spite of their exhaustion, assumed her reign. They begged him to have his revenge,—were quite annoyed at the result,—had no doubt he would recover if he proceeded. Without no-

ting their remarks, he seated himself at the table, and wrote checks for their respective amounts, Tom Cogit jumping up and bringing him the inkstand. Lord Castlefort, in the most affectionate manner, pocketed the draft; at the same time recommending the duke not to be in a hurry, but to send it when he was cool. Lord Dice received his with a bow. Temple Grace with a sigh—the baron, with an avowal of his readiness always to give him his revenge.

The duke, though sick at heart, would not leave the room with any evidence of a broken spirit; and when Lord Castlefort again repeated, "Pay us when we meet again," he said, "I think it very improbable that we shall meet again, my lord. I wished to know what gaming was. I had heard a great deal about it. It is not so very disgusting; but I am a young man, and cannot play tricks with my complexion."

He reached his house. The Bird was out. He gave orders for himself not to be disturbed, and he went to bed; but in vain he tried to sleep. What rack exceeds the torture of an excited brain and an exhausted body! His hands and feet were like ice, his brow like fire; his ears rung with supernatural roaring; a nausea had seized upon him, and death he would have welcomed. In vain, in vain he courted repose; in vain, in vain he had recourse to every expedient to wile himself to slumber. Each minute he started from his pillow with some phrase which reminded him of his late fearful society. Hour after hour moved on with its leaden pace; each hour he heard strike, and each hour seemed an age. Each hour was only a signal to cast off some covering, or shift his position. It was at length morning. With a feeling that he should go mad if he remained any longer in bed, he rose and paced his chamber. The air refreshed him. He threw himself on the floor; the cold crept over his senses, and he slept.

CHAPTER IX.

O! ye immortal gods!—ye are still immortal, although no longer ye hover o'er Olympus. The crescent glitters on your mountain's base, and crosses spring from out its toppling crags. But in vain the mufti, and the patriarch, and the pope flout at your past traditions. They are married to man's memory by the sweetest chain that ever fancy wove for love. The poet is a priest, who does not doubt the inspiration of his oracles; and your shrines are still served by a faithful band, who love the beautiful, and adore the glorious! In vain, in vain, they tell us your divinity is a dream. From the cradle to the grave, our thoughts and feelings take their colour from you. O! Ægiachus, the birch has often proved thou art still a thunderer; and, although thy twanging bow murmur no longer through the avenging air, many an apple twig still indicates thy outraged dignity, pulcher Apollo!

O! ye immortal gods! nothing so difficult as to begin a chapter, and therefore have I flown to you. In literature, as in life, it is the first step—you know the rest. After a paragraph or so, our blood is up, and even my jaded hackneys scud along, and warm up into friskiness.

The duke awoke; another day of his eventful

life is now to run its course. He found that the Bird of Paradise had not returned from an excursion to a neighbouring park; he left a note for her, apprising her of his departure to London, and he despatched a very affectionate letter to Lady Aphrodite, which was the least that he could do, considering that he perhaps quitted Brighton the day of her arrival. And having done all this, he ordered his horses, and before noon he was on his first stage.

It was his birthday. He had completed his twenty-third year. This was sufficient, even if he had no other inducement, to make him indulge in some slight reflection. These annual summings up are awkward things, even to the prosperous and the happy; but to those who are the reverse, who are discontented with themselves, and find that youth melting away which they believe can alone achieve any thing, I think a birthday is about the most gloomy four-and-twenty hours that ever flap their damp, dull wings over melancholy man.

Yet the Duke of St. James was rather thoughtful than melancholy. His life had been too active of late to allow him to indulge much in that passive mood. "I may never know what happiness is," thought his grace, as he leaned back in his whirling britchska; "but I think I know what happiness is not. It is not the career which I have hitherto pursued. All this excitement which they talk of so much, wears out the mind, and, I begin to believe, even the body, for certainly my energies seem deserting me. But two years, two miserable years, four-and-twenty months, eight-and-forty times the hours, the few hours, that I have been worse than wasting here, and I am shipwrecked—fairly bulged. Yet I have done every thing, tried every thing, and my career has been an eminent career. Wo to the wretch who trusts to his pampered senses for felicity! Wo to the wretch who flies from the bright goddess sympathy, to sacrifice before the dark idol self-love! Ah! I see too late, we were made for each other. Too late I discover the beautiful results of this great principle of creation. O! the blunders of an unformed character! O! the torture of an ill-regulated mind!

"Give me a life with no fierce alternations of rapture and anguish,—no impossible hopes,—no mad depression. Free me from the delusions which succeed each other like scentless roses that are ever blooming. Save me from the excitement which brings exhaustion, and from the passion that precreates remorse. Give me the luminous mind, where recognised and paramount duty dispels the harassing, ascertains the doubtful, confirms the wavering, sweetens the bitter. Give me content! O! give me love!

"How is it to end? What is to become of me? Can nothing rescue me? Is there no mode of relief, no place of succour, no quarter of refuge, no hope of salvation? I cannot right myself, and there is an end of it. Society, society, society! I owe thee much; and perhaps in working in thy service, those feelings might be developed which I am now convinced are the only source of happiness—but I am plunged too deep in the quag. I have no impulse, no call. I know not how it is, but my energies, good and evil, seem alike vanishing. There stares that fellow at my carriage! God! willingly would I break the stones upon the road for a year, to clear my mind of all the past!"

A carriage dashed by, and a lady bowed. It was Mrs. Dallington Vere.

The duke had appointed his banker to dine with him, as not a moment must be lost in preparing for the reception of his Brighton drafts. He was also to receive, this evening, a complete report of all his affairs. The first thing that struck his eye on his table was a packet from Sir Carte Blanche. He opened it eagerly, stared, started, and nearly shrieked. It fell from his hands. He was unfortunately alone. The estimates for the completion of his works, and the purchase of the rest of the furniture, exactly equalled the sum already expended. Sir Carte added, that the works might of course be stopped, but that there was no possible way of reducing them, with any deference to the original design, scale, and style; that he had already given instructions not to proceed with the furniture until further notice, but regretted to observe, that the orders were so advanced that he feared it was too late to make any sensible reduction. It might, in some degree, reconcile his grace to this report, when he concluded by observing, that the advanced state of the works could permit him to guaranty that the present estimates would not be exceeded.

The duke had sufficiently recovered before the arrival of his confidential agent not to appear agitated, only serious. The awful catastrophe at Brighton was announced, and his report of affairs was received. It was a very gloomy one. Great agricultural distress prevailed, and the rents could not be got in. Five-and-twenty per cent. was the least that must be taken off his income, and with no prospect of being speedily added on. There was a projected rail-road which would entirely knock up his canal, and even if crushed, must be expensively opposed. Coals were falling also, and the duties in town increasing. There was sad confusion in the Irish estates. The missionaries, who were patronised on the neighbouring lands of one of the city companies, had been exciting fatal confusion.—Chapels were burnt, crops destroyed, stock butchered, and rents all in arrear. Mr. Daere had contrived with great prudence to repress the efforts of the new reformation, and had succeeded in preventing any great mischief. His plans for the pursuit of his ideas and feelings upon this subject had been communicated to his late ward in an urgent and important paper, which his grace had never seen, but one day, unread, pushed into a certain black cabinet, which perhaps the reader may remember. His grace's miscellaneous debts had also been called in, and amounted to a greater sum than they had anticipated, which debts always do. One hundred and forty thousand pounds had crumbled away in the most imperceptible manner. A very great slice of this was the portion of the jeweller. His shield and his vases would at least be evidence to his posterity of the splendour and the taste of their imprudent ancestor; but he observed the other items with less satisfaction. He discovered, that in the course of two years he had given away one hundred and thirty-seven necklaces and chains; and as for rings they must be counted by the bushel. The result of this gloomy interview was, that the duke had not only managed to get rid of the immortal half-million, but had incurred debts or engagements to the amount of nearly eight hundred thousand pounds, encumbrances which were to be borne by a decreased, and perhaps decreasing income.

His grace was once more alone.

"Well! my brain is not turned;—and yet, I think, it has been pretty well worked these last few days. It cannot be true:—it must all be a dream. He never could have dined here, and said all this. Have I, indeed, been at Brighton? No, no, no,—I have been sleeping after dinner. I have a good mind to ring, and ask whether he really was here. It must be one great delusion. But no!—there are those cursed accounts. Well! what does it signify? I was miserable before, and now I am only contemptible in addition. How the world will laugh! They were made, forsooth, for my diversion. O idiot! you will be the butt of every one! Talk of Bagshot, indeed!—why he will scarcely speak to me!

"Away with this! Let me turn these things in my mind. Take it at one hundred and fifty thousand. It is more—it must be mere: but we will take it at that. Now, suppose one hundred thousand is allotted every year to meet my debts;—I suppose in nine or ten years I shall be free. Not that freedom will be worth much there; but still I am thinking of the glory of the house I have betrayed. Well then, there is fifty thousand a-year left. Let me see; twenty thousand have always been spent in Ireland, and ten at Pen Bronnock—and they must not be cut down. The only thing I can do now is, not to spare myself. I am the cause, and let me meet the consequences. Well, then, perhaps twenty thousand a-year remain to keep Hauteville Castle and Hauteville House; to maintain the splendour of the Duke of St. James. Why, my hereditary charities alone amount to a quarter of my income, to say nothing of incidental charges:—I, too, who should, and who would wish to rebuild at my own cost every bridge that is swept away, and every steeple that is burnt in my county.

"And now for the great point. Shall I proceed with my buildings? My own personal convenience whispers—no! But I have a strong conviction that the advice is treasonable. What! the young duke's folly, for every gazer in town and country to sneer at! O! my fathers, am I indeed your child, or am I a bastard? Never—never shall your shield be sullied while I bear it! Never shall your proud banner veil while I am chieftain! They shall be finished—certainly, they shall be finished, if I die an exile! There can be no doubt about this; I feel the deep propriety.

"This girl, too—something must be done for her. I must get Squib to run down to Brighton for me and Afy,—poor dear Afy,—I think she will be sorry when she hears it all!

"My head is weak; I want a counsellor. This man cannot enter into my feelings. Then there is my family lawyer. If I ask him for advice, he will ask me for instructions. Besides, this is not a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence; it is an affair as much of sentiment as economy; it involves the honour of my family—and I want one to unburthen myself to, who can sympathize with the tortured feelings of a noble—of a duke without a dukedom—for it has come to that. But I will leave sneers to the world.

"There is Annesley. He is clever, but so cold-blooded. He has no heart. There is Squib. He is a good fellow, and has heart enough; and I suppose, if I wanted to pension off a mistress, or compound with a few rascally tradesmen, he would manage the affair to a miracle. There is Darrell;

but he will be so fussy, and confidential, and official. Every meeting will be a privy council, every discussion a debate, every memorandum a state paper. There is Burlington; he is experienced, and clever, and kind-hearted, and I really think likes me;—but—no, no, it is too ridiculous. We who have only met for enjoyment, whose countenance was a smile, and whose conversation was badinage; we to meet, and meditate on my broken fortunes! Impossible! Besides, what right have I to compel a man, the study of whose life is to banish care, to take all my anxieties on his back or refuse the duty at the cost of my acquaintance, and the trouble of his conscience. Ah! I once had a friend, the best, the wisest—but no more of that. What is even the loss of fortune and of consideration to the loss of his—his daughter's love!"

His voice faltered, yet it was long before he retired; and he rose on the morrow only to meditate over his harassing embarrassments. As if the cup of his misery were not overflowing, a new incident occurred about this time, which rendered his sense of them even keener. But this is important enough to commence a new chapter.

CHAPTER X.

WILLIAM HENRY, Marquis of Marylebone, completed his twenty-first year—an event which created a greater sensation among the aristocracy of England, than even the majority of George Augustus Frederick, Duke of St. James. The rent-roll of his grace was great; but that of his lordship was incalculable. He had not indeed so many castles as our hero; but then, in the metropolis, a whole parish owned him as lord; and it was whispered, that when a few miles of leases fell in, the very Civil List must give him the wall. Even in the duration of his minority he had the superiority over the young duke, for the marquis was a posthumous son.

Lord Marylebone was a short, thick, swarthy, young gentleman, with wiry black hair, a nose somewhat flat, sharp eyes, and tuskish mouth—altogether not very unlike a terrier. His tastes were unknown: he had not travelled, nor done any thing very particular, except with a few congenial spirits beat the Guards in a rowing match,—a pretty diversion, and almost as conducive to a small white hand as almond-paste.

But his lordship was now of age, and might be seen every day at a certain hour rattling up Bond-street with a long red van, in which he drove four or five particular friends who lived at Stephen's hotel; and therefore, I suppose, were the partners of his glory in his victory over his majesty's household troops. Lord Marylebone was the universal subject of conversation. Pursuits which would have devoted a shabby earl of twelve or fifteen thousand a year to universal reprobation,—or, what is much worse, to universal sneers,—assumed quite a different character when they constituted the course of life of this fortunate youth. He was a delightful young man. So unaffected! No super-refinement, no false delicacy. Every one, every sex, every thing, extended his, her, or its hand to this cub; who, quite puzzled, but too brutal to be confused, kept driving on the red van, and each day perpetrating some new act of profligacy, some new

instance of coarse profusion, tasteless extravagance, and inelegant eccentricity.

But, nevertheless, he was the hero of the town. He was the great point of interest in "The Universe," and "The New World" favoured the old one with weekly articles on his character and conduct. The young duke was quite forgotten, if really young he could be longer called. Lord Marylebone was in the mouth of every tradesman, who authenticated his own vile inventions by foisting them on his lordship. The most grotesque fashions suddenly inundated the metropolis; and when the Duke of St. James ventured to express his disapprobation, he found his empire was over. "They were sorry that it did not meet his grace's taste; but really what his grace had suggested was quite gone by. This was the only hat, or cane, or coat which any civilized being could be seen with. Lord Marylebone wore, or bore, no other."

In higher circles it was much the same. Although the dandies would not bate an inch, and certainly would not elect the young marquis for their leader, they found, to their dismay, that the empire which they were meditating to defend, had already slipped away from their grasp. A new race of adventurous youths appeared upon the stage. Beards, and great-coats even rougher, bull-dogs instead of poodles, clubs instead of canes, cigars instead of perfumes, were the order of the day. There was no end to boat-racing; Crockford's sneered at White's; and there was even a talk of reviving the ring. Even the women patronised the young marquis, and those who could not be blind to his real character, were sure that, if well managed, he would not turn out ill.

Assuredly, our hero, though shelved, did not envy his successful rival. Had he been, instead of one for whom he felt a sovereign contempt, a being even more accomplished than himself, pity, and not envy, would have been the sentiment he would have yielded to his ascendant star. But, nevertheless, he could not be insensible to the results of this incident; and the advent of the young marquis seemed like the sting in the epigram of his life. After all his ruinous magnificence,—after all the profuse indulgence of his fantastic tastes,—he had sometimes consoled himself, even in the bitterness of satiety, by reminding himself, that he, at least, commanded the admiration of his fellow-creatures, although it had been purchased at a costly price. Not insensible to the power of his wealth, the magic of his station, he had, however, ventured to indulge in the sweet belief, that these qualities were less concerned in the triumphs of his career, than his splendid person, his accomplished mind, his amiable disposition, and his finished manner; his beauty, his wit, his goodness, and his grace. Even from this delusion, too, was he to waken, and, for the first time in his life, he gauged the depth and strength of that popularity which had been so dear to him, and which he now found to be so shallow and so weak.

"What will they think of me when they know all! What they will: I care not. I would sooner live in a cottage with May Dacre, and work for our daily bread, than be worshipped by all the beauty of this Babylon."

Gloomy, yet sedate, he returned home. His letters announced two extraordinary events. M. de Whiskerburg had galloped off with Lady Aphrodite, and Count Frill had flown away with the Bird of Paradise.

CHAPTER XI.

THE last piece of information was a relief; but the announcement of the elopement cost him a pang. Both surprised, and the first shocked him. We are unreasonable in love, and do not like to be anticipated even in neglect. An hour ago, Lady Aphrodite Grafton was to him only an object of anxiety and a cause of embarrassment. She was now a being to whom he was indebted for some of the most pleasing hours of his existence, and who could no longer contribute to his felicity. Everybody appeared deserting him.

He had neglected her, to be sure; and they must have parted, it was certain. Yet although the present event saved him from the most harrowing of scenes, he could not refrain from shedding a tear. So good! and so beautiful!—and was this her end? He, who knew all, knew how bitter had been the lot of her life.

It is certain, that when one of your very virtuous women ventures to be a little indiscreet, I say it is certain, though I regret it, that sooner or later there is an explosion. And the reason is this, that they are always in a hurry to make up for lost time, and so love with them becomes a business instead of being a pleasure. Nature had intended Lady Aphrodite Grafton for a Psyche, so spiritual was her soul, so pure her blood! Art, that is, education, which at least should be an art, though it is not,—art had exquisitely sculptured the precious gem that nature had developed, and all that was wanting was love to stamp an impression. Lady Aphrodite Grafton might have been as perfect a character as was ever the heroine of a novel:—and to whose account shall we place her blighted fame and sullied lustre? To that animal who seems formed only to betray woman. Her husband was a traitor in disguise. She found herself betrayed; but like a noble chieftain, when her capital was lost, maintained herself among the ruins of her happiness, in the citadel of her virtue. She surrendered, she thought, on terms, and in yielding her heart to the young duke, though never for a moment blind to her conduct, yet memory whispered extenuation, and love added—all that was necessary.

Our hero (I am for none of your perfect heroes) did not behave much better than her husband. The difference between them was, Sir Lucius Grafton's character was formed, and formed for evil; while the Duke of St. James, when he became acquainted with Lady Aphrodite, possessed none. Gallantry was a habit in which he had been brought up. To protest to women what he did not believe, and to feign what he did not feel, were, as he supposed, parts in the character of an accomplished gentleman; and as hitherto he had not found his career productive of any misery, we may perhaps view his conduct with less severity. But at length he approaches—not a mere woman of the world, who tries to delude him into the idea that he is the first hero of a romance that has been a hundred times repeated. He trembles at the responsibility which he has incurred by engaging the feelings of another. In the conflict of his emotions, some rays of moral light break upon his darkened soul. Profligacy brings its own punishment, and he feels keenly that man is the subject of sympathy, and not the slave of self-love.

This remorse protracts a connexion which each

day is productive of more painful feelings; but the heart cannot be overstrung, and anxiety ends in callousness. Then come neglect, remonstrance, explanations, protestations, and, sooner or later, a catastrophe.

But love is a dangerous habit, and when once indulged, is not easily thrown off, unless you become devout, which is, in a manner, giving the passion a new direction. In Catholic countries, it is surprising how many adventures end in a convent. A dame, in her desperation, flies to the grate, which never re-opens: but in Protestant regions, she has time to cool, and that's the deuse; so, instead of taking the veil, she takes—a new lover.

Lady Aphrodite had worked up her mind, and the young duke, to a step, the very mention of which, a year before, would have made her shudder. What an enchanter is passion! No wonder Ovid, who was a judge, made love so much connected with his metamorphoses. With infinite difficulty had she dared to admit the idea of flying with his grace; but when the idea was once admitted,—when she really had, once or twice, constantly dwelt on the idea of at length being free from her tyrant, and perhaps about to indulge in those beautiful affections for which she was formed, and of which she had been rifled,—when, I say, all this occurred, and her hero diplomatized, and, in short, kept back—why, she had advanced one step, without knowing it, to running away with another man.

It was unlucky that De Whiskerburg stepped in. An Englishman would not have done. She knew them well, and despised them all; but he was new, (dangerous novelty,) with a cast of feelings which, because they were strange, she believed to be unhackneyed, and he was impassioned.—I need not go on.

So this star has dropped from out the heaven; so this precious pearl no longer gleams among the jewels of society, and there she breathes in a foreign land, among strange faces, and stranger customs; and when she thinks of what is past, laughs at some present emptiness, and tries to persuade her withering heart that the mind is independent of country, and blood, and opinion. And her father's face no longer shines with its proud love, and her mother's voice no longer whispers to her with sweet anxiety. Clouded is the brow of her bold brother, and dimmed is the radiancy of her budding sister's bloom.

Poor creature! that is to say, wicked woman!—for I am not one of those who set myself against the verdict of society, or ever omit to expedite, by a gentle kick, a falling friend. And yet, when I just remember beauty is beauty, and grace is grace, and kindness is kindness, although the beautiful, the graceful, and the amiable do get in a scrape, I don't know how it is, I confess it is a weakness, but under these circumstances I do not feel quite inclined to sneer. But this is wrong. We should not pity or pardon those who have yielded to great temptation, or perchance great provocation. Besides, it is right that our sympathy should be kept for the injured.

To stand amid the cold ashes of your desolate hearth, with all your penates shivered at your feet; to find no smiling face meet your return, no brow look gloomy when you leave your door, to eat and sleep alone, to be bored with grumbling servants and with weekly bills; to have your children asking after mamma; and no one to nurse your gout, or cure the influenza that rages in your household

—all this is doubtless hard to digest, and would tell in a novel, particularly if written by my friends Mr. Ward or Mr. Bulwer.

But is it true? I hope not. I, who am the loneliest of the sons of Adam, on whom no female ever will drop in, just for a quiet chat, except the muse, who will not quite desert me, I have some idea of trying the comforts and the consolations of the blessed state; and, I confess, though of a mild and tolerant disposition—one, in fact, who can bear any thing—I say, I should not exactly like—you understand me.

Therefore, I beg it to be most explicitly understood, that if any damsel, instead of going out to India, choose to come out to me on speculation. (I promise to give her a fair trial,) I beg it, I say, to be most distinctly understood, that she must behave herself.

For Doctors' Commons are a common bore, or sewer, the *cloaca maxima* of society, and, no doubt, fend greatly to the purity of our morals. But then, in England, you have to pay for virtue, as well as every thing else; and I cannot ensure the purity of my posterity at the cost of the purse of the present generation.

And so, ma'am'selle, this is an understood condition. For the rest of your qualifications, fortune is no object; by which I mean to be understood that if grace and beauty will not come, backed by those sweet acres and consols, why, I must take the picture without a frame, and wear the gem without its burnished bed. Love and economy will doubtless do wonders. For your style of loveliness, although, like all others, I may have my penchant; nevertheless, blonde or brunette, I shall be satisfied. I only insist upon an exquisite taste in costume. I hate an ill-dressed woman. In this accomplished age, it is unnecessary to say any thing of accomplishments; and provided you do not copy prints, and will favour me with more of the piano than of your guitar, we shall not quarrel. You must not be at all fantastic, but a most obedient and quiet wife. You must condescend occasionally to turn a leaf of Jarrin or of Dolby; but, on the other hand, you may eat as little as you like. Of myself, I say nothing, because egotism is not my forte; but if you wish to make inquiries, I am ready with the most respectable references, requiring, as I do, the same, and also, that all letters be post-paid.

CHAPTER XII.

THE duke had passed a stormy morning with his solicitor, who wished him to sell the Pen Bronnock property, which, being parliamentary, would command a price infinitely greater than might be expected from its relative income. The very idea of stripping his coronet of this brightest jewel, and thus sacrificing for wealth the ends of riches, greatly disordered him, and he more and more felt the want of a counsellor who could sympathize with his feelings, as well as arrange his fortunes. In this mood, he suddenly seized a pen, and wrote the following letter.

“— House, Feb. 5, 182—.

“MY DEAR MR. DACRE,—I keenly feel that you are the last person to whom I should apply for the counsels or the consolation of friendship. I have

long ago forfeited all claims to your regard, and your esteem I never possessed. Yet, if only because my career ought to end by my being an unsuccessful suppliant to the individual whom both virtue and nature pointed out to me as my best friend, and whose prospered and parental support I have so wantonly, however thoughtlessly, rejected, I do not regret that this is written. No feeling of false delicacy can prevent me from applying to one to whom I have long ago incurred incalculable obligations, and no feeling of false delicacy will, I hope, for a moment, prevent you from refusing the application of one who has acknowledged those obligations only by incalculable ingratitude.

“In a word, my affairs are, I fear, inextricably involved. I will not dwell upon the madness of my life; suffice that its consequences appal me. I have really endeavoured to examine into all details, and am prepared to meet the evil as becomes me; but, indeed, my head turns with the complicated interests which solicit my consideration; and I tremble lest, in the distraction of my mind, I may adopt measures which may baffle the very results I would attain. For myself, I am very ready to pay the penalty of my silly profligacy; and if exile, or any other personal infliction, can redeem the fortunes of the house that I have betrayed, I shall cheerfully submit to my destiny. My career has been productive of too little happiness to make me regret its termination.

“But I want advice: I want the counsel of one who can sympathize with my distracted feelings—who will look as much, or rather more, to the honour of my family than to the convenience of myself. I cannot obtain this from what are called men of business—and, with a blush, I confess I have no friend. In this situation, my thoughts recur to one on whom, believe me, they have often dwelt; and although I have no right to appeal to your heart, for my father's sake you will perhaps pardon this address. Whatever you may resolve, my dearest sir, rest assured that you and your family will always command the liveliest gratitude of one who regrets he may not subscribe himself

“Your obliged and devoted friend,

“ST. JAMES.

“I beg that you will not answer this if your determination be what I anticipate and what I deserve.”

“Dacre Dacre, Esq.” &c. &c. &c.

It was signed, sealed and sent. He repented its transmission when it was gone. He almost resolved to send a courier to stop the post. He continued walking up and down his room for the rest of the day: he could not eat, or read, or talk. He was plunged in a nervous revery. He passed the next day in the same state. Unable to leave his house, and unseen by visitors, he retired to his bed, feverish and dispirited. The morning came, and he woke from his hot and broken sleep at an early hour; yet he had not energy to rise. At last the post arrived, and his letters were brought up to him. With a trembling hand and a sinking breath he read these lines:

“Castle Dacre, February 6, 182—.

“MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—Not only for your father's sake, but your own, are my services ever at your command. I have long been sensible of your amiable disposition, and there are circumstances which will ever make me your debtor.

"The announcement of the embarrassed state of your affairs fills me with sorrow and anxiety—yet I will hope the best. Young men, unconsciously, exaggerate adversity as well as prosperity. If you are not an habitual gamester, and I hope you have not been even an occasional one, unbounded extravagance could scarcely, in two years, have permanently injured your resources. However, bring down with you all papers, and be careful to make no arrangement, even of the slightest nature, until we meet.

"We expect you hourly. May desires her kindest regards, and begs me to express the great pleasure which she will feel at again finding you our guest. It is unnecessary for me to repeat how very sincerely I am your friend.

"DACE DACE."

He read the letter three times, to be sure he did not mistake the delightful import. Then he rang the bell with a vivacity which had not characterized him for many a month.

"Luigi! prepare to leave town to-morrow morning for an indefinite period. I shall only take you. I must dress immediately, and order breakfast and my horses."

The Duke of St. James had communicated the state of his affairs to Lord Fitz-pompey, who was very shocked, offered his best services, and also asked him to dinner, to meet the Marquis of Marylebone. The young duke had also announced to his relatives, and to some of his particular friends, that he intended to travel for some time, and he well knew that their charitable experience would understand the rest. They understood every thing. The marquis's party daily increased, and "The Universe" and "The New World" announced that the young duke was "done up."

There was one person to whom our hero would pay a farewell visit before he left London. This was Lady Caroline St. Maurice. He had called at Fitz-pompey House one or two mornings in the hope of finding her alone, and to-day he determined to be more successful. As he stopped his horse for the last time before his uncle's mansion, he could not help calling to mind the first visit which he had paid after his arrival. But the door opens,—he enters,—he is announced,—and finds Lady Caroline alone.

Ten minutes passed away, as if the morning ride or evening ball were again to bring them together. The young duke was still gay, and still amusing. At last he said with a smile—

"Do you know, Caroline, this is a farewell visit, and to you!"

She did not speak, but bent her head, as if she were intent upon some work, and so seated herself that her countenance was almost hid.

"You have heard from my uncle," continued he, laughing, "and if you have not heard from him, you have heard from somebody else, of my little scrape. A fool and his money, you know, Caroline, and a short reign and a merry one. When we get prudent, we are wondrous fond of proverbs. My reign has certainly been brief enough: with regard to the merriment, that is not quite so certain. I have little to regret except your society, sweet coz!"

"Dear George, how can you talk so of such serious affairs! If you knew how unhappy, how miserable I am, when I hear the cold, callous world

speak of such things with indifference, you would at least not imitate their heartlessness."

"Dear Caroline!" said he, seating himself at her side.

"I cannot help thinking," she continued, "that you have not sufficiently exerted yourself about these embarrassments. You are, of course, too harassed—too much annoyed—too little accustomed to the energy and the detail of business to interfere with any effect; but surely, surely, a friend might. You will not speak to my father, and perhaps you have your reasons; but is there no one else? St. Maurice, I know, has no head. Ah! George, I often feel that if your relations had been different people, your fate might have been different. We are the fault."

He kissed her hand.

"Among all your intimates," she continued, "is there no one fit to be your counsellor—no one worthy of your confidence?"

"None," said the duke bitterly, "none—none. I have no friend among those intimates: there is not a man of them who cares to serve, or is capable of serving me."

"You have well considered?" asked Lady Caroline.

"Well, dear, well. I know them all by rote,—head and heart. Ah! my dear, dear Carry, if you were a man, what a nice little friend you would be."

"You will always laugh, George. But I—I have no heart to laugh. This breaking up of your affairs, this exile, this losing you whom we all love—love so dearly, makes me quite miserable!"

He kissed her hand again.

"I dare say," she continued, "you have thought me as heartless as the rest, because I never spoke. But I knew—that is, I feared—or, rather, hoped, that a great part of what I heard was false; and so I thought notice was unnecessary, and might be painful. Yet, Heaven knows, there are few subjects that have been oftener in my thoughts, or cost me more anxiety. Are you sure you have no friend?"

"I have you, Caroline. I did not say I had no friends: I said I had none among those intimates you talked of; that there was no man among them capable of the necessary interference, even if he were willing to undertake it. But I am not friendless—not quite forlorn, love! My fate has given me a friend, that I but little deserve; one, whom if I had prized better, I should not perhaps been obliged to put his friendship to so severe a trial. To-morrow, Caroline, I depart for Castle Dacre; there is my friend. Alas! how little have I deserved such a boon!"

"Dacre!" exclaimed Lady Caroline, "Mr. Dacre! O! you have made me so happy, George! Mr. Dacre is the very, very person,—that is, the very best person you could possibly have applied to."

"Good-bye, Caroline," said his grace, rising.

She burst into tears.

Never, never had she looked so lovely: never, never had he loved her so entirely! Tears!—tears shed for him! O! what, what is grief, when a lovely woman remains to weep over our misfortunes! Could he be miserable—could his career indeed be unfortunate, when this was reserved for him? He was on the point of pledging his affection,—but to leave her under such circumstances was impossible: to neglect Mr. Dacre was equally

so. He determined to arrange affairs with all possible promptitude, and then to hasten up, and entreat her to share his diminished fortunes. But he would not go without whispering hope—without leaving some soft thought to lighten her lonely hours. He caught her in his arms; he covered her sweet small mouth with kisses, and whispered, in the midst of their pure embrace—

“Love!—Love! I shall soon return, and we will yet be happy.”

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I

MISS DACRE, although she was prepared to greet the Duke of St. James with cordiality, did not anticipate with equal pleasure the arrival of the pages and the jager. Infinite had been the disturbances they had occasioned during their first visit, and endless the complaints of the steward and the housekeeper. The men-servants were initiated in the mysteries of dominoes, and the maid-servants in the tactics of flirtation. Carlstein was the hero of the under-butlers, and even the trusty guardian of the cellar himself was too often on the point of obtaining the German's opinion of his master's German wines. Gaming, and drunkenness, and love, the most productive of all the teeming causes of human sorrow, had in a week sadly disordered the well-regulated household of Castle Daere, and nothing but the impetuosity of our hero would have saved his host's establishment from utter perdition. Miss Daere was therefore not less pleased than surprised when the britchska of the Duke of St. James discharged on a fine afternoon, its noble master, attended only by the faithful Luigi, at the terrace of the castle.

A few country cousins, fresh from Cumberland, who knew nothing of the Duke of St. James, except from a stray number of “The Universe,” which occasionally stole down to corrupt the pure waters of their lakes, were the only guests. Mr. Daere grasped our hero's hand with a warmth and expression which were unusual to him, but which conveyed, better than words, the depth of his friendship; and his daughter, who looked more beautiful than ever, advanced with a beaming face and joyous tone, which quite reconciled the Duke of St. James to being a ruined man.

The presence of strangers limited their conversation to subjects of general interest. At dinner, the duke took care to be most agreeable: he talked in a very unaffected manner, and particularly to the cousins, who were all delighted with him, and found him “quite a different person to what they had fancied.” The evening passed over, and even lightly, without the aid of *coarté*, romances, or gallops. Mr. Daere chatted with old Mr. Montingford, and old Mrs. Montingford sat still admiring her “girls” who stood still admiring May Daere singing or talking, and occasionally reconciled us to their occasional silence, by a frequent and extremely hearty laugh—that Cumberland laugh, which never outlives a single season in London.

And the Duke of St. James—what did he do? It must be confessed, that in some points he greatly

resembled the Misses Montingford, for he was both silent and admiring—but he never laughed. Yet he was not dull, and was careful not to show that he had cares, which is vulgar. If a man be gloomy, let him keep to himself. No one has a right to go croaking about society, or, what is worse, looking as if he stifled grief. These fellows should be put in the pound. I like a good broken heart or so, now and then; but then we should retire to the Sierra Morena mountains, and live upon locusts and wild honey, not “dine out” with our cracked cores, and while we are meditating suicide, the Gazette, or the Chiltern Hundreds, damn a vintage, or eulogize an *entrée*.

And as for cares—what are cares when a man is in love! Once more they had met,—once more he gazed upon that sunny and sparkling face, once more he listened to that sweet and thrilling voice which sounded like a birdlike burst of music upon a summer morning. She moved, and each attitude was fascination. She was still; and he regretted that she moved. Now her neck, now her hair, now her round arm, now her tapering waist, ravished his attention: now he is in ecstasies with her twinkling foot; now he is dazzled with her glancing hand.

Once more he was at Daere! How different was this meeting to their first! Then, she was cold, almost cutting; then she was disregardful, almost contemptuous; but then he had hoped,—ah! madman, he had more than hoped. Now she was warm, almost affectionate; now she listened to him with readiness, ay! almost courted his conversation. And now he could only despair. As he stood alone before the fire, chewing this bitter cud, she approached him.

“How good you were to come directly!” she said, with a smile which melted his heart. “I fear, however, you will not find us as merry as before. But you can make any thing amusing. Come, then, and sing to these damsels. Do you know they are half afraid of you? and I cannot persuade them that a terrible magician has not assumed, for the nonce, the air and appearance of a young gentleman of distinction.”

He smiled, but could not speak. Repartee sadly deserts the lover; yet smiles, under those circumstances, are very eloquent; and the eye, after all, speaks much more to the purpose than the tongue. Forgetting every thing, except the person who addressed him, he offered her his hand, and advanced to the group which surrounded the piano.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning was passed by the Duke of St. James in giving Mr. Daere his report of the state of his affairs. His banker's accounts, his architect's estimates, his solicitor's statements, were all brought forward and discussed. A ride, generally with Miss Daere and one of her young friends, dinner, and a short evening, and eleven o'clock, sent them all to repose. Thus glided on a fortnight. The mornings continued to be passed in business. Affairs were more complicated than his grace had imagined, who had no idea of detail. He gave all the information that he could, and made his friend master of his particular feelings. For the rest, Mr. Daere was soon involved in much

correspondence; and although the young duke could no longer assist him, he recommended, and earnestly begged, that he would remain at Dacre; for he could perceive, better than his grace, that our hero was labouring under a great deal of excitement, and that his health was impaired. A regular course of life was therefore as necessary for his constitution, as it was desirable for all other reasons.

Behold, then, our hero domesticated at Dacre—rising at nine, joining a family breakfast, taking a quiet ride or moderate stroll, sometimes looking into a book—but he was no great reader; sometimes fortunate enough in achieving a stray game at billiards, usually with a Miss Montingford, and retiring to rest about the time that in London his most active existence generally began. Was he dull? was he wearied? He was never lighter-hearted or more contented in his life. Happy he could not allow himself to be styled, because the very cause which breathed this calm over his existence seemed to portend a storm which could not be avoided. It was the thought, the presence, the smile, the voice of May Dacre, that imparted this new interest to existence; that being who never could be his. He shuddered to think that all this must end; but, although he never indulged again in the great hope, his sanguine temper allowed him to thrust away the future, and to participate in all the joys of the flowing hour.

At the end of February, the Montingfords departed, and now the duke was the only guest at Dacre; nor did he hear that any others were expected. He was alone with her again—often was he alone with her, and never without a strange feeling coming over his frame, which made him tremble. Mr. Dacre, a man of active talents, always found occupation in the various interests of a large estate, and usually requested, or rather required, the Duke of St. James to be his companion. He was desirous that the duke should not be alone, and ponder too much over the past; nor did he conceal his wishes from his daughter, who, on all occasions, as the duke observed with gratification, seconded the benevolent intentions of her parent. Nor did our hero indeed wish to be alone, or to ponder over the past. He was quite contented with the present; but he did not want to ride with papa, and took every opportunity to shirk; all which Mr. Dacre set down to the indolence of exhaustion, and the inertness of a mind without an object.

"I am going to ride over to Doncaster, George," said Mr. Dacre, one morning, at breakfast. "I think you had better order your horse too. A good ride will rouse you, and you should show yourself there."

"O! very well, sir; but—but, I think that—"

"But what?" asked Mr. Dacre, smiling.

The duke looked to May Dacre, who seemed to take pity on his idleness.

"You make him ride too much, papa. Leave him at home with me. I have a long round today, and want an escort. I will take him instead of my friend Tom Carter. You must carry a basket, though," said she, turning to the duke, "and run for the doctor if he be wanted, and, in short, do any odd message that turns up."

So Mr. Dacre departed alone, and shortly after his daughter and the Duke of St. James set out on their morning ramble. Many were the cottages at

which they called—many the old dales after whose rheumatisms, and many the young daisies after whose fortunes they inquired. Old Dame Rawdon was worse or better—worse last night, but better this morning. She was always better when miss called. Miss's face always did her good. And Fanny was very comfortable at Squire Wentworth's, and the housekeeper was very kind to her, thanks to miss's saying a word to the great lady. And old John Selby was quite about again. Miss's stuff had done him a world of good, to say nothing of Mr. Dacre's generous old wine.

"And is this your second son, Dame Rishworth?"

"No; that bees our fourth," said the good woman, maternally arranging the urchin's thin, white, flat, straight, unmanageable hair. "We are thinking what to do with him, miss. He wants to go out to sarvice. Since Jim Eustace got on so, I don't know what the matter is with the lads; but I think we shall have none of them in the fields soon. He can clean knives and shoes very well, miss. Mr. Bradford, at the castle, was saying, t'other day, that perhaps he might want a young hand. You haven't heard any thing, I suppose, miss?"

"And what is your name, sir?" asked Miss Dacre.

"Bobby Rishworth, miss!"

"Well, Bobby, I must consult Mr. Bradford."

"We be in great trouble, miss," said the next cottager. "We be in great trouble. Tom, poor Tom, was out last night, and the keepers will give him up. The good man has done all he can—we have all done all we can, miss, and you see how it ends. He is the first of the family that ever went out. I hope that will be considered, miss. Seventy years, our fathers before us, have we been on the 'state, and nothing ever sworn agin us. I hope that will be considered, miss. I am sure if Tom had been an under-keeper, as Mr. Roberts once talked of, this would have never happened. I hope that it will be considered, miss. We are in great trouble surely. Tom, you see, was our first, miss."

"I never interfere about poaching, you know, Mr. Jones. Mr. Dacre is the best judge of such matters. But you can go to him and say that I sent you. I am afraid, however, that he has heard of Tom before."

"Only that night at Millwood, miss, and then, you see, he had been drinking with Squire Ridge's people. I hope that will be considered, miss."

"Well, well, go up to the castle."

"Pray be seated, miss," said a very neat-looking mistress of a very neat little farm-house. "Pray be seated, sir. Let me dust it first. Dust will get everywhere, do what we can. And how's pa, miss? He has not given me a look-in for many a day—not since he was a-hunting: bless me, if it a'n't a fortune. This day fortnight he tasted our ale, sure enough. Will you take a glass, sir?"

"You are very good. No, I thank you; not today."

"Yes, give him a glass, nurse. He is very unwell, and it will do him good."

She brought the sparkling amber fluid, and the duke did justice by his draught.

"I shall have fine honey for you, miss, this year," said the old nurse. "Are you fond of honey, sir? Our honey is well known about. I don't know how it is, but we do always contrive to

manage the bees. How fond some people are of honey, good Lord! Now, when you were a little girl, (I knew this young lady, sir, before you did,) you always used to be fond of honey. I remember one day—let me see—it must be! ay! truly, that it is—eighteen years ago next Martinmas. I was a-going down the nursery stairs, just to my poor mistress's room, and I had you in my arms (for I knew this young lady, sir, before you did)—well! I was a-going down the stairs, as I just said, to my poor dear mistress's room, with you, who was then a little un indeed (bless your smiling face! you cost me many a weary hour when you were weaned, miss. That you did! Some thought you would never get through it; but I always said, while there is life there is hope; and so, you see, I were right)—but, as I was saying, I was a-going down the stairs to my poor dear mistress, and I had a gallipot in my hand, a covered gallipot, with some leeches. And just as I got to the bottom of the stairs, and was a-going into my poor dear mistress's room, said you (I never shall forget it)—said you, 'Honey, honey, nurse.' She thought it was honey, sir. So, you see, she were always fond of honey, (for I knew this young lady long before you did, sir.)"

"Are you quite sure of that, nurse?" said Miss Dacre; "I think this is an older friend than you imagine. You remember the little duke—do not you? This is the little duke. Do you think he has grown?"

"Now! bless my life! is it so, indeed? Well, be sure, he has grown. I always thought he would turn out well, miss, though Dr. Prettyman were always at preaching and talking his prophecyeations. I always thought he would turn out well at last. Bless me! how he has grown, indeed! Perhaps he grows too fast, and that makes him weak. Nothing better than a glass of ale for weak people. I remember when Dr. Prettyman ordered it for my poor dear mistress. 'Give her ale,' said the doctor, 'as strong as it can be brewed;' and, sure enough, my poor dear master had it brewed! Have you done growing, sir? You was ever a troublesome child. Often and often have I called 'George! George! Georgy! Georgy Porgy!' and he never would come near me, though he heard all the time as plainly as he does now. Bless me! he has grown, indeed!"

"But I have turned out well at last, nurse, eh?" asked the duke.

"Ay! sure enough; I always said so. Often and often have I said, he will turn out well at last. You be going, miss? I thank you for looking in. My duty to my master. I was thinking of bringing up one of those cheeses he likes so."

"Ay! do nurse. He can eat no cheese but yours."

As they wandered home, they talked of Lady Caroline, to whom the duke mentioned that he must write. He had once intended distinctly to have explained his feelings to her in a letter from Dacre; but each day he postponed the close of his destiny, although without hope. He lingered, and he lingered round May Dacre, as a bird flutters round the fruit which is already grasped by a boy. Circumstances, which we shall relate, had already occurred, which confirmed the suspicion he had long entertained, that Arundel Dacre was his favoured rival. Impressed with the folly of again encouraging hope, yet unable to harden his heart

against her continual fascination, the softness of his manner indicated his passion, and his calm and somewhat languid carriage also told her it was hopeless. Perhaps, after all, there is no demeanour more calculated to melt obdurate woman. The gratification he received from her society was evident, yet he never indulged in that gallantry of which he was once so proud. When she approached him, a mild smile lit up his pensive countenance; he adopted her suggestions, but made none; he listened to her remarks with interest, but no longer bandied repartee. Delicately he impressed her with the absolute power which she might exercise over his mind.

"I write myself to Caroline to-morrow," said Miss Dacre.

"Ah! then I need not write. I talked of going up sooner. Have the kindness to explain why I do not:—peremptory orders from Mr. Dacre—fresh air, and—"

"Arithmetic; I understand you get on admirably."

"My follies," said the duke, with a serious air "have at least been productive of one good end—they have amused you."

"Nay! I have done too many foolish things myself, any more to laugh at my neighbours. As for yourself, you have only committed those which were inseparable from your situation; and few like the Duke of St. James, would so soon have opened their eyes to the truth of their conduct."

"A compliment from you repays me for all."

"Self-approbation does, which is much better than compliments from any one. See! there is papa—and Arundel too; let us run up!"

CHAPTER III.

THE Duke of St. James had, on his arrival at Dacre, soon observed that a very constant correspondence was maintained between Miss Dacre and her cousin. There was no attempt to conceal the fact from any of the guests, and as that young gentleman was now engaged in an affair interesting to all his friends, every letter generally contained some paragraph almost as interesting to the Mountingfords as herself, and which was accordingly read aloud. Mr. Arundel Dacre was candidate for the vacant representation of a town in a distant county. He had been disappointed in his views on the borough, about which he had returned to England, but had been nevertheless persuaded by his cousin to remain in his native country. During this period he had been a great deal at Castle Dacre, and had become much more intimate and unreserved with his uncle, who observed with the greatest satisfaction this change in his character, and lost no opportunity of deserving and increasing the confidence for which he had so long unavailingly yearned and which was now so unexpectedly proffered.

The borough for which Arundel Dacre was about to stand was in Sussex, a county in which his family had no property, and very slight connexion. Yet at the place the Catholic interest was strong, and on that and the usual whig influence he ventured. His desire to be a member of the legislature, at all and from early times extreme,

was now greatly heightened by the prospect of being present at the impending Catholic debate. After an absence of three weeks, he had hurried to Yorkshire for four-and-twenty hours, to give a report of the state of his canvass, and the probability of his success. In that success all were greatly interested, but none more so than May Dacre, whose thoughts indeed seemed to dwell on no other subject, and who expressed herself with a warmth which betrayed her secret feelings. Had the place only been in Yorkshire, she was sure he must have succeeded. She was the best canvasser in the world, and everybody agreed that Harry Greystock owed his election merely to her insinuating tongue and unrivalled powers of scampering, by which she had completely baffled the tactics of Lady Amarantha German, who thought that a canvass was only a long morning call, and might be achieved in a cachemere and a britchska.

The young duke, who had seen very little of his second since the eventful day, greeted him with warmth, and was welcomed with a frankness which he had never before experienced from his friend. Excited by rapid travel and his present course of life, and not damped by the unexpected presence of any strangers, Arundel Dacre seemed quite a changed man, and talked immensely.

"Come, May, I must have a kiss! I have been kissing as pretty girls as you. There, now! you all said I never should be a popular candidate. I get regularly huzzaed every day,—so they have been obliged to hire a band of butchers' boys to pelt me. Whereupon I compare myself to Cæsar set upon in the senate house, and get immense cheering in 'The County Chronicle,' which I have bribed. If you knew the butts of wine, the Heidelberg tuns of ale, that I have drunk during the last fortnight, you would stare indeed. As much as the lake; but then I have to talk so much, that the ardour of my eloquence, like the hot flannels of the Humane Society, saves me from the injurious effects of all this liquid."

"But will you get in—but will you get in?" exclaimed his cousin.

"'Tis not in mortals to command success; but—"

"Pooh! pooh! you must command it!"

"Well, then, I have an excellent chance; and the only thing against me is, that my committee are quite sure. But really I think, that if the Protestant overseers, whom, by-the-by, May, I cannot persuade that I am a heretic (it is very hard that a man is not believed when he says he shall be damned)—if they do not empty the workhouse, we shall do. But let us go in, for I have travelled all night, and must be off to-morrow morning."

They entered the house, and the duke quitted the family group. About an hour afterward he sauntered to the music-room. As he opened the door his eyes lighted upon May Dacre and her cousin. They were standing before the fire, with their backs to the door. His arm was wound carelessly round her waist, and with his other hand he supported, with her, a miniature, at which she was looking. The duke could not catch her countenance, which was completely hid; but her companion was not gazing on the picture; his head, a little turned, indicated that there was a living countenance more interesting to him than all the skill of the most cunning artist. Part of his cheek was alone perceptible, and that was burning red.

All this was the work of a moment. The duke stared, turned pale, closed the door without a sound, and retired unperceived. When he was sure that he could no longer be observed, he gasped for breath, a cold dew covered his frame, his joints loosened, and his sinking heart gave him that sickening sensation when life appears utterly worthless, and ourselves utterly contemptible. Yet what had he witnessed? A confirmation of what he had never doubted. What was this woman to him? Alas! how supreme was the power with which she ruled his spirit! And this Dacre—this Arundel Dacre,—how he hated him! O! that they were hand to hand, and sword to sword, in some fair field, and there decide it! He must conquer; he felt that. Already his weapon pierced that craven heart, and ripped open that breast which was to be the pillow of—Hell! hell! He rushed to his room, and began a letter to Caroline St. Maurice; but he could not write: and after scribbling over a quire of paper, he threw the sheets to the flames, and determined to ride up to town to-morrow.

The dinner-bell sounded. Could he meet them? Ay! meet them! Defy them! Insult them! He descended to the dining-room. He heard her musical and liquid voice; the scowl upon his brow melted away; but, gloomy and silent, he took his seat, and gloomy and silent he remained. Little he spoke, and that little was scarcely courteous. But Arundel had enough to say. He was the hero of the party. Well he might be. Story after story of old maids and young widows, sturdy butchers, and corrupt coal-merchants, sparkled away; but a faint smile was all the tribute of the duke, and a tribute that was seldom paid.

"You are not well!" said Miss Dacre to him in a low voice.

"I believe I am," answered he, shortly.

"You do not seem quite so," she replied, with an air of surprise.

"I believe I have got a headach," he retorted, with very little more cordiality. She did not again speak, but she was evidently annoyed.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE certainly is a dark delight in being miserable—a sort of strange satisfaction in being savage, which is uncommonly fascinating. One of the greatest pests of my philosophy is, that I can no longer be sullen, and most sincerely do I regret it. To brood over misery—to flatter yourself that there is not a single being who cares for your existence, and not a single circumstance to make that existence desirable;—O! there is wild witchery in it, which I doubt whether opium can reach, and I am sure that wine cannot.

And the duke! He soon left the uncle and nephew to their miserable speculations about the state of the poll, and took his sullen way, with the air of Ajax, to the terrace. Here he stalked along in a fierce revery; asked why he had been born; why he did not die; why he should live, and so on. His wounded pride, which had borne so much, fairly got the mastery, and revenged for all insults on love, whom it ejected most scurvily. He blushed to think how he had humiliated himself before her

She was the cause of that humiliation, and of every disagreeable sensation that he was experiencing; he began, therefore, to imprecate vengeance, walked himself into a fair, cold-hearted, malicious passion, and avowed most distinctly that he hated her. As for him, most ardently he hoped that, some day or other, they might again meet at six o'clock in the morning in Kensington Gardens, but in a different relation to each other.

It was dark when he entered the castle. He was about ascending to his own room, when he determined not to be cowed, and resolved to show himself the regardless witness of their mutual loves; so he repaired to the drawing-room. At one end of this very spacious apartment Mr. Dacre and Arundel were walking in deep converse; at the other sat Miss Dacre at a table, reading. The duke seized a chair without looking at her, dragged it along to the fireplace, and there seating himself, with his arms folded, his feet on the fender, and his chair tilting, he appeared to be lost in the abstracting contemplation of the consuming fuel.

Some minutes had passed, when a slight sound like a fluttering bird made him look up;—Miss Dacre was standing at his side.

“Is your head better?” she asked him, in a soft voice.

“Thank you, it is quite well,” he replied, in a sullen tone.

There was a moment's pause, and then she again spoke.

“I am sure you are not well.”

“Perfectly, thank you.”

“Something has happened, then,” she said, rather imploringly.

“What should have happened?” he rejoined, very pettishly.

“You are very strange; very unlike what you always are.”

“What I always am is of no consequence to myself, or to any one else; and as for what I am now, I cannot always command my feelings, though I shall take care that they are not again observed.”

“I have offended you?”

“Then you have shown your discretion, for you should always offend the forlorn.”

“I did not think before, that you were bitter.”

“That has made me bitter which has made all others so.”

“What?”

“Disappointment.”

Another pause; yet she did not go.

“I will not quarrel, and so you need not try. You are consigned to my care, and I am to amuse you. What shall we do?”

“Do what you like, Miss Dacre; but spare, O! spare me, your pity!”

“My lord! you do indeed surprise me. Pity! I was not thinking of pity! But you are indeed serious, and I leave you.”

He turned;—he seized her hand.

“Nay! do not go. Forgive me,” he said,—“forgive me, for I am most miserable.”

“Why, why are you?”

“O! do not ask, you agonize me.”

“Shall I sing? shall I charm the evil spirit?”

“Any thing.”

She tripped to the piano, and an air, bursting like the spring, and gay as a village feast, filled the room with its delight. He listened, and each in-

stant the chilly weight loosened from his heart. Her balmy voice now came upon his ear, breathing joy and cheerfulness, content and love. Could love be the savage passion which lately subjugated his soul? He rose from his seat; he walked about the room; each minute his heart was lighter, his brow more smooth. A thousand thoughts, beautiful and quivering like the twilight, glanced o'er his mind, in indistinct but exquisite tumults—and hope, like the voice of an angel in a storm, was heard above all. He lifted a chair gently from the ground, and stealing to the enchantress, seated himself at her side. So softly he reached her, that for a moment he was unperceived. She turned her head, and her eyes met his. Even the ineffable incident was forgotten, as he marked the strange gush of lovely light, that seemed to say—what to think of, was, after all, madness.

CHAPTER V.

THE storm was past. He vowed that a dark thought should not again cross his mind. It was fated that she should not be his; but it was some miserable satisfaction, that he was only rejected in favour of an attachment which had grown with her years, and had strengthened with her stature, and in deference to an engagement hallowed by time as well as by affection. It was deadly indeed to remember, that fate seemed to have destined him for that happy position, and that his folly had rejected the proffered draught of bliss. He blasphemed against the Fitz-pompeys. However, he did not leave Dacre at the same time as Arundel, but lingered on. His affairs were far from being arranged. The Irish business gave great trouble, and he determined therefore to remain.

It was ridiculous to talk of feeding a passion which was not susceptible of increase. Her society was heaven; and he resolved to enjoy it, although he was to be expelled. As for his loss of fortune, it gave him not a moment's care. Without her, he felt he could not live in England, and, even ruined, he would be a match for an Italian prince.

So he continued her companion, each day rising with purer feelings and a more benevolent heart; each day more convinced of the falseness of his past existence, and of the possibility of happiness to a well-regulated mind; each day more conscious that duty is nothing more than self-knowledge, and the performance of it consequently the development of feelings which are the only true source of self-gratification. He mourned over the opportunities which he had forfeited of conducting to the happiness of others and himself. Sometimes he half resolved to remain in England and devote himself to his tenantry; but passion blinded him, and he felt that he had erred too far ever to regain the right road.

The election for which Arundel Dacre was a candidate came on. Each day the state of the pell arrived. It was nearly equal to the last. Their agitation was terrible, but forgotten in the deep mortification which they experienced at the announcement of his defeat. He talked to the public very boldly of petitioning, and his certainty of ultimate success; but he let them know privately, that he had no intention of the first, and no chance of

the second. Even Mr. Dacre could not conceal his deep disappointment; but May was quite in despair. Even if her father could find means of securing him a seat another time, the present great opportunity was lost.

"Surely we can make some arrangement for next session," said the duke, whispering hope to her.

"O! no, no, no, so much depended upon this. It is not merely his taking a part in the debate, but—but—Arundel is so odd, and every thing was staked upon this. I cannot tell you what depended upon it. He will leave England directly."

She did not attempt to conceal her agitation. The duke rose, and paced the room in a state scarcely less moved. A thought had suddenly flashed upon him. Their marriage doubtless depended on this success. He knew something of Arundel Dacre, and had heard more. He was convinced of the truth of his suspicion. Either the nephew would not claim her hand until he had carved out his own fortunes, or perhaps the uncle made his distinction the condition of his consent. Yet this was odd. It was all odd. A thousand things had occurred which equally puzzled him. Yet he had seen enough to weigh against a thousand thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER fortnight glided away, and he was still at the castle, still the constant and almost sole companion of May Dacre.

It is breakfast; the servant is delivering the letter-bag to Mr. Dacre. Interesting moment! when you extend your hand for the billet of a mistress, and receive your tailor's bill! How provokingly slow are most domestic chieftains in this anxious operation! They turn the letters over and over, and upside and down; arrange, confuse, mistake, and sort; pretend, like Champollion, to decipher illegible franks, and deliver, with a slight remark, which is intended as a friendly admonition, the documents of the unlucky wight who encourages unprivileged correspondents.

A letter was delivered to Miss Dacre. She started, exclaimed, blushed, and tore it open.

"Only you, only you," she said, extending her hand to the young duke, "only you were capable of this!"

It was a letter from Arundel Dacre, not only written but franked by him.

It explained every thing that the Duke of St. James might have told them before; but he preferred hearing all himself, from the delighted and delightful lips of Miss Dacre, who read to her father her cousin's letter.

The Duke of St. James had returned him for one of his Cornish boroughs. It appeared that Lord St. Maurice was the previous member, who had accepted the Chilterns in his favour.

"You were determined to surprise as well as delight us," said Mr. Dacre.

"I am no admirer of mysteries," said the duke; "but the fact is, in the present case it was not in my power to give you any positive information, and I had no desire to provide you, after your late disappointment, with new sources of anxiety. The only person I could take the liberty with, at so

short a notice, was St. Maurice. He, you know, is a young liberal; but he cannot forget that he is the son of a tory, and has no very great ambition to take any active part in affairs at present. I anticipated less difficulty with him than with his father. St. Maurice can command me again when it suits him; but, I confess to you, I have been surprised at my uncle's kindness in this affair. I really have not done justice to his character before, and regret it. He has behaved in the most kind-hearted and the most liberal manner, and put me under obligations which I never shall forget. He seems as desirous of serving my friend as myself; and I assure you, sir, it would give you pleasure to know in what terms of respect he speaks of your family, and particularly of Arundel."

"Arundel says he shall take his seat the morning of the debate. How very near! how admirably managed! O! I shall never recover my surprise and delight! How good you are!"

"He takes his seat then to-morrow," said Mr. Dacre, in a musing tone. "My letters give a rather nervous account of affairs. We are to win it, they hope, but by two only. As for the Lords, the majority against us will, it is said, be somewhat smaller than usual. We shall never triumph, George, till May is M. P. for the county. Cannot you return her for Pen Bromcock too?"

They talked, as you may suppose, of nothing else. At last Mr. Dacre remembered an appointment with his bailiff, and proposed to the duke to join him, who acceded.

"And I to be left alone this morning, then!" said Miss Dacre. "I am sure, as they say of children, I can set to nothing."

"Come and ride with us, then!"

"An excellent idea! Let us scamper over to Hauteville! I am just in the humour for a gallop up the avenue, and feel half-emancipated already with a Dacre in the House. O! to-morrow, how nervous I shall be!"

"I will despatch Barrington, then," said Mr. Dacre, "and join you in ten minutes."

"How good you are!" said Miss Dacre to the duke. "How can we thank you enough! What can we do for you!"

"You have thanked me enough. What have I done, after all? My opportunity to serve my friends is brief. Is it wonderful that I seize the opportunity?"

"Brief! brief! Why do you always say so! Why do you talk so of leaving us?"

"My visit to you has been already too long. It must soon end, and I remain not in England when it ceases."

"Come and live at Hauteville, and be near us?"

He faintly smiled as he said, "No, no; my doom is fixed. Hauteville is the last place that I should choose for my residence, even if I remained in England. But I hear the horses."

The important night at length arrived, or rather the important messenger, who brought down, express, a report of its proceedings to Castle Dacre.

Nothing is more singular than the various success of men in the House of Commons. Fellows who have been the oracles of coteries from their birth,—who have gone through the regular process of gold medals, senior wranglerships, and double foists,—who have nightly sat down amid tumultuous cheering in debating societies, and can harangue with an unruffled forehead and an unflin-

ing voice, from one end of a dinner-table to the other, who—on all occasions have something to say, and can speak with fluency on what they know nothing about—no sooner rise in the House, than their spells desert them. All their effrontery vanishes. Commonplace ideas are rendered even more uninteresting by monotonous delivery; and keenly alive, as even boobies are in those sacred walls to the ridiculous, no one appears more thoroughly aware of his unexpected and astounding deficiencies than the orator himself. He regains his seat, hot and hard, sultry and stiff, with a burning cheek and an icy hand, repressing his breath lest it should give evidence of an existence of which he is ashamed, and clenching his fist, that the pressure may secretly convince him that he has not as completely annihilated his stupid body as his false reputation.

On the other hand, persons whom the women have long deplored, and the men long pitied as having no "manner," who blush when you speak to them, and blunder when they speak to you, suddenly jump up in the House with a self-confidence, which is only equalled by their consummate ability. And so it was with Arundel Dacre. He rose the first night that he took his seat, a great disadvantage, of which no one was more sensible than himself, and for two hours and a-half he harangued the fullest House that had ever been assembled, with the self-possession of an habitual debater. His clenching argument, and his luminous detail, might have been expected from one who had the reputation of having been a student. What was more wonderful was, the withering sarcasm that blasted like the sinooon, the brilliant sallies of wit that flashed like a sabre, the gushing eddies of humour that drowned all opposition and overwhelmed those ponderous and unwieldy arguments which the producers announced as rocks, but which he proved to be porpoises. Never was there such a triumphant *début*; and a peroration of genuine eloquence, because of genuine feeling, concluded amid the long and renewed cheers of all parties.

The truth is, Eloquence is the child of Knowledge. When a mind is full, like a wholesome river, it is also clear. Confusion and obscurity are much oftener the results of ignorance than of inefficiency. Few are the men who cannot express their meaning when the occasion demands the energy; as the lowest will defend their lives with acuteness, and sometimes even with eloquence. They are masters of their subject. Knowledge must be gained by ourselves. Mankind may supply us with facts; but the results, even if they agree with previous ones, must be the work of our own mind. To make others feel, we must feel ourselves; and to feel ourselves, we must be natural. This we can never be when we are vomiting forth the dogmas of the schools. Knowledge is not a mere collection of words; and it is a delusion to suppose that thought can be obtained by the aid of any other intellect than our own. What is repetition, by a curious mystery, ceases to be truth, even if it were truth when it was first heard; as the shadow in a mirror, though it move and mimic all the actions of vitality, is not life. When a man is not speaking, or writing, from his own mind, he is as insipid company as a looking-glass.

Before a man can address a popular assembly with command he must know something of man-

kind, and he can know nothing of mankind without he knows something of himself. Self-knowledge is the property of that man whose passions have their play, but who ponders over their results. Such a man sympathizes by inspiration with his kind. He has a key to every heart. He can divine, in the flash of a single thought, all that they require, all that they wish. Such a man speaks to their very core. All feel that a masterly hand tears off the veil of cant, with which, from necessity, they have enveloped their souls; for cant is nothing more than the sophistry which results from attempting to account for what is unintelligible, or to defend what is improper.

Perhaps, although we use the term, we never have had oratory in England. There is an essential difference between oratory and debating. Oratory seems an accomplishment confined to the ancients, unless the French preachers may put in their claim, and some of the Irish lawyers. Mr. Shiel's speech in Kent was a fine oration; and the boobies who taunted him for having got it by rote were not aware that in doing so he only wisely followed the examples of Pericles, Demosthenes, Lysias, Isocrates, Hortensius, Cicero, Cæsar, and every great orator of antiquity. Oratory is essentially the accomplishment of antiquity: it was their most efficient mode of communicating thought; it was their substitute for printing.

I like a good debate; and, when a stripling, used often to be stiled in the gallery, or enjoy the easier privileges of a member's son. I like, I say, a good debate, and have no objection to a due mixture of bores, which are a relief. I remember none of the giants of former days: but I have heard Canning. He was a consummate rhetorician; but there seemed to me a dash of commonplace in all that he said, and frequent indications of the absence of an original mind. To the last he never got clear of "good God, sir!" and all the other hackneyed ejaculations of his youthful debating clubs. The most commanding speaker that I ever listened to is, I think, Sir Francis Burdett. I never heard him in the House,—but at an election. He was full of music, grace, and dignity, even amid all the vulgar tumult; and, unlike all mob orators, raised the taste of the populace to him, instead of lowering his own to theirs. His colleague, Mr. Hobbhouse, seemed to me ill qualified for a demagogue, though he spoke with power. He is rather too elaborate, and a little heavy, but fluent, and never weak. His thoughtful and highly cultivated mind maintains him under all circumstances; and his breeding never deserts him. Sound sense comes recommended from his lips by the language of a scholar and the urbanity of a gentleman.

Mr. Brougham, at present, reigns paramount in the House of Commons. I think the lawyer has spoiled the statesman. He is said to have very great powers of sarcasm. From what I have observed there, I should think very little ones would be quite sufficient. Many a sneer withers in those walls which would scarcely, I think, blight a currant-bush out of them; and I have seen the House convulsed with raillery which, in other society, would infallibly settle the railler to be a bore beyond all tolerance. Even an idiot can raise a smile. They are so good-natured, or find it so dull. Mr. Canning's badinage was the most successful, though I confess I have listened to few

things more calculated to make a man gloomy. But the House always ran riot, taking every thing for granted, and cracked their universal sides before he opened his mouth. The fault of Mr. Brougham is, that he holds no intellect at present in great dread, and, consequently, allows himself on all occasions to run wild. Few men hazard more unphilosophical observations; but he is safe because there is no one to notice them. On all great occasions Mr. Brougham has come up to the mark,—an infallible test of a man of genius.

I hear that Mr. Babington Macauley is to be returned. If he speaks half as well as he writes, the House will be in fashion again. I fear that he is one of those who, like the individual whom he has most studied, "will give up to party what was meant for mankind."

At any rate, he must get rid of his rabidity. He writes now on all subjects, as if he certainly intended to be a renegade, and was determined to make the contrast complete.

Mr. Peel is a model of a minister, and improves as a speaker; though, like most of the rest, he is fluent without the least style. He should not get so often in a passion, either, or, if he do, should not get out of one so easily. His sweet apologies are cloying. His candour—he will do well to get rid of that. He can make a present of it to Mr. Huskisson.

Mr. Hnskisson is a memorable instance of the value of knowledge, which maintains a man under all circumstances and all disadvantages, and will. I am not sure now, if I were king,—which, thank God! I am not, because I should then be prevented from being the most dutiful of subjects, which, thank God! I am,—I am not sure, I say, if I were his most gracious majesty, and the present cabinet could not go on, I am not sure that I should not send for Mr. Huskisson.

"Huskisson!" I should say, "the duke can whip it on no longer. If you like to try, you may. But, hark ye! no more coalitions, and no more explanations. I have no idea of the first estate of the realm having again to do the duty of the two others. If you have a party strong enough, you shall have a fair trial. You need not speak at present. Luncheon is in the next room. When you have taken a bottle of hock, we shall get a little truth out of you."

In the Lords I admire The Duke. The readiness with which he has adopted the air of a debater shows the man of genius. There is a gruff, husky sort of a downright Montaignish *naïveté* about him, which is quaint, unusual, and tells. You plainly perceive that he is determined to be a civilian; and he is as offended if you drop a hint that he occasionally wears a uniform, as a servant on a holiday if you mention the word *livery*.

Lord Grey speaks with feeling, and is better to hear than to read, though ever strong and impressive. Lord Holland's speeches are like a *refuocimento* of all the suppressed passages in Clarendon, and the notes in the new edition of Bishop Burnet's Memoirs: but taste throws a delicate hue over the curious medley, and the candour of a philosophic mind shows, that in the library of Holland House he can sometimes cease to be a partisan.

Lord Goderich speaks too often, and not sufficiently to the purpose; but he is a man of talents. These Canningites sadly want a leader, and are

scattered about in a very loose style, indeed. I think I must come over. It would take a month though, I should think, to knock up the present administration, provided it were February, and not leap-year. But then I must be consistent, and not compromise my principles, which will never do in England—more than once a-year. Let me see: what are they? Am I a whig or a tory? I forget. As for the tories, I admire antiquity, particularly a ruin; even the relics of the temple of intolerance have a charm. I think I am a tory. But then the whigs give such good dinners, and are the most amusing. I think I am a whig; but then the tories are so moral, and morality is my forte: I must be a tory. But the whigs dress so much better; and an ill-dressed party, like an ill-dressed man, must be wrong. Yes! I am a decided whig. And yet—I feel like Garrick between tragedy and comedy. I think I will be a whig and tory alternate nights, and then both will be pleased: or I have no objection, according to the fashion of the day, to take a place under a tory minister, provided I may vote against them.

One thing is quite clear,—that a man may speak very well in the House of Commons, and fail very completely in the House of Lords. There are two distinct styles requisite; I intend, in the course of my career, if I have time, to give a specimen of both. In the lower House, Don Juan may perhaps be our model; in the upper House, Paradise Lost.

CHAPTER VII.

Nothing was talked of in Yorkshire but Mr. Arundel Dacre's speech. All the world flocked to Castle Dacre, to compliment and to congratulate; and a universal hope was expressed that he might come in for the county, if indeed the success of his eloquence did not enable his uncle to preoccupy that honour. Even the calm Mr. Dacre shared the general elation, and told the Duke of St. James regularly every day that it was all owing to him. May Dacre was enthusiastic; but her gratitude to him was synonymous with her love for Arundel, and valued accordingly. The duke, however, felt that he had acted at once magnanimously, generously, and wisely. The consciousness of a noble action is itself ennobling. His spirit expanded with the exciting effects which his conduct had produced; and he felt consolation under all his misery, from the conviction that he had now claims to be remembered, and perhaps regarded, when he was no more among them.

The bill went swimmingly through the Commons, the majority of two gradually swelling into eleven; and the important night in the Lords was at hand.

"Lord Faulconcourt writes," said Mr. Dacre, "that they expect only thirty-eight against us."

"Ah! that terrible House of Lords!" said May Dacre. "Let us see: when does it come on—the day after to-morrow? Scarcely forty-eight hours and all will be over, and we shall be just where we were.—You and your friends manage very badly in your House," she added, addressing herself to the duke.

"I do all I can," said his grace, smiling: "Barlington has my proxy."

"That is exactly what I complain of. On such

an occasion there should be no proxies. Personal attendance would indicate a keener interest in the result. Ah! if I were the Duke of St. James for one night!"

"Ah! that you would be the Dutchess of St. James!" thought the duke; but a despairing lover has no heart for jokes, and so he did not give utterance to the wish. He felt a little agitated, and caught May Dacre's eye. She smiled and slightly blushed, as if she felt the awkwardness of her remark, though too late.

The duke retired early, but not to sleep. His mind was busied on a great deed. It was past midnight before he could compose his agitated feelings to repose, and by five o'clock he was again up. He dressed himself, and then put on a rough travelling coat, which, with a shawl, effectually disguised his person; and putting in one pocket a shirt, and in the other a few articles from his dressing-case, the Duke of St. James stole out of Castle Dacre, leaving a note for his host accounting for his sudden departure by urgent business at Hauteville, and promising a return in a day or two.

The fresh morn had fully broke. He took his hurried way through the long dewy grass, and, crossing the park, gained the road, which however was not the high one. He had yet another hour's rapid walk before he could reach his point of destination; and when that was accomplished, he found himself at a small public-house, bearing for a sign his own arms, and situated in the high road opposite his own park. He was confident that his person was unknown to the host, or to any of the early idlers who were lingering about the mail, then breakfasting.

"Any room, guard, to London?"

"Room inside, sir,—just going off."

The door was opened, and the Duke of St. James took his seat in the Edinburgh and York Mail. He had two companions: the first, because apparently the most important, was a hard-featured, gray-headed gentleman, with a somewhat supercilious look, and a mingled air of acuteness and conceit; the other was an humble-looking widow in her weeds, middle-aged, and sad. These persons had recently roused themselves from their nocturnal slumbers, and now, after their welcome meal and hurried toilet, looked as fresh as birds.

"Well! now we are off," said the gentleman. "Very neat, cleanly little house this, ma'am," continued he to his companion. "What is the sign?"—"The Hauteville arms."—"O! Hauteville—that is—that is—let me see!—the St. James family. Ah! a pretty fool that young man has made himself, by all accounts—eh! sir?"

"I have reason to believe so," said the duke.

"I suppose this is his park—eh? Hem! going to London, sir?"

"I am."

"Ah! hem! Hauteville Park, I suppose, this. Fine ground wasted. What the use of parks is, I can't say."

"The place seems well kept up," said the widow.

"So much the worse—I wish it were in ruins."

"Well, for my part," continued the widow, in a low voice, "I think a park the most beautiful thing we have. Foreigners, you know, sir—"

"Ah! I know what you are going to say," observed the gentleman, in a curt, gruff voice. "It is all nonsense. Foreigners are fools. Don't talk to me of beauty—a mere word. What is the use

of all this! It produces about as much benefit to society as its owner does."

"And do you think his existence, then, perfectly useless?" asked the duke.

"To be sure, I do. So the world will, some day or other. We are opening our eyes fast. Men begin to ask themselves what the use of an aristocracy is? That is the test, sir."

"I think it not very difficult to demonstrate the use of an aristocracy," mildly observed the duke.

"Pooh! nonsense, sir! I know what you are going to say; but we have got beyond all that. Have you read this, sir? This article on the aristocracy in 'The Screw and Lever Review?'"

"I have not, sir."

"Then I advise you to make yourself master of it, and you will talk no more of the aristocracy. A few more articles like this, and a few more noblemen like the man who has got this park, and people will open their eyes at last."

"I should think," said his grace, "that the follies of the man who has got this park have been productive of evil only to himself. In fact, sir, according to your own system, a prodigal noble seems to be a very desirable member of the commonwealth, and a complete leveller."

"We shall get rid of them all soon, sir," said his companion, with a malignant smile.

"I have heard that he is very young, sir," remarked the widow.

"What is that to you or me?"

"Ah! youth is a very trying time. Let us hope the best! He may turn out well yet, poor soul!"

"I hope not. Don't talk to me of poor souls. There is a poor soul," said the utilitarian, pointing to an old man breaking stones on the highway. "That is what I call a poor soul, not a young prodigal, whose life has been one long career of infamous debauchery."

"You appear to have heard much of this young nobleman," said the duke; "but it does not follow, sir, that you have heard truth."

"Very true, sir," said the widow. "The world is very foul-mouthed. Let us hope he is not so very bad."

"I tell you what, my friends; you know nothing about what you are talking. I don't speak without foundation. You have not the least idea, sir, how this fellow has lived. Now what I am going to tell you is a fact: I know it to be a fact. A very intimate friend of mine, who is an intimate friend of a friend who knows a person who is a very intimate friend of an intimate friend of a person who knows the Duke of St. James, told me himself, that one night they had for supper—what do you think, ma'am?—Venison cutlets, each served up in a hundred pound note, and sovereign sauce."

"Mercy!" exclaimed the widow.

"And do you believe it?" asked the duke.

"Believe it! I know it!"

"He is very young," said the widow. "Youth is a very trying time."

"Nothing to do with his youth. It's the system—the infernal system. If that man had to work for his bread, like everybody else, do you think he would dine off bank-notes? No! to be sure he wouldn't! It's the system."

"Young people are very wild!" said the widow.

"Pooh! ma'am, nonsense! Don't talk cant. If a man be properly educated, he is as capable at one-and-twenty of managing any thing as at any

time in his life: more capable. Look at the men who write 'The Screw and Lever'—the first men in the country. Look at them. Not one of age. Look at the man who wrote this article on the aristocracy—*young Duncan Macmorrough*. Look at him, I say—the first man in the country by far."

"I never heard his name before," calmly observed the duke.

"Not heard his name?—not heard of *young Duncan Macmorrough*—first man of the day, by far,—not heard of him! Go and ask the Marquis of Sheephead what he thinks of him. Go and ask Lord Two and Two what he thinks of him. *Duncan* dines with Lord Two and Two every week."

The duke smiled, and his companion proceeded.

"Well, again, look at his friends. There is *young First Principles*. What a head that fellow has got! Here, this article on India is by him. He'll knock up their charter. He is a clerk in the India House. Up to the detail, you see. Let me read you this passage on monopolies. Then there is *young Tribunal Quirk*. By G—, what a mind that fellow has got! By G—, nothing but first principles will go down with these fellows! They laugh at any thing else. By G—, sir, they look upon the administration of the present day as a parcel of sucking babes! When I was last in town *Quirk* told me that he would not give *that* for all the public men that ever existed! He is keeping his terms at *Gray's Inn*. This article on a new code is by him. Shows as plain as light that by sticking close to first principles the laws of the country might be carried in every man's waistcoat pocket."

The coach stopped, and a colloquy ensued.

"Any room to Selby?"

"Outside or in?"

"Out, to be sure."

"Room inside only."

"Well! in then."

The door opened, and a singularly quaint-looking personage presented himself. He was very stiff and prim in his appearance; dressed in a blue coat, and scarlet waistcoat, with a rich bandanna handkerchief tied very neatly round his neck, and a very new hat, to which his head seemed little habituated.

"Sorry to disturb you, ladies and gentlemen; not exactly the proper place for me. Don't be alarmed. I'm always respectful wherever I am. My rule through life is to be respectful."

"Well, now, in with you," said the guard.

"Be respectful, my friend, and don't talk so to an old soldier who has served his king and his country."

Off they went.

"Majesty's service?" asked the stranger of the duke.

"I have not that honour."

"Hum! Lawyer, perhaps?"

"Not a lawyer."

"Hum! A gentleman, I suppose?"

The duke was silent; and so the stranger addressed himself to the anti-aristocrat, who seemed vastly annoyed by the intrusion of so low a personage.

"Going to London, sir?"

"I tell you what, my friend, at once. I never answer impertinent questions."

"No offence, I hope, sir! Sorry to offend. I'm always respectful. Madam! I hope I don't inconvenience you; I should be sorry to do that. We sailors, you know, are always ready to accommodate the ladies."

"Sailor!" exclaimed the acute utilitarian, his curiosity stifling his hauteur. "Why! just now I thought you were a soldier."

"Well! so I am."

"Well, my friend, you are a conjurer, then."

"No, I a'n't; I'm a marine."

"A very useless person, then."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to say, that if the sailors were properly educated, such an amphibious corps would never have been formed, and some of the most atrocious sinecures ever tolerated would consequently not have existed."

"Sinecures! I never heard of him. I served under Lord Combermere. Maybe you've heard of him, ma'am! A nice man,—a beautiful man. I have seen him stand in a field like that, with the shot falling about him like hail, and caring no more for them than peas."

"If that were for bravado," said the utilitarian, "I think it a very silly thing."

"Bravado! I never heard of him. It was for his king and country."

"Was it in India?" asked the widow.

"In a manner, ma'am," said the marine, very courteously. "At *Bhurtpore*, up by *Pershy*, and thereabouts—the lake of *Cashmere*, where all the shawls come from. Maybe you have heard of *Cashmere*, ma'am?"

"Who has not heard of the lake of *Cashmere*?" hummed the duke to himself.

"Ah! I thought so," said the marine; "all people know much the same; for some have seen, and some have read. I can't read, but I have served my king and country for five-and-twenty years, and have used my eyes."

"Better than reading," said the duke, humouring the character.

"I'll tell you what," said the marine, with a knowing look. "I suspect there is a d—d lot of lies in your books. I landed in England last 7th of June, and went to see *St. Paul's*. 'This is the greatest building in the world,' says the man. 'Thanks I, 'You lie.' I did not tell him so, because I am always respectful. I tell you what, sir; maybe you think *St. Paul's* the greatest building in the world, but I tell you what, it's a lie. I have seen one greater. Maybe, ma'am, you think I am telling you a lie too; but I am not. Go and ask *Captain Jones*, of the 58th: I went with him: I give you his name: go and ask *Captain Jones* of the 58th, if I be telling you a lie. The building I mean is the palace of the *Sultan Acber*; for I have served my king and country five-and-twenty years last 7th of June, and have seen strange things—all built of precious stones, ma'am. What do you think of that? All built of precious stones: cornelian, of which you make your seals: as sure as I'm a sinner saved. If I a'n't speaking the truth, I am not going to Selby. Maybe you'd like to know why I am going to Selby. I'll tell you what. Five-and-twenty years have I served my king and country last 7th of June. Now I will begin with the beginning. I ran away from home, when I was eighteen, you see; and after the siege of *Bhurtpore*, I was sitting on a bale of silk alone, and I said to myself, I'll go and see my mother. Sure as I am going to Selby, that's the whole. I landed in England last 7th of June, absent five-and-twenty years, serving my king and country. I sent them a letter last night. I put it in the post

myself. Maybe I shall be there before my letter now."

"To be sure you will," said the utilitarian: "what made you do such a silly thing? Why, your letter is in this coach."

"Well! I shouldn't wonder. I shall be there before my letter now. All nonsense, letters: my wife wrote it at Falmouth."

"You are married, then?" said the widow.

"A'n't I, though!—the sweetest creature, madam, though I say it before you, that ever lived."

"Why did not you bring your wife with you?" asked the widow.

"And wouldn't I be very glad to? but she wouldn't come among strangers at once; and so I have got a letter, which she wrote for me, to put in the post, in case they are glad to see me, and then she will come on."

"And you, I suppose, are not sorry to have a holyday?" said the duke.

"A'n't I, though? A'n't I as low about leaving her, as ever as I was in my life? and so is the poor creature. She won't eat a bit of victuals till I come back, I'll be sworn,—not a bit, I'll be bound to say that—and I myself, although I am an old soldier, and served my king and country for five-and-twenty years, and so got knocked about, and used to any thing, as it were—I don't know how it is, but I always feel queer whenever I am away from her. I shan't make a hearty meal till I see her. Something or other, when I am away from her, every thing feels dry in the throat."

"You are very fond of her, I see?" said the duke.

"And ought I not to be? Didn't I ask her three times before she said *yes*? Those are the wives for wear, sir. None of the fruit that fall at a shaking for me! Hasn't she stuck by me in every climate, and in every land I was in? Not a fellow in the company had such a wife. Wouldn't I throw myself off this coach this moment, to give her a moment's peace? That I would, though,—d—n me if I wouldn't."

"Hush! hush!" said the widow; "never swear.—I am afraid you talk too much of your love," she added, with a faint smile.

"Ah! you don't know my wife, ma'am.—Are you married, sir?"

"I have not that happiness," said the duke.

"Well! there is nothing like it! but don't take the fruit that falls at a shake. But this, I suppose, is Selby."

The marine took his departure, having stayed long enough to raise in the young duke's mind curious feelings.

As he was plunged in reverie, and as the widow was silent, conversation was not resumed until the coach stopped for dinner.

"We stop here half an hour, gentlemen," said the guard. "Mrs. Burnet," he continued, to the widow, "let me hand you out."

They entered the parlour of the inn. The duke, who was ignorant of the etiquette of the road, did not proceed to the discharge of his duties, as the youngest guest, with all the promptness desired by his fellow-travellers.

"Now, sir," said an outside, "I will thank you for a slice of that mutton, and will join you, if you have no objection, in a bottle of sherry."

"What you please, sir. May I have the pleasure of helping you, ma'am?"

After dinner, the duke took advantage of a vacant outside place.

Tom Rawlins was the model of a guard. Young, robust, and gay, he had a letter, a word, or a wink for all he met. All seasons were the same to him; night or day, he was ever awake, and ever alive to all the interest of the road: now joining in conversation with a passenger, shrewd, sensible, and respectful; now exchanging a little elegant *badinage* with the coachman; now bowing to a pretty girl; now quizzing a passer-by;—he was off and on his seat in an instant; and, in the whirl of his cigar, would lock a wheel, or unlock a passenger.

From him the young duke learned that his fellow-inside was Mr. Duncan Macmorrogh, senior, a writer at Edinburgh, and, of course, the father of the first man of the day. Tom Rawlins could not tell his grace as much about the principal writer in "The Screw and Lever Review" as we can; for Tom was no patron of our periodical literature, further than a police report in the Publican's Journal. Young Duncan Macmorrogh was a limb of the law, who had just brought himself into notice by a series of articles in "The Screw and Lever," in which he had subjected The Universe piecemeal to his critical analysis. Duncan Macmorrogh cut up the creation, and got a name. His attack upon mountains was most violent, and proved by its personality, that he had come from the Lowlands. He demonstrated the inutility of all elevation, and declared that the Andes were the aristocracy of the globe. Rivers he rather patronised; but flowers he quite pulled to pieces, and proved them to be the most useless of existences. Duncan Macmorrogh informed us, that we were quite wrong in supposing ourselves to be the miracle of the creation. On the contrary, he avowed that already there were various pieces of machinery of far more importance than man; and he had no doubt, in time, that a superior race would arise, got by a steam-engine on a spinning-jenny.

The other "inside" was the widow of a former curate of a Northumbrian village. Some friend had obtained for her only child a clerkship in a public office, and, for some time, this idol of her heart had gone on prospering; but, unfortunately, of late, Charles Burnet had got into a bad set, was now involved in a terrible scrape, and, as Tom Rawlins feared, must lose his situation and go to ruin.

"She was half distracted when she heard it first, poor creature! I have known her all my life, sir. Many the kind word and glass of ale I have had at her house, and that's what makes me feel for her, you see. I do what I can to make the journey easy to her; for it is a pull at her years. God bless her! there is not a better body in this world; that I will say for her. When I was a boy, I used to be the playfellow in a manner with Charley Burnet, a gay lad, sir, as ever you would wish to see in a summer's day,—and the devil among the girls always, and that's been the ruin of him; and as open a hearted fellow as ever lived. Damn me! I'd walk to the land's end to save him, if it were only for his mother's sake,—to say nothing of himself."

"And can nothing be done?" asked the duke.

"Why, you see, he is back in £ s. d.; and, to make it up, the poor body must sell her all, and he won't let her do it, and wrote a letter like a prince—(No room, sir)—as fine a letter as ever you read—(Hilloa, there! What! are you asleep!)—as ever you read on a summer's day. I didn't see it, but my mother told me it was as good as e'er a one

of the old gentleman's sermons. 'Mother,' said he, 'my sins be upon my own head. I can bear disgrace,'—(How do, Mr. Wilkins?)—'but I cannot bear to see you a beggar!'

"Poor fellow!"

"Ah! sir, as good a hearted fellow as ever you'd wish to meet!"

"Is he involved to a great extent, think you?"

"O! a long figure, sir—(I say, Betty, I've got a letter for you from your sweetheart)—a very long figure, sir—(Here, take it!)—I should be sorry—(Don't blush—no message!)—I should be sorry to take two hundred pounds to pay it. No, I wouldn't take two hundred pounds, that I wouldn't!—(I say, Jacob, stop at old Bag Smith's.)"

Night came on, and the duke resumed his inside place. Mr. Macmorrough went to sleep over his son's article: and the duke feigned slumber, though he was only indulging in reverie. He opened his eyes, and a light, which they passed, revealed the countenance of the widow. Tears were stealing down her face.

"I have no mother—I have no one to weep for me," thought the duke; "and yet, if I had been in this youth's station, my career probably would have been as fatal. Let me assist her. Alas! how I have misused my power, when, even to do this slight deed, I am obliged to hesitate, and consider whether it be practicable."

The coach again stopped for a quarter of an hour. The duke had, in consideration of the indefinite period of his visit, supplied himself amply with money on repairing to Dacre. Besides his purse, which was well stored for the road, he had somewhat more than three hundred pounds in his note-book. He took advantage of their tarrying to enclose it and its contents in a sheet of paper, with these lines—

"An unknown friend requests Mrs. Burnet to accept this token of his sympathy with suffering virtue."

Determined to find some means to put this in her possession before their parting, he resumed his place. The Scotchman now prepared for his night's repose. He produced a pillow for his back, a bag for his feet, and a cap for his head. These, and a glass of brandy and water, in time produced a due effect, and he was soon fast asleep. Even to the widow night brought some solace. The duke alone found no repose. Unused to travelling in public conveyances at night, and unprovided with any of the ingenious expedients of a mail-coach adventurer, he felt all the inconveniences of an inexperienced traveller. The seat was unendurably hard, his back ached, his head whirled, the confounded sherry, slight as was his portion, had made him feverish, and he felt at once excited and exhausted. He was sad, too, very depressed. Alone, and no longer surrounded with that splendour which had hitherto made solitude precious, life seemed stripped of all its ennobling spirit. His energy vanished. He repented his rashness; and the impulse of the previous night, which had gathered fresh power from the dewy moon, vanished. He felt alone, and without a friend, and night passed without a moment's slumber, watching the driving clouds.

The last fifteen miles seemed longer than the whole journey. At St. Alban's he got out, took a cup of coffee with Tom Rawlins, and although the morning was raw, again seated himself by his side.

In the first gloomy little suburb Mrs. Burnet got out. The duke sent Rawlins after her with the parcel, with peremptory instructions to leave it. He watched the widow protesting it was not hers, his faithful emissary appealing to the direction, and, with delight, he observed it left in her hands. They rattled into London, stopped in Lombard-street, reached Holborn, entered an archway; the coachman threw the whip and reins from his now careless hands. The duke bade farewell to Tom Rawlins, and was shown to a bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE return of morning had in some degree dissipated the gloom that had settled on the young duke during the night. Sound and light made him feel less forlorn, and for a moment his soul again responded to his high purpose. But now he was to seek necessary repose. In vain. His heated frame and anxious mind were alike restless. He turned, he tossed in his bed, but he could not banish from his ear the whirling sound of his late conveyance, the snore of Mr. Macmorrough, and the voice of Tom Rawlins. He kept dwelling on every petty incident of his journey, and repeating in his mind every petty saying. His determination to slumber made him even less sleepy. Conscious that repose was absolutely necessary to the performance of his task, and dreading that the boon was now unattainable, he became each moment more feverish and more nervous; a crowd of half-formed ideas and images flitted over his heated brain. Failure, misery, May Dacre, Tom Rawlins, boiled beef; Mrs. Burnet, the aristocracy, mountains and the marine, and the tower of St. Alban's cathedral, hurried along in infinite confusion. But there is nothing like experience. In a state of distraction, he remembered the hopeless but refreshing sleep he had gained after his fatal adventure at Brighton. He jumped out of bed, and threw himself on the floor, and in a few minutes, from the same cause, his excited senses subsided into slumber.

He awoke: the sun was shining through his rough shutter. It was noon. He jumped up, rang the bell, and asked for a bath. The chambermaid did not seem exactly to comprehend his meaning, but said she would speak to the waiter. He was the first gentleman who ever had asked for a bath at the Dragon with Two Tails. The waiter informed him that he might get a bath, he believed, at the Hummums. The duke dressed, and to the Hummums he then took his way. As he was leaving the yard, he was followed by an ostler, who, in a voice musically hoarse, thus addressed him.

"Have you seen missis, sir?"

"Do you mean me? No, I have not seen your missis," and the duke proceeded.

"Sir, sir," said the ostler, running after him, "I think you said you had not seen missis?"

"You think right," said the duke, astonished, and again he walked on.

"Sir, sir," said the pursuing ostler; "I don't think you have got any luggage!"

"O! I beg your pardon," said the duke; "I see it. I am in your debt; but I meant to return."

"No doubt on't, sir; but when gemmen don't have no luggage, they sees missis before they go, sir."

"Well, what am I in your debt? I can pay you here."

"Five shillings, sir."

"Here!" said the duke; "and tell me when a coach leaves this place to-morrow for Yorkshire."

"Half-past six o'clock in the morning precisely," said the ostler.

"Well, my good fellow, I depend upon your securing me a place; and that is for yourself," added his grace, throwing him a sovereign. "Now, mind; I depend upon you."

The man stared, as if he had been suddenly taken into partnership with missis; at length, he found his tongue.

"Your honour may depend upon me. Where would you like to sit? In or out? Back to your horses, or the front? Get you the box, if you like. Where's your great-coat, sir? I'll brush it for you."

The bath and the breakfast brought our hero round a good deal, and at half-past two he stole to a solitary part of St. James' Park, to stretch his legs and collect his senses. We must now let our readers into a secret, which perhaps they have already unravelled. The duke had rushed up to London, with the determination not only of attending the debate, but of participating in it. His grace was no politician; but the question at issue was one simple in its nature, and so domestic in its spirit, that few men could have arrived at his period of life without having heard its merits, both too often and too amply discussed. He was master of all the points of interest, and he had sufficient confidence in himself to believe that he could do them justice. He walked up and down, conning over in his mind, not only the remarks which he intended to make, but the very language in which he meant to offer them. As he formed sentences, almost for the first time, his courage and his fancy alike warmed; his sanguine spirit sympathized with the nobility of the imaginary scene, and inspirited the intonations of his modulated voice.

About four o'clock he repaired to the House. Walking up one of the passages, his progress was stopped by the back of an individual bowing with great servility to a patronising peer, and my-lording him with painful repetition. The nobleman was Lord Fitz-pompey; the bowing gentleman Mr. Duncan Macmorrogh, the anti-aristocrat, and father of the first man of the day.

"George! is it possible!" exclaimed Lord-Fitz-pompey. "I will speak to you in the House," said the duke, passing on, and bowing to Mr. Donald Macmorrogh.

He recalled his proxy from the Duke of Burlington, and accounted for his presence to many astonished friends by being on his way to the Continent; and, passing through London, thought he might as well be present, particularly as he was about to reside for some time in Catholic countries. It was the least compliment that he could pay his future hosts. "Give me a pinch of snuff."

The debate began. Don't be alarmed. I shall not describe it. Five or six peers had spoken, and one of the ministers had just sat down when the Duke of St. James rose. He was extremely nervous, but he repeated to himself the name of May Dacre for the hundredth time, and proceeded. He was nearly commencing "May Dacre," instead of "My Lords," but he escaped this blunder. For the

first five or ten minutes, he spoke in almost as cold and lifeless a style as when he echoed the king's speech; but he was young, and seldom troubled them, and was listened to therefore with indulgence. The duke warmed, and a courteous "hear, hear," frequently sounded; the duke became totally free from embarrassment, and spoke with equal eloquence and energy. A cheer, a stranger in the House of Lords, rewarded and encouraged him. As an Irish landlord, his sincerity could not be disbelieved, when he expressed his conviction of the safety of emancipation; but it was as an English proprietor and British noble, that it was evident that his grace felt most keenly upon this important measure. He described with power the peculiar injustice of the situation of the English Catholics. He professed to feel keenly upon this subject, because his native county had made him well acquainted with the temper of this class; he painted in glowing terms, the loyalty, the wealth, the influence, the noble virtues, of his Catholic neighbours; and he closed a speech of an hour's duration, in which he had shown that a worn subject was susceptible of novel treatment and novel interest, amid loud and general cheers. The lords gathered round him while he spoke, and many personally congratulated him upon his distinguished success. The debate took its course. At three o'clock the pro-catholics found themselves in a minority, but in a minority in which the prescient might have well discovered the herald of future justice. The address of the Duke of St. James was the *crack* speech of the night.

The duke walked into White's. It was crowded. The first man who welcomed him was Annesley. He congratulated the duke with a warmth for which the world did not give him credit.

"I assure you, my dear St. James, that I am one of the few people whom this display has not surprised. I have long observed that you were formed for something better than mere frivolity. And, between ourselves, I am sick of it. Don't be surprised if you hear that I go to Algiers. Depend upon it, that I am on the point of doing something dreadful."

"Sup with me, St. James," said Lord Squire; "I will ask O'Connell to meet you."

Lord Fitz-pompey and Lord Darrell were profuse in congratulations; but he broke away from them to welcome the man who now advanced. He was one of whom he never thought without a shudder, but whom, for all that, he greatly liked.

"My dear Duke of St. James," said Arundel Dacre, "how ashamed I am that this is the first time I have personally thanked you for all your goodness!"

"My dear Dacre, I have to thank you for proving for the first time to the world, that I was not without discrimination."

"No, no," said Dacre, gayly and easily; "all the congratulations and all the compliments to-night shall be for you. Believe me, my dear friend, I share your triumph."

They shook hands with earnestness.

"May will read your speech with exultation," said Arundel. "I think we must thank her for making you an orator."

The duke faintly smiled, and shook his head.

"And how are all your Yorkshire friends?" continued Arundel. "I am disappointed again in

getting down to them; but I hope, in the course of the month, to pay them a visit."

"I shall see them in a day or two," said the duke. "I pay Mr. Dacre one more visit before my departure from England."

"Are you then indeed going?" asked Arundel, in a kind voice.

"Forever."

"Nay, nay, *ever* is a strong word."

"It becomes then my feelings. However, we will not talk of this. Can I bear any letter for you?"

"I have just written," replied Arundel, in a gloomy voice, and with a changing countenance, "and therefore will not trouble you. And yet—"

"What!"

"And yet the letter is an important letter—to me. The post, to be sure, never does miss:—but if it were not troubling your grace too much, I almost would ask you to be its bearer."

"It will be there as soon," said the duke, "for I shall be off in an hour."

"I will take it out of the box, then," said Arundel, and he fetched it. "Here is the letter," said he on his return: "pardon me if I impress upon you its importance. Excuse this emotion,—but, indeed, this letter decides my fate. My happiness for life is dependent on its reception!"

He spoke with an air and voice of agitation.

The duke received the letter in a manner scarcely less disturbed; and with a hope that they might meet before his departure, faintly murmured by one party, and scarcely responded to by the other, they parted.

"Well, now," said the duke, "the farce is complete:—and I have come to London to be the bearer of his offered heart! I like this, now. Is there a more contemptible—a more ludicrous—absolutely ludicrous ass than myself? Fear not for its delivery: most religiously shall it be consigned to the hand of its owner. The fellow has paid a compliment to my honour or my simplicity: I fear the last,—and really I feel rather proud. But away with these feelings! Have not I seen her in his arms? Pah, pah, pah! Thank God! I spoke. At least, I die in a blaze. Even Annesley does not think me quite a fool. O, May Dacre, May Dacre!—if you were but mine, I should be the happiest fellow that ever breathed!"

He breakfasted, and then took his way to the Dragon with Two Tails. The morning was bright, and fresh, and beautiful, even in London. Joy came upon his heart, in spite of all his loneliness, and he was glad and sanguine. He arrived just in time. The coach was about to start. The faithful ostler was there with his great-coat, and the duke found that he had three fellow-passengers. They were lawyers, and talked for the first two hours of nothing but the case respecting which they were going into the country. At Woburn a despatch arrived with the newspapers. All purchased one, and the duke among the rest. He was well reported, and could now sympathize with, instead of smile at, the anxiety of Lord Darrell.

"The young Duke of St. James seems to have distinguished himself very much," said the first lawyer.

"So I observe," said the second one. "The leading article calls our attention to his speech as the most brilliant delivered."

"I am surprised," said the third, "I thought he was quite a different sort of person."

"By no means," said the first: "I have always had a very high opinion of him. I am not one of those who think the worse of a young man because he is a little wild."

"Nor I," said the second. "Young blood, you know, is young blood."

"A very intimate friend of mine who knows the Duke of St. James well, once told me," rejoined the first, "that I was quite mistaken about him; that he was a person of no common talents, well read, quite a man of the world, and a good deal of wit too; and let me tell you that in these days wit is no common thing."

"Certainly not," said the third. "We have no wit now."

"And a very kind-hearted, generous fellow," continued the first, "and *very* unaffected."

"I can't bear an affected man," said the second, without locking off his paper. "He seems to have made a very fine speech, indeed."

"I should not wonder his turning out something great," said the third.

"I have no doubt of it," said the second.

"Many of these wild fellows do."

"He is not so wild as we think," said the first.

"But he is done up," said the second.

"Is he indeed?" said the third. "Perhaps, by making a speech, he wants a place?"

"People don't make speeches for nothing," said the third.

"I shouldn't wonder if he is after a place in the Household," said the second.

"Depend upon it, he looks to something more active," said the first.

"Perhaps he would like to be head of the Admiralty?" said the second.

"Or the Treasury?" said the third.

"That is impossible?" said the first. "He is too young."

"He is as old as Pitt," said the third.

"I hope he will resemble him in nothing but his age then," said the first.

"I look upon Pitt as the first man that ever lived," said the third.

"What!" said the first. "The man who worked up the national debt to nearly eight hundred millions!"

"What of that?" said the third. "I look upon the national debt as the source of all our prosperity."

"The source of all our taxes, you mean."

"What is the harm of taxes?"

"The harm is, that you will soon have no trade; and when you have no trade, you will have no duties: and when you have no duties, you will have no dividends; and when you have no dividends, you will have no law; and then where is your source of prosperity?" said the first.

But here the coach stopped, and the duke got out for an hour.

By midnight they had reached a town not more than thirty miles from Dacre. The duke was quite exhausted, and determined to stop. In half an hour he enjoyed that deep, dreamless slumber with which no luxury can compete. One must have passed restless nights for years to be able to appreciate the value of sound sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

He rose early and managed to reach Dacre at the breakfast hour of the family. He discharged his chaise at the park gate, and entered the house unseen. He took his way along a corridor lined with plants, which led to the small and favourite room in which the morning meetings of May and himself always took place when they were alone. As he lightly stepped along, he heard a voice that he could not mistake, as it were in animated converse. Agitated by sounds which ever created in him emotion, for a moment he paused. He starts,—his eye sparkles with strange delight,—a flush comes over his panting features, half of modesty, half of triumph. He listens to his own speech from the lips of the woman he loves. She is reading to her father with melodious energy the passage in which he describes the high qualities of his Catholic neighbours. The intonations of the voice indicate the deep sympathy of the reader. She ceases. He hears the admiring exclamation of his host. He rallies his strength,—he advances,—he stands before them. She utters almost a shriek of delightful surprise, and welcomes him with both her hands.

How much there was to say!—how much to ask!—how much to answer! Even Mr. Dacre poured forth questions like a boy. But May—she could not speak, but leaned forward in her chair with an eager ear, and look of congratulation, that rewarded him for all his exertion. Every thing was to be told. How he went;—whether he slept in the mail,—where he went;—what he did;—whom he saw;—what they said;—what they thought:—all must be answered. Then fresh exclamations of wonder, delight, and triumph. The duke forgot every thing but his love, and for three hours felt the happiest of men.

At length Mr. Dacre rose and looked at his watch with a shaking head. "I have a most important appointment," said he, "and I must gallop to keep it. God bless you, my dear St. James! I could stay talking with you forever; but you must be utterly wearied. Now, my dear boy, go to bed."

"To bed!" exclaimed the duke. "Why, Tom Rawlins would laugh at you!"

"And who is Tom Rawlins?"

"Ah! I cannot tell you every thing: but assuredly I am not going to bed."

"Well, May, I leave him to your care; but do not let him talk any more."

"O! sir," said the duke, "I really had forgotten. I am the bearer to you, sir, of a letter from Mr. Arundel Dacre." He gave it him.

As Mr. Dacre read the communication, his countenance changed, and the smile which before was on his face vanished. But whether he were displeased, or only serious, it was impossible to ascertain, although the duke watched him narrowly. At length he said, "May! here is a letter from Arundel, in which you are much interested."

"Give it me then, papa."

"No, my love; we must speak of this together. But I am pressed for time. When I come home. Remember!" He quitted the room.

They were alone: the duke began again talking, and Miss Dacre put her finger to her mouth, with a smile.

"I assure you," said he, "I am not half so

wearied as the day after hunting. I slept at —y, and the only thing I now want is a good walk. Let me be your companion this morning!"

"I was thinking of paying nurse a visit. What say you?"

"O! I am ready; anywhere."

She ran for her bonnet, and he kissed her handkerchief, which she left behind, and, I believe, every thing else in the room which bore the slightest relation to her. And then the recollection of Arundel's letter came over him, and his joy fled. When she returned, he was standing before the fire, gloomy and dull.

"I fear you are tired," she said.

"Not in the least."

"I shall never forgive myself if all this exertion make you ill."

"Why not?"

"Because, although I will not tell papa, I am sure my nonsense is the cause of your having gone to London."

"It is probable; for you are the cause of all that does not disgrace me." He advanced, and was about to seize her hand; but the accursed miniature occurred to him, and he repressed his feelings, almost with a groan. She, too, had turned away her head, and was busily engaged in tending a flower.

"Because she has explicitly declared her feelings to me, and, sincere in that declaration, honours me by a friendship of which alone I am unworthy, am I to persecute her with my dishonoured overtures—the twice rejected? No, no!" He took up his hat, and offered her his arm.

They took their way through the park, and he soon succeeded in reassuming the tone that befitted their situation. Traits of the debate, and the debaters, which newspapers cannot convey, and which he had not yet recounted,—anecdotes of Annesley and their friends, and other gossip, were offered for her amusement. But if she were amused, she was not lively, but singularly, unusually silent. There was only one point on which she seemed interested, and that was his speech. When he was cheered, and who particularly cheered; who gathered round him, and what they said after the debate: on all these points she was most inquisitive.

They rambled on: nurse was quite forgotten and at length they found themselves in the beautiful valley, rendered more lovely by the ruins of the abbey. It was a place that the duke could never forget, and which he ever avoided. He had never renewed his visit since he first gave vent, among its reverend ruins, to his overcharged and most tumultuous heart.

They stood in silence before the holy pile with its vaulting arches and crumbling walls, mellowed by the mild lustre of the declining sun. Not two years had fled since here he first staggered after the breaking glimpses of self-knowledge, and struggled to call order from out of the chaos of his mind. Not two years, and yet what a change had come over his existence! How diametrically opposite now were all his thoughts, and views, and feelings, to those which then controlled his fatal soul! How capable, as he firmly believed, was he now of discharging his duty to his Creator and his fellow-men! and yet the boon that ought to have been the reward for all this self-repentance—the sweet seal that ought to have ratified this new contract of existence was wanting.

"Ah!" he exclaimed aloud, and in a voice of anguish,—“ah! if I ne'er had left the walls of Dacre, how different might have been my lot!”

A gentle but involuntary pressure reminded him of the companion whom for once in his life, he had for a moment forgotten.

"I feel it is madness,—I feel it is worse than madness; but must I yield without a struggle, and see my dark fate cover me without an effort? O! yes, here, even here, where I have wept over your contempt,—even here, although I subject myself to renewed rejection, let, let me tell you, before we part, how I adore you!"

She was silent; a strange courage came over his spirit; and, with a reckless boldness, and rapid voice, a misty sight, and total unconsciousness of all other existence, he resumed the words which had broken out as if by inspiration.

"I am not worthy of you. Who is? I was worthless. I did not know it. Have not I struggled to be pure? have not I sighed on my nightly pillow for your blessing? O! could you read my heart,—and sometimes I think, you can read it, for indeed, with all its faults, it is without guile, I dare to hope, that you would pity me. Since we first met, your image has not quitted my conscience for a second. When you thought me least worthy,—when you thought me vile, or mad,—O! by all that is sacred, I was the most miserable wretch that ever breathed, and flew to dissipation only for distraction!

"Not, not for a moment have I ceased to think you the best, the most beautiful, the most enchanting and endearing creature that ever graced our earth. Even when I first dared to whisper my insolent affection, believe me, even then, your presence controlled my spirit as no other woman had. I bent to you then in pride and power. The station that I could then offer you was not utterly unworthy of your perfection. I am now a beggar, or, worse, an insolvent noble, and dare I, dare I to ask you to share the fortunes that are broken and the existence that is obscure!"

She turned; her arm fell over his shoulder; she buried her head in his breast.

CHAPTER X.

MR. DACRE returned home with an excellent appetite, and almost as keen a desire to renew his conversation with his guest; but dinner and the duke were neither to be commanded. Miss Dacre also could not be found. No information could be obtained of them from any quarter. It was nearly seven o'clock—the hour of dinner. That meal, somewhat to Mr. Dacre's regret, was postponed for half an hour, servants were sent out, and the bell was rung—but no tidings. Mr. Dacre was a little annoyed and more alarmed; he was also hungry, and at half-past seven he sat down to a solitary meal.

About a quarter past eight, a figure rapped at the dining-room window:—it was the young duke. The fat butler seemed astonished, not to say shocked, at this violation of etiquette; nevertheless, he slowly opened the window.

"Any thing the matter, George! Where is May?"

"Nothing. We lost our way. That is all. May—Miss Dacre desired me to say, that she would not join us at dinner."

"I am sure something has happened."

"I assure you, my dear sir, nothing, nothing at all the least unpleasant—but we took the wrong turning. All my fault."

"Shall I send for the soup?"

"No. I am not hungry—I will take some wine." So saying, his grace poured out a tumbler of claret.

"Shall I take your grace's hat?" asked the fat butler.

"Dear me! have I my hat on?"

This was not the only evidence afforded by our hero's conduct that his presence of mind had slightly deserted him. He was soon buried in a deep reverie, and sat with a full plate but idle knife and fork before him,—a perfect puzzle to the fat butler, who had hitherto considered his grace the very pink of propriety.

"George, you have eaten no dinner," said Mr. Dacre.

"Thank you, a very good one indeed—a remarkably good dinner. Give me some red wine, if you please."

At length they were left alone.

"I have some good news for you, George."

"Indeed!"

"I think I have let Rosemount."

"So!"

"And exactly to the kind of person that you wanted,—a man who will take a pride, although merely a tenant, in not permitting his poor neighbours to feel the want of a landlord. You will never guess—Lord Mildmay."

"What did you say of Lord Mildmay, sir?"

"My dear fellow, your wits are wool-gathering—I say, I think I have let Rosemount."

"O! I have changed my mind about letting Rosemount."

"My dear duke, there is no trouble which I will grudge to further your interests; but really I must beg, in future, that you will, at least, apprise me when you change your mind. There is nothing, as we have both agreed, more desirable than to find an eligible tenant for Rosemount. You never can expect to have a more beneficial one than Lord Mildmay; and really, unless you have positively promised the place to another person, which, excuse me for saying, you were not authorized to do, I must insist, after what has passed, upon his having the preference."

"My dear sir, I only changed my mind this afternoon: I couldn't tell you before. I have promised it to no one; but I think of living there myself."

"Yourself! O! if that be the case, I shall be quite reconciled to the disappointment of Lord Mildmay. But what, in the name of goodness, my dear fellow, has produced this wonderful revolution in all your plans in the course of a few hours? I thought you were going to mope away life in the lake of Geneva, or dawdle it away in Florence or Rome."

"It is very odd, sir. I can hardly believe it myself:—and yet it must be true. I hear her voice even at this moment. O! my dear Mr Dacre, I am the happiest fellow that ever breathed!"

"What is all this?"

"Is it possible, my dear sir, that you have not

long before detected the feelings I ventured to entertain for your daughter? In a word, she requires only your sanction to my being the most fortunate of men."

"My dear friend,—my dear, dear boy!" cried Mr. Dacre, rising from his chair and embracing him, "it is out of the power of man to impart to me any event which could afford me such exquisite pleasure! Indeed, indeed, it is to me most surprising! for I had been induced to suspect, George, that some explanation had passed between you and May, which, while it accounted for your mutual esteem, gave little hope of a stronger sentiment."

"I believe, sir," said the young duke with a smile, "I was obstinate."

"Well, this changes all our plans. I have intended, for this fortnight past, to speak to you finally on your affairs. No better time than the present: and, in the first place—"

But, really, this interview is confidential.

CHAPTER XI.

THEY come not: it is late. He is already telling all! She relapses into her sweet reverie. Her thought fixes on no subject: her mind is intent on no idea: her soul is melted into dreamy delight: her only consciousness is perfect bliss! Sweet sounds still echo in her ear, and still her pure pulse beats, from the first embrace of passion.

The door opens, and her father enters, leaning upon the arm of her beloved. Yes—he has told all! Mr. Dacre approached, and, bending down, pressed the lips of his child. It was the seal to their pledged faith, and told, without speech, that the blessings of a parent mingled with the vows of a lover! No other intimation was at present necessary: but she, the daughter, thought now only of her father, that friend of her long life, whose love had ne'er been wanting,—was she about to leave him? She arose: she threw her arms round his neck and wept.

The young duke walked away, that his presence might not control the full expression of her hallowed soul. "This jewel is mine," was his thought: "what, what have I done to be so blessed?"

In a few minutes he again joined them, and was seated by her side; and Mr. Dacre considerably remembered that he wished to see his steward, and they were left alone. Their eyes met, and their soft looks tell that they were thinking of each other. His arm steals round the back of her chair, and with his other hand he gently captures hers.

First love, first love! how many a glowing bard has sung thy beauties! How many a poor devil of a prosing novelist, like myself, has echoed all our superiors, the poets, teach us! No doubt, thou rosy god of young desire, thou art a most bewitching little demon; and yet, for my part, give me last love.

Ask a man, which turned out best—the first horse he bought, or the one he now canters on? Ask—but, in short, there is nothing in which knowledge is more important, and experience more valuable, than in love. When we first love, we are enamoured of our own imaginations. Our thoughts are high, our feelings rise from out the deepest caves of the tumultuous tide of our full

life. We look around for one to share our exquisite existence, and sanctify the beauties of our being.

But these beauties are only in our thoughts. We feel like heroes, when we are but Loys. Yet our mistress must bear a relation, not to ourselves, but to our imagination. She must be a real heroine, while our perfection is but ideal. And the quick and dangerous fancy of our race will, at first, rise to the pitch. She is all—we can conceive. Mild and pure as youthful priests, we bow down before our altar. But the idol to which we breathe our warm and gushing vows, and bend our eager knees—all its power, does it not exist only in our idea? all its beauty, is it not the creation of our own excited fancy? And then the sweetest of superstitions ends. The long delusion bursts, and we are left like men upon a heath when fairies vanish—cold and dreary, gloomy, bitter, harsh, existence seems a blunder.

But just when we are most miserable, and curse the poets' cunning and our own conceits, there lights upon our path, just like a ray fresh from the sun, some sparkling child of light, that makes us think we are premature, at least, in our resolves. Yet we are determined not to be taken in, and try her well in all the points in which the others failed. One by one her charms steal on our warming soul, as, one by one, those of the other beauty sadly stole away, and then we bless our stars, and feel quite sure that we have found perfection in a petticoat.

What shall I do, then? Why, sir, if you have cash enough, marry; but if not, go to Paris for a month—not Bath or Brighton—you may find her there—and forget her.

For, believe me, who, being a bachelor, may be allowed to put in a word in favour of a system in which I am not interested, love without marriage is both expensive, immoral, and productive of the most disagreeable consequences. It tries the constitution, heart, and purse. Profligacy is almost an impossibility; and even dissipation, as this work well proves, soon gets a bore. What we call morality is nothing else but common sense, and the experience of our fellow-men codified for our common good.

And if, if marriage did not require such an income (they say three thousand now will scarcely do, even for us youngers. What times we live in!)—I have half a mind (I think we must come down) really to look about me; (one gets tired of wandering;) and, no doubt, there is great pleasure in a well-regulated existence, particularly if no children come in after dinner.

But our duke—where are we? He had read woman thoroughly, and consequently knew how to value the virgin pages on which his thoughts now fixed. He and May Dacre wandered in the woods, and nature seemed to them more beautiful from their beautiful loves. They gazed upon the sky; a brighter light fell o'er the luminous earth. Sweeter to them the fragrance of the sweetest flowers, and a more balmy breath brought on the universal promise of the opening year.

They wandered in the woods, and there they breathed their mutual adoration. She to him was all in all, and he to her was like a new divinity. She poured forth all that she long had felt, and scarcely could suppress. From the moment he tore her from the insulter's arms, his image fixed

in her heart, and the struggle which she experienced to repel his renewed vows was great indeed. When she heard of his misfortunes, she had wept; but it was the strange delight she experienced when his letter arrived to her father, that first convinced her how irrevocably her mind was his.

And now she does not cease to blame herself for all her past obduracy—now she will not for a moment yield that he could have been ever any thing but all that was pure, and beautiful, and good.

CHAPTER XII.

BUT although we are in love, business must not be utterly neglected, and Mr. Dacre insisted that the young duke should for one morning cease to wander in his park, and listen to the result of his exertions during the last three months. His grace listened. Rents had not risen, but it was hoped that they had seen their worst; the rail-road had been successfully opposed; and coals had improved. The London mansion and the Alhambra had both been disposed of, and well: the first to the new French ambassador; and the second to a gray-headed stock-jobber, very rich, who, having no society, determined to make solitude amusing. The proceeds of these sales, together with sundry sums obtained by converting into cash the stud, the furniture, and the *bijouterie*, produced a most respectable fund, which nearly paid off the annoying miscellaneous debts. For the rest, Mr. Dacre, while he agreed that it was on the whole advisable that the buildings should be completed, determined that none of the estates should be sold, or even mortgaged. His plan was, to procrastinate the termination of these undertakings, and to allow each year itself to afford the necessary supplies. By annually setting aside one hundred thousand pounds, in seven or eight years he hoped to find every thing completed and all debts cleared. He did not think that the extravagance of the duke could justify any diminution in the sum which had hitherto been apportioned for the maintenance of the Irish establishments; but he was of opinion, that the decreased portion which they, as well as the western estates, now afforded to the total incomes, was a sufficient reason. Fourteen thousand a-year were consequently allotted to Ireland, and seven to Pen Brounck. There remained to the duke about thirty thousand per annum; but then Hauteville was to be kept up with this. Mr. Dacre proposed that the young people should reside at Rosemount, and that, consequently, they might form their establishment from the castle, without reducing their Yorkshire appointments, and avail themselves, without any obligation, or even the opportunity of great expenses, of all the advantages afforded by the necessary expenditure. Finally, Mr. Dacre presented his son with his town-mansion and furniture; and as the young duke insisted that the settlements upon her grace should be prepared in full reference to his inherited and future income, this generous father at once made over to him the great bulk of his personal property, amounting to upwards of a hundred thousand pounds, and a little ready money, of which he now knew the value.

The Duke of St. James had duly informed his uncle, the Earl of Fitz-pompey, of the intended

change in his condition, and in answer received the following letter.

"Fitz-pompey Hall, May, 18—

"MY DEAR GEORGE:—Your letter did not give us so much surprise as you expected; but, I assure you, it gave us as much pleasure. You have shown your wisdom and your taste in your choice; and I am free to confess, that I am acquainted with no one more worthy of the station which the Dutchess of St. James must always fill in society, and more calculated to maintain the dignity of your family than the lady whom you are about to introduce to us as our niece. Believe me, my dear George, that the notification of this agreeable event has occasioned even additional gratification both to your aunt and to myself, from the reflection that you are about to ally yourself with a family in whose welfare we must ever take an especial interest, and whom we may in a manner look upon as our own relatives. For, my dear George, in answer to your flattering and most pleasing communication, it is my truly agreeable duty to inform you (and, believe me, you are the first person out of our immediate family to whom this intelligence is made known) that our Caroline, in whose happiness we are well assured you take a lively interest, is about to be united to one who may now be described as your near relative, namely, Mr. Arundel Dacre.

"It has been a long attachment, though, for a considerable time, I confess, unknown to us; and, indeed, at first sight, with Caroline's rank and other advantages, it may not appear, in a mere worldly point of view, so desirable a connexion as some perhaps might expect. And, to be quite confidential, both your aunt and myself were at first a little disinclined (great as our esteem and regard have ever been for him)—a little disinclined, I say, to the union. But Dacre is certainly the most rising man of the day. In point of family he is second to none; and his uncle has indeed behaved in the most truly liberal manner. I assure you, he considers him as a son; and even if there were no other inducement, the mere fact of your connexion with the family would alone not only reconcile, but, so to say, make us perfectly satisfied with the arrangement. It is unnecessary to speak to you of the antiquity of the Dacres. Arundel will ultimately be one of the richest commoners, and I think it is not too bold to anticipate, taking into consideration the family into which he marries, and, above all, his connexion with you, that we may finally succeed in having him called up to us. You are, of course, aware that there was once a barony in the family.

"Everybody talks of your speech. I assure you, although I ever gave you credit for uncommon talents, I was astonished. So you are to have the vacant riband! Why did you not tell me? I learned it to-day from Lord Bobbleshim. But we must not quarrel with men in love for not communiating.

"You ask me for news of all your old friends. You, of course, saw the death of old Annesley. The new lord took his seat yesterday—he was introduced by Lord Bloomerly. I was not surprised to hear in the evening, that he was about to be married to Lady Charlotte, though the world affect to be astonished. I should not forget to say that Lord A. asked most particularly after you.

"I think I have now written you a very long letter. I once more congratulate you on your *admirable* selection; and with the united remembrance of our family circle—particularly Caroline, who will write perhaps by this post to Miss D.—believe me, dear George, your truly affectionate uncle,
J. P.

"P. S.—Lord Marylebone is very unpopular—quite a brute. We all miss you."

It is not to be supposed that this letter conveyed the first intimation to the Duke of St. James of the most interesting event of which it spoke. On the contrary he had long been aware of the whole affair; but I have been too much engaged with his own conduct to find time to let the reader into the secret, which, like all secrets, is to be hoped, was no secret. Next to gaining the affections of May Dacre, it was impossible for any event to occur more delightful to our hero than the present. His heart had often misgiven him when he had thought of Caroline. Now she was happy, and not only happy, but connected with him for life, just as he wished. Arundel Dacre, too, of all men he most wished to like, and indeed most liked. One feeling alone had prevented them from being bosom friends, and that feeling had long triumphantly vanished.

May Dacre had been almost from the beginning the confidant of his cousin. In vain however, had she beseeched him to intrust all to her father. Although he now repented his past feelings, he would not work upon himself to change; and not till he had entered parliament and succeeded, and gained a name which would reflect honour on the family with which he wished to identify himself, could he impart to his uncle the secret of his heart, and gain that support, without which his great object could never have been achieved. The Duke of St. James, by returning him to parliament, had been the unconscious cause of all his happiness, and ardently did he pray that his generous friend might succeed in what he was well aware was his secret aspiration, and that his beloved cousin might yield her hand to the only man whom Arundel Dacre considered worthy of her.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER week brought another letter from the Earl of Fitz-pompey.

THE EARL OF FITZ-POMPEY TO THE DUKE OF ST. JAMES.

[Read this alone.]

"MY DEAR GEORGE,—I beg you will not be alarmed by the above memorandum, which I thought it but prudent to prefix. A very disagreeable affair has just taken place, and to a degree exceedingly alarming; but it might have turned out much more distressing, and on the whole, we may all congratulate ourselves at the result. Not to keep you in fearful suspense, I beg to recall your recollection to the rumour, which is in circulation, of the intention of Lady Aphrodite Grafton to oppose the divorce. A few days back, her brother, Lord Wariston, with whom I was previously unacquainted, called upon me by appointment, having previously requested a private

interview. The object of his seeing me was no less than to submit to my inspection the letters, by aid of which it was anticipated that the divorce might be successfully opposed. You will be astounded to hear that these consist of a long series of correspondence of Mrs. Dallington Vere's, developing, I am shocked to say, machinations of a very alarming nature, the effect of which, my dear George, was no less than very materially to control your fortunes in life, and those of that charming and truly admirable lady whom you have delighted us all so much, by declaring to be our future relative.

"From the very delicate nature of the disclosures, Lord Wariston felt the great importance of obtaining all necessary results without making them public; and, actuated by these feelings, he applied to me, both as your nearest relative, and an acquaintance of Sir Lucius, and, as he expressed it, and I may be permitted to repeat, as one whose experience in the management of difficult and delicate negotiations was not altogether unknown, in order that I might be put in possession of the facts of the case, advise and perhaps interfere for the common good.

"Under these circumstances, and taking into consideration the extreme difficulty attendant upon a satisfactory arrangement of the affair, I thought fit, in confidence, to apply to Arundel, whose talents I consider of the first order, and only equalled by his prudence and calm temper. As a relation, too, of more than one of the parties concerned, it was perhaps only proper that the correspondence should be submitted to him.

"I am sorry to say, my dear George, that Arundel behaved in a very odd manner, and not at all with that discretion which might have been expected, both from one of his remarkably sober and staid disposition, and one not a little experienced in diplomatic life. He exhibited the most unequivocal signs of his displeasure at the conduct of the parties principally concerned, and expressed himself in so vindictive a manner against one of them, that I very much regretted my application, and requested him to be cool.

"He seemed to yield to my solicitations; but, I regret to say, his composure was only feigned, and the next morning he and Sir Lucius Grafton met. Sir Lucius fired first without effect, but Arundel's aim was more fatal, and his ball was lodged in the thigh of his adversary. Sir Lucius has only been saved by amputation; and I need not remark to you, that to such a man, life on such conditions is scarcely desirable. All idea of a divorce is quite given over. The letter in question was stolen from his cabinet by his valet, and given to a *soubrette* of his wife, whom Sir Lucius considered in his interest, but who, as you see, betrayed him.

"For me remained the not very agreeable office of seeing Mrs. Dallington Vere. I made known to her, in a manner as little offensive as possible, the object of my visit. The scene, my dear George, was very trying; and I think it very hard, that the follies of a parcel of young people should really place me in such a distressing position. She fainted, &c., wished the letters to be given up; but Lord W—— would not consent to this, though he promised to keep their contents secret, provided she quitted the country. She goes directly; and I am well assured, which is not the least surprising part of this strange history, that her affairs are in a state

of great distraction. The relatives of her late husband are about again to try the will, and with every prospect of success. She has been negotiating with them for some time through the agency of Sir Lucius Grafton, and the late exposé will not favour her interests.

"If any thing further happen, my dear George, depend upon my writing; but Arundel desires me to say, that on Saturday he will run down to Dacre for a few days, as he very much wishes to see you and all. With our united remembrance to Mr. and Miss Dacre,

"Ever, my dear George,

"Your very affectionate uncle,
"FITZ-POMPEY."

The young duke turned with trembling and disgust from these dark terminations of unprincipled careers, and their fatal evidences of the indulgence of unbridled passions. How nearly too had he been shipwrecked in this moral whirlpool! With what gratitude did he not invoke the beneficent Providence that had not permitted the innate seeds of human virtue to be blighted in his wild and neglected soul! With what admiration did he not gaze upon the pure and beautiful being whose virtue and whose loveliness were the causes of his regeneration, the sources of his present, and the guarantees of his future joy.

Four years have now elapsed since the young Duke of St. James was united to May Dacre; and it would not be too bold to declare, that during that period he has never for an instant ceased to consider himself the happiest, and the most fortunate of men. His life is passed in the agreeable discharge of all the important duties of his exalted station, and his present career is by far a better answer to the lucubrations of young Duncan Macmorrough, than all the abstract arguments that ever yet were offered in favour of the existence of an aristocracy.

Hauteville House and Hauteville Castle proceeded in regular course—their magnificent dwellings will never erase simple and delightful Rosemount from the grateful memory of the Dutchess of St. James. Parliament, and in a degree society, invite the duke and dutchess each year to the metropolis, and Mr. Dacre is generally their guest. Their most intimate and beloved friends are Arundel and Lady Caroline;—and as her ladyship now heads the establishment of Castle Dacre, they are seldom separated. But among their most agreeable

company is a young gentleman styled by courtesy Dacre, Marquis of Hauteville; and his young sister, who has not yet escaped from her beautiful mother's arms, and who beareth the blooming title of the Lady May.

Reader! our tale is told, and the sweet shades who for three long weeks have stolen from decay its consciousness, and lent life even to languor, vanish into air. The syllables are sailing on the wind, that are the sting of life. Farewell! O! word of wo! O! sound of sorrow! and yet the necessary termination of all joy.

NOTES.

Page 240.—(1) Lady Morgan, in her very agreeable work, "The Book of the Boudoir," has a most amusing chapter on *Raconteurs*. Lady Morgan is certainly a woman of considerable talents, and has been what is called "hardly used." But I suspect that this lively writer is one who would prefer excessive abuse to moderate commendation. Why does Lady Morgan give her critics such unnecessary advantages? Why, for instance, in the volumes of which I am speaking, and in which there is so much to admire, is the "Menagiana," and that too more than once, quoted and panegyricized as the work of Menage? Why does Vandyke, too, figure as the court painter of Henry the Eighth? Why—but I cease this ungracious office. I know that there is a delightful giddiness in Irish brains, which will perfectly account for these errors, without seeking for a harsher cause; but then, what use is the "English husband" who is introduced to us with such triumph? Surely Sir Charles might be permitted to read the proofs, and to extinguish by the frigorific influence of his Saxon blood, these *macula* in the flaming luminary of Kildare street.

Page 255.—(2) This important principle is much more ably expressed in the witty memoirs of the brilliant Henry Pelham. Had I his gay volumes at command, I should have pleasure in referring to them more particularly. The author of "Pelham" is one of the few rising writers to whom we may look up for the maintenance of the honour of English literature.

Page 257.—(3) Con. Don Juan. Cant. I. s. 216.

Page 257.—(4) Half a century ago, when gentlemen were curious in their port wine, to which, ere long, we shall return, the Oporto Company made a present of sundry pipes to a royal duke of England. Small portions of this offering, by some villanous methods, reached other cellars besides that of the prince, and were known among connoisseurs by the title of "duke wine."—My earliest recollections are of this Lusitanian nectar.

Page 259.—(5) I quote this line from a poem by Mr. Millman, whose initial ode in "The Martyr of Antioch" would have entitled him to the crown at Athens.

Page 292.—(6) Dawson Turner, Esq. of Yarmouth, a gentleman whose taste and talents are appreciated by a large circle of distinguished friends, possesses, among other literary treasures, an unrivalled collection of autograph letters.

Page 302.—(7) This was the invariable custom at Strawberry Hill.

CONTARINI FLEMING

A PSYCHOLOGICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

CONTARINI FLEMING.

I.

WANDERING in those deserts of Africa that border the Erythræan sea, I came to the river Nile, to that ancient, and mighty, and famous stream, whose waters yielded us our earliest civilization, and which, after having witnessed the formation of so many states, and the invention of so many creeds, still flow on with the same serene beneficence, like all that we can conceive of Deity; in form sublime, in action systematic, in nature bountiful, in source unknown.

My solitary step sounded in the halls of the Pharaohs. I moved through those imperial chambers, supported by a thousand columns, and guarded by colossal forms seated on mysterious thrones; I passed under glittering gates meet to receive the triumphal chariot of a Titan; I gazed on sublime obelisks pointing to the skies, whose secrets their mystic characters affected to conceal. Wherever I threw my sight, I beheld vast avenues of solemn sphinxes reposing in supernatural beauty, and melancholy groups of lion-visaged kings; huge walls vividly pictured with the sacred rites and the domestic offices of remote antiquity, or sculptured with the breathing forms of heroic warfare.

And all this might, all this magnificence, all this mystery, all this beauty, all this labour, all this high invention—where were their originators? I fell into deep musing. And the kingdoms of the earth passed before me, from the thrones of the Pharaohs to those enormous dominations that sprang out of the feudal chaos, the unlawful children of Ignorance and Expediency. And I surveyed the generations of man from Rameses the Great, and Memnon the Beautiful, to the solitary pilgrim, whose presence now violated the sanctity of their gorgeous sepulchres. And I found that the history of my race was but one tale of rapid destruction or gradual decay.

And in the anguish of my heart, I lifted up my hands to the blue ether, and I said, "Is there no hope? What is knowledge, and what is truth? How shall I gain wisdom?"

The wind arose, the bosom of the desert heaved, pillars of sand sprang from the earth and whirled across the plain, sounds more awful than thunder came rushing from the south; the fane and the palace, the portal and the obelisk, the altar and the throne, the picture and the frieze, disappeared from my sight, and darkness brooded over the land. I knelt down and hid my face in the movable and burning soil, and as the wind of the desert passed over me, methought it whispered, "Child of nature, learn to unlearn!"

We are the slaves of false knowledge. Our memories are filled with ideas that have no origin in truth. We learn nothing from ourselves. The sum

of our experience is but a dim dream of the conduct of past generations, generations that lived in a total ignorance of their nature. Our instructors are the unknowing and the dead. We study human nature in a charnel-house, and, like the nations of the East, we pay divine honours to the maniac and the fool. A series of systems have mystified existence. We believe what our fathers credited, because they were convinced without a cause. The faculty of thought has been destroyed. Yet our emasculated minds, without the power of fruition, still pau for the charms of wisdom. It is this that makes us fly with rapture to false knowledge—to tradition, to prejudice, to custom. Delusive tradition, destructive prejudice, degenerating custom! It is this that makes us prostrate ourselves with reverence before the wisdom of by-gone ages, in no one of which has man been the master of his own reason.

I am desirous of writing a book which shall be all truth, a work of which the passion, the thought, the action, and even the style, should spring from my own experience of feeling, from the meditations of my own intellect, from my own observation of incident, from my own study of the genius of expression.

When I turn over the pages of the metaphysician, I perceive a science that deals in words instead of facts. Arbitrary axioms lead to results that violate reason; imaginary principles establish systems that contradict the common sense of mankind. All is dogma, no part demonstration. Wearied, perplexed, doubtful, I throw down the volume in disgust.

When I search into my own breast, and trace the developement of my own intellect, and the formation of my own character, all is light and order. The luminous succeeds to the obscure, the certain to the doubtful, the intelligent to the illogical, the practical to the impossible, and I experience all that refined and ennobling satisfaction that we derive from the discovery of truth and the contemplation of nature.

I have resolved, therefore, to write the history of my own life, because it is the subject of which I have the truest knowledge.

At an age when some have scarcely entered upon their career, I can look back upon past years spent in versatile adventure and long meditation. My thought has been the consequence of my organization; my action the result of a necessity not less imperious. My fortune and my intelligence have blended together, and formed my character.

I am desirous of executing this purpose while my brain is still fed by the ardent though tempered flame of youth; while I can recall the past with accuracy, and record it with vividness; while my memory is still faithful, and while the dewy freshness of youthful fancy still lingers on the flowers of my mind.

I would bring to this work the illumination of an intellect emancipated from the fatal prejudices of an irrational education. This may be denied me. Yet some exemption from the sectarian prejudices that imbitter life may surely be expected from one who, by a curious combination of circumstances, finds himself without country, without kindred, and without friends; nor will he be suspected of indulging in the delusion of worldly vanity, who, having acted in the world, has retired to meditate in an inviolate solitude, and seeks relief from the overwhelming vitality of thought in the flowing spirit of creation.

II.

WHEN I can first recall existence, I remember myself a melancholy child. My father, Baron Fleming, was a Saxon nobleman of ancient family, who, being opposed to the French interest, quitted, at the commencement of this century, his country, and after leading for some years a wandering life, entered into the service of a northern court. At Venice, yet a youth, he married a daughter of the noble house of Contarini, and of that marriage I was the only offspring. My entrance into this world was marked with evil, for my mother yielded up her life while investing me with mine. I was christened with the name of her illustrious race. Thus much, during the first years of my childhood, I casually learned, but I know not how; I feel I was early conscious that my birth was a subject on which it was proper that I should not speak, and one, the mention of which, it was early instilled into me, would only occasion my remaining parent bitter sorrow. Therefore upon this topic I was ever silent, and with me, from my earliest recollection, Venice was a name to be shunned.

My father again married. His new bride was a daughter of the country which had adopted him. She was of high blood, and very wealthy, and beautiful in the fashion of her land. This union produced two children, both males. As a child, I viewed them with passive antipathy. They were called my brothers, but nature gave the lie to the reiterated assertion. There was no similitude between us. Their blue eyes, their flaxen hair, and their white visages claimed no kindred with my Venetian countenance. Wherever I moved, I looked around me, and beheld a race different from myself. There was no sympathy between my frame and the rigid clime whither I had been brought to live. I knew not why, but I was unhappy. Had I found in one of my father's new children a sister, all might have been changed. In that sweet and singular tie, I might have discovered solace, and the variance of constitution would perhaps, between different sexes, have fostered, rather than discouraged affection. But this blessing, which I have ever considered the choicest boon of nature, was denied me. I was alone.

I loved my father dearly and deeply, but I seldom saw him. He was buried in the depth of affairs. A hurried kiss and a passing smile were the fleeting gifts of his affection. Scrupulous care however was taken that I should never be, and should never feel, neglected. I was overladen with attentions, even as an infant. My stepmother, swayed by my father, and perhaps by a well-regulated mind, was vigilant in not violating the etiquette of maternal duty. No favour was shown to my white brethren which was not extended also to me. To me also,

as the eldest, the preference, if necessary, was ever yielded. But for the rest, she was cold, and I was repulsive, and she stole from the saloon, which I rendered interesting by no infantile graces, to the nursery, where she could lavish her love upon her troublesome, but sympathizing offspring, and listen to the wondrous chronicle which their attendants daily supplied of their marvellous deeds and almost oracular prattle.

Because I was unhappy, I was sedentary and silent, for the lively sounds and the wild gambols of children are but the unconscious pourings of joy. They make their gay noises, and burst into their gay freaks, as young birds in spring chant in the free air, and flutter in the fresh boughs. But I could not revel in the rushing flow of my new blood, nor yield up my frame to its dashing and voluptuous course. I could not yet analyze my feelings; I could not indeed yet think; but I had an instinct that I was different from my fellow-creatures, and the feeling was not triumph, but horror.

My quiet inaction gained me the reputation of stupidity. In vain they endeavoured to conceal from me their impression. I read it in their looks; in their glances of pity full of learned discernment, in their telegraphic exchanges of mutual conviction. At last, in a moment of irritation, the secret broke from one of my white brothers. I felt that the urchin spoke truth, but I cut him to the ground. He ran howling and yelping to his dam. I was surrounded by the indignant mother and the domestic police. I listened to their agitated accusations, and palpitating threats of punishment, with sullen indifference. I offered no defence. I courted their vengeance. It came in the shape of imprisonment. I was conducted to my room, and my door was locked on the outside. I answered the malignant sound by bolting it in the interior. I remained there two days deaf to all their entreaties, without sustenance, feeding only upon my vengeance. Each fresh visit was an additional triumph. I never answered; I never moved. Demands of apology were exchanged for promises of pardon: promises of pardon were in turn succeeded by offers of reward. I gave no sign. I heard them stealing on tiptoe to the portal, full of horrible alarm, and even doubtful of my life. I scarcely would breathe. At length the door was burst open, and in rushed the half-fainting baroness, and a posse of servants, with the children clinging to their nurses' gowns. Planted in the most distant corner, I received them with a grim smile. I was invited away. I refused to move. A man-servant advanced and touched me. I stamped, I gnashed my teeth, I gave a savage growl, that made him recoil with dread. The baroness lost her remaining presence of mind, withdrew her train, and was obliged to call in my father, to whom all was for the first time communicated.

I heard his well-known step upon the stair, I beheld the face that never looked upon me without a smile, if in carelessness, still, still a smile. Now it was grave, but sad, not harsh.

"Contarini," he said, in a serious, but not angered voice, "what is all this?"

I burst into a wild cry, I rushed to his arms. He pressed me to his bosom. He tried to kiss away the flooding tears, that each embrace called forth more plentifully. For the first time in my life I felt happy, because for the first time in my life I felt loved.

III.

It was a beautiful garden, full of terraces and shaded walks of bowery trees. A tall fountain sprang up from a marble basin, and its glittering column broke in its fall into a thousand coloured drops, and woke the gleamy fish that would have slept in the dim water. And I wandered about, and the enchanted region seemed illimitable, and at each turn more magical and more bright. Now a white vase shining in the light, now a dim statue shadowy in a cool grot. I would have lingered a moment at the mossy hermitage, but the distant bridge seemed to invite me to new adventures.

It was only three miles from the city, and belonged to the aunt of the baroness. I was brought here to play. When the women met there was much kissing, and I also was kissed, but it gave me no pleasure, for I felt even then that it was a form, and I early imbibed a hatred of all this mechanical domestic love. And they sat together, and took out their work, and talked without ceasing, chiefly about the children. The baroness retold all the wonderful stories of the nurses, many of which I knew to be false. I did not say this, but the conviction gave me, thus early, a contempt for the chatter of women. As soon as I was unobserved, I stole away to the garden.

Even then it was ravishing to be alone. And although I could not think, and knew not the cause of the change, I felt serene, and the darkness of my humour seemed to leave me. All was so new and so beautiful. The bright sweet flowers, and the rich shrubs, and the tall trees, and the flitting birds, and the golden bees, and the gay butterflies, and that constant and soothing hum, broken only ever and anon by a strange shrill call, and that wonderful blending of brilliancy and freshness, and perfume and warmth, that strong sense of the loveliness and vitality of nature which we feel amid the growing life of a fair garden, entered into my soul, and diffused themselves over my frame, softened my heart, and charmed my senses.

But all this was not alone the cause of my happiness. For to me the garden was not a piece of earth belonging to my aunt, but a fine world. I wandered about in quest of some strange adventure, which I would fain believe, in so fair a region must quickly occur. The terrace was a vast desert over which I travelled for many days, and the mazy walks, so mysterious and unworldly, were an unexplored forest fit for a true knight. And in the hermitage, I sought the simple hospitality of a mild and aged host, who pointed to the far bridge as surely leading to a great fulfilment, and my companion was a faithful esquire, whose fidelity was never wanting, and we conversed much, but most respecting a mighty ogre, who was to fall beneath my puissant arm. Thus glided many a day in unconscious and creative reverie, but sometimes, when I had explored over again each nook and corner, and the illimitable feeling had worn off, the power of imagination grew weak. I found myself alone amid the sweets and sunshine, and felt sad.

But I would not quit this delicious world without an effort, and invented a new mode of mingling in its life. I reclined beneath a shady tree, and I covered my eyes with my little hand, and I tried to shut out the garish light, that seemed to destroy the visions which were ever flitting before me.

They came in their beauty, obedient to my call. And I wandered in strange countries, and achieved many noble acts, and said many noble words, and the beings with whom I acted were palpable as myself, with beautiful faces and graceful forms. And there was a brave young knight, who was my friend, and his life I ever saved, and a lovely princess, who spoke not, but smiled ever, and ever upon me. And we were lost in vast forests, and shared hard food, and as the evening drew on, we came to the gates of a castle.

"Contarini! Contarini!" a voice sounded from the house, and all the sweet visions rushed away like singing birds scared out of a tree. I was no longer a brave knight: I was a child. I rose miserable and exhausted, and in spite of a repeated cry, I returned with a slow step and a sullen face.

I saw there was an unusual bustle in the house. Servants were running to and fro doing nothing, doors were slammed, and there was much calling. I stole into the room unperceived. It was a new comer. They were all standing around a beautiful girl, expanding into prime womanhood, and all talking at the same time. There was also much kissing.

It appeared to me that there could not be a more lovely being than the visiter. She was dressed in a blue riding-coat, with a black hat, which had fallen off her forehead. Her full chestnut curls had broken loose. Her rich cheek glowed with the excitement of the meeting, and her laughing eyes sparkled with social love.

I gazed upon her unperceived. She must have been at least eight years my senior. This idea crossed me not then, I gazed upon her unperceived, and it was fortunate, for I was entranced. I could not move or speak. My whole system changed. My breath left me. I panted with great difficulty. The colour fled from my cheek, and I was sick from the blood rushing to my heart.

I was seen, I was seized, I was pulled forward. I bent down my head. They lifted it up, drawing back my curls; they lifted it up covered with blushes. She leant down, she kissed me—O! how unlike the dull kisses of the morning. But I could not return her embrace; I nearly swooned upon her bosom. She praised, in her good-nature, the pretty boy, and the tone in which she spoke made me doubly feel my wretched insignificance.

The bustle subsided; eating succeeded to talking. Our good aunt was a great priestess in the mysteries of plum-cake and sweet wine. I had no appetite. This was the fruitful theme of much discussion. I could not eat: I thought only of the fair stranger. They wearied me with their wonderment and their inquiries. I was irritated and I was irritable. The baroness schooled me in that dull tedious way which always induces obstinacy. At another time, I should have been sullen, but my heart was full and softened, and I wept. My step-mother was alarmed lest, in an unguarded moment, she should have passed the cold, strict line of maternal impartiality which she had laid down for her constant regulation. She would have soothed me with commonplace consolation. I was miserable and disgusted. I fled again to the garden.

I regained with hurrying feet my favourite haunt, again I sat under my favourite tree. But not now to build castles of joy and hope, not now to commune with my beautiful creation, and revel in the warm flow of my excited fancy. All, all had fled;

all had changed. I shivered under the cold horror of reality.

I thought I heard beautiful music, but it was only the voice of a woman.

"Contarini," said the voice, "why do you weep?"

I looked up; it was the stranger, it was Christiana. "Because," I answered, sobbing, "I am miserable."

"Sweet boy," she said, as she knelt down beside me, "dry, dry your tears, for we all love you. Mamma meant not to be cross."

"Mamma! She is not *my* mamma."

"But she loves you like a mother."

"No one loves me."

"All love you, dearest—I love you," and she kissed me with a thousand kisses.

"O! Christiana," I exclaimed, in a low, tremulous voice, "love me, love me always. If *you* do not love me I shall die!"

I threw my arms around her neck, and a gleam of rapture seemed to burst through the dark storm of my grief. She pressed me to her heart a thousand times, and each time I clung with a more ardent grasp—and by degrees, the fierceness of my passion died away, and heavy sobs succeeded to my torrents of tears, and light sighs at last came flying after, like clouds in a clearing heaven. Our grief dies away like a thunder-storm.

IV.

THE visit of Christiana was the first great incident of my life. No day passed without my seeing her, either at the garden-house, or at our town, and each day I grew happier. Her presence, the sound of her voice, one bright smile, and I was a different being; but her caresses, her single society, the possession of her soft hand—all this was maddening. When I was with her in the company of others, I was happy, but I indicated my happiness by no exterior sign. I sat by her side, with my hand locked in hers, and I fed in silence upon my tranquil joy. But when we were alone, then it was that her influence over me broke forth. All the feelings of my heart were hers. I concealed nothing. I told her each moment that I loved her, and that until I knew her I was unhappy. Then I would communicate to her in confidence all my secret sources of enjoyment, and explain how I had turned common places into enchanted regions, where I could always fly for refuge. She listened with fondness and delight, and was the heroine of all my sports. Now I had indeed a princess. Strolling with her, the berceau was still more like a forest, and the solace of the hermit's cell still more refreshing.

Her influence over me was all-powerful, for she seemed to change my habits and my temper. In kindness she entered into my solitary joys; in kindness she joined in my fantastic amusements; for her own temper was social, and her own delight in pastimes that were common to all. She tried to rouse me from my inaction, she counselled me to mingle with my companions. How graceful was this girl! Grace was indeed her characteristic, her charm. Sometimes she would run away swifter than an arrow, and then, as she was skimming along, suddenly stop, and turn her head with an expression so fascinating, that she appeared to me always like a young sunny fawn.

"Contarini!" she would cry, in a clear flute-like voice. How I rushed to her!

I became more amiable to my brothers. I courted more the members of my little society. I even joined in their sports. It was whispered that Contarini was much improved, and the baroness glanced at me with a kind of patronising air, that seemed to hint to the initiated not to press me too heavily with their regulations, or exercise towards one so unpractised, perhaps so incapable, all the severity of their childish legislation.

The visit of Christiana drew to a close. There was a children's ball at our house, and she condescended to be its mistress. Among my new companions, there was a boy who was two years my senior. He had more knowledge of the world than most of us, for he had been some time at school. He was gay, vivacious, talkative. He was the leader in all our diversions. We all envied him his superiority, and all called him conceited. He was ever with Christiana. I disliked him.

I hated dancing, but to-night I had determined to dance, for the honour of our fair president. When the ball opened, I walked up to claim her hand as a matter of course. She was engaged—she was engaged to this youthful hero. Engaged! Was it true! Engaged! Horrible jargon! Were the hollow forms of mature society to interfere with our play of love? She expressed her regret, and promised to dance with me afterward. She promised what I did not require. Pale and agitated, I stole to a corner, and fed upon my mortified heart.

I watched her in the dance. Never had she looked more beautiful; what was worse, never more happy. Every smile pierced me through. Each pressure of my rival's hand touched my brain. I grew sick and dizzy. It was a terrible effort not to give way to my passion. But I succeeded, and escaped from the chamber, with all its glaring lights and jarring sounds.

I stopped one moment on the staircase for breath. A servant came up and asked if I wanted any thing. I could not answer. He asked if I were unwell. I struggled with my choking voice, and said I was very well. I stole up to my bed-room. I had no light, but a dim moon just revealed my bed. I threw myself upon it and wished to die.

My forehead was burning hot, my feet were icy cold. My heart seemed in my throat. I felt quite sick. I could not speak; I could not weep; I could not think. Every thing seemed blended in one terrible sensation of desolate and desolating wretchedness.

Much time perhaps had not elapsed, although it seemed to me an age, but there was a sound in the room, light and gentle. I looked around, I thought that a shadowy form passed between me and the window. A feeling of terror crossed me. I nearly cried out; but as my lips moved, a warm mouth sealed them with sweetness.

"Contarini," said a voice I could not mistake, "are you unwell?"

I would not answer.

"Contarini, my love, speak to Christiana!"

But the demon prevailed, and I would not speak.

"Contarini, you are not asleep?"

Still I was silent.

"Contarini, you do not love me."

I would have been silent, but I sighed.

"Contarini, what has happened? Tell me, tell me, dearest. Tell your Christiana. You know you always tell her every thing."

I seized her hand—I bathed it with my fast-flowing tears.

She knelt down as she did on our first meeting in the garden, and clasped me in her arms; and each moment the madness of my mind grew greater. I was convulsed with passion.

And when I grew more calm, she again spoke, and asked me what made me so unhappy; and I said, between my wild sobs, "O! Christiana, you too have turned against me!"

"Dear, sensitive child," she said, as she pressed me to her bosom, "if you feel so keenly, you will never be happy. Turn against you! O! Contarini, who is your friend if not Christiana! Do I not love you better than all the world! Do I not do all I can to make you happy and good? And why should I turn against Contarini when he is the best and dearest of boys, and loves his Christiana with all his heart and soul?"

She raised me from the bed, and placed me in her lap. My head reposed upon her fond and faithful heart. She was silent, for I was exhausted, and I felt her sweet breath descending upon my cheek.

"Go," I said, after some little time, and in a feeble voice, "go, Christiana. They want you."

"Not without you, dearest. I came to fetch you."

"I cannot go. It is impossible; I am so tired."

"O! come dearest! I shall be so unhappy if you do not come. You would not have me unhappy the whole evening, this evening that we were to be so gay. See! I will run and fetch a light, and be with you in a moment." And she kissed me and ran away, and in a moment returned.

"Dearest Christiana! I cannot go. What will they think of me?"

"Nobody knows even that you are away; all are busy."

"What will they think of me? Really I cannot go, and my eyes are so red."

"Nonsense! They are the blackest and most beautiful eyes I ever saw."

"O! they are horridly red," I answered, looking in the glass. "I cannot go, Christiana."

"They are not the least red. I will wash them with some eau de Cologne and water."

"O! Christiana, do you really love me? Have you really made it up?"

"I love you more than ever, dear! There, let me brush your curls. Is this your brush? What a funny little brush! Dear Contarini, how pretty you look!"

V.

WHEN I was eight years of age, a tutor was introduced into the house, and I was finally and formally emancipated from the police of the nursery, and the government of women. My tutor was well qualified for his office, according to the existing ideas respecting education, which substitute for the noblest of sciences the vile art of teaching words. He was learned in his acquirements, and literary in his taste, with a calm mind, a bland manner, and a mild voice. The baroness, who fancied herself a great judge of character, favoured him, before the commencement of his labours, with an epitome of mine. After a year's experience of his pupil, he ventured to express his opinion, that I was by no means so slow as was supposed, that although I had no great power of application, I was not averse to acquiring knowledge, and that if I were not endowed with any very remarkable or shining qualities,

my friends might be consoled for the absence of these high powers by my being equally destitute of those violent passions and that ungovernable volition which were usually attendant upon genius, and too often rendered the most gifted miserable.

I was always a bad learner, and although I loved knowledge from my cradle, I liked to acquire it in my own way. I think that I was born with a detestation of grammars. Nature seemed to whisper to me the folly of learning words instead of ideas, and my mind would have grown sterile for want of manure, if I had not taken its culture into my own hands, and compensated by my own tillage for my tutor's bad husbandry. I therefore, in a quiet way, read every book that I could get hold of, and studied as little as possible in my instructor's museum of verbiage, whether his specimens appeared in the anatomy of a substantive, or the still more disgusting form of a dissected verb.

This period of my life was too memorable for a more interesting incident than the introduction of my tutor. For the first time I visited the theatre. Never shall I forget the impression. At length I perceived human beings conducting themselves as I wished. I was mad for the playhouse, and I had the means of gratifying my mania. I so seldom fixed my heart upon any thing, I showed, in general, such little relish for what is called amusement, that my father accorded me his permission with pleasure and facility, and as an attendant to this magical haunt, I now began to find my tutor of great use.

I had now a pursuit, for when I was not a spectator at the theatre, at home I was an actor. I required no audience—I was happier alone. My chivalric reveries had been long gradually leaving me; now they entirely vanished. As I learned more of life and nature, I required for my private world something which, while it was beautiful and uncommon, was nevertheless natural and could live. Books more real than fairy tales and feudal romances had already made me muse over a more real creation. The theatre at once fully introduced to me this new existence, and there arose accordingly in my mind new characters. Heroes succeeded to knights, tyrants to ogres, and boundless empire to enchanted castles. My character also changed with my companions. Before all was beautiful and bright, but still and mystical. The forms that surrounded me were splendid, the scenes through which I passed glittering, but the changes took place without my agency, or if I acted, I fulfilled only the system of another—for the foundation was the supernatural. Now, if every thing were less beautiful, every thing was more earnest. I mingled with the warlike and the wise, the crafty, the suffering, the pious—all depended upon our own exertions, and each result could only be brought about by their own simple and human energies—for the foundation was the natural.

Yet at times even this fertile source of enjoyment failed, and the dark spirit which haunted in my first years would still occasionally descend upon my mind. I knew not how it was, but the fit came upon me in an instant, and often when least counted on. A star, a sunset, a tree, a note of music, the sound of the wind, a fair face flitting by me in unknown beauty, and I was lost. All seemed rapid, dull, spiritless, and flat. Life had no object and no beauty; and I slunk to some solitary corner, where I was content to lie down and die. These were moments of bitter agony, these were moments in

which if I were spoken to I had no respect for persons. Once I remember my father found me before the demon had yet flown, and, for the first time, he spoke without being honoured.

At last I had such a lengthened fit that it attracted universal attention. I would scarcely move, or speak, or eat for days. There was a general alarm. The baroness fell into a flutter, lest my father should think I had been starved to death, or ill-used, or poisoned, and overwhelmed me with inquiries, each of which severally procrastinated my convalescence. For doubtless, now that I can analyze my past feelings, these dark humours arose only from the want of being loved. Physicians were called in. There were immense consultations. They were all puzzled, and all had recourse to arrogant dogmas. I would not, nay, I could not assist them. Lying upon the sofa with my eyes shut, as if asleep, I listened to their conferences. It was settled that I was suffering from a want of nervous energy. Strange jargon, of which their fellow-creatures are the victims! Although young, I looked upon these men with suspicion, if not contempt, and my after life has both increased my experience of their character, and confirmed my juvenile impression.

Change of air and scene were naturally prescribed for an effect by men who were ignorant of the cause. It was settled that I should leave town, accompanied by my tutor, and that we should reside for a season at my father's castle.

VI.

"AND I, too, will fly to Egeria!"

We were discoursing of Pompilius when the thought flashed across me. I no longer listened to his remarks, and ceased also to answer. My eyes were indeed fixed upon the page, but I perceived nothing; as it was not yet my hour of liberty, I remained in a soft state of dreamy abstraction.

When I was again free I wandered forth into the park, and I hastened, with a rushing, agitated step, to the spot on which I had fixed.

It was a small dell, and round it grew tall trees with thin and light-coloured leaves; and the earth was everywhere covered with thick fern and many wild flowers. And the dell was surrounded at a very slight distance by a deep wood, out of which white glancing hares each instant darted to play upon the green sunny turf. It was not indeed a sparry grot, cool in the sparkling splendour of a southern scene; it was not indeed a spot formed in the indefinite, but lovely, mould of the regions of my dreams, but it was green, and sweet, and wondrous still.

And I threw myself upon the soft yielding fern, and covered my eyes. And a shadowy purple tint was all that I perceived, and as my abstraction grew more intense, the purple lightened into a dusky white, and this new curtain again into a glittering veil, and the veil mystically disappeared, and I beheld a beautiful and female face.

It was not unlike Christiana, but more dazzling, and very pensive. And the eyes met mine, and they were full of serious lustre, and my heart beat, and I seemed to whisper with a very low, but almost ecstatic voice, "Egeria!" Yet indeed my lips did not move. And the vision beamed with a melancholy smile. And suddenly I found myself in a spacious cave, and I looked up into the face

of a beautiful woman, and her countenance was the countenance of the vision. And we were in deep shade, but far out I could perceive a shining and azure land. And the sky was of a radiant purple, and the earth was streaming with a golden light. And there were blue mountains, and bright fields, and glittering vineyards.

And I said nothing, but I looked upon her face, and dwelt upon her beauty. And hours flew, and the sun set, and the dew descended. And as the sky became less warm, the vision gradually died away, and I arose in the long twilight, and I returned home pensive and grave, but full of a soft and palpitating joy.

And when I returned, I could not eat. My tutor made many observations, many inquiries, but he was a simple man, and I could always quiet him. I sat at the table full of happiness, and almost without motion. And in the evening I stole into a corner, and thought of the coming day with all its rich strange joys.

My life was now one long stream of full felicity. It was indeed but one idea, but that idea was as beautiful as it was engrossing. Each day I hastened to the enchanted dell, each day I returned with renewed rapture. I had no thought for any thing but my mystic mistress. My studies, always an effort, would now have been insupportable, had I not invented a system by which I rendered even their restraint a new source of enjoyment. I had now so complete a command of my system of abstraction, that while my eye apparently was employed and interested with my allotted page, I in fact perceived nothing but my visionary nymph. My tutor, who observed me always engrossed, could not perceive that I was otherwise than a student, and when I could remember, I would turn over a leaf, or affect with much anxiety to look out a word in the lexicon, so that his deception was perfect. Then at the end of the day I would snatch some hasty five minutes to gain an imperfect acquaintance with my task, imperfect enough to make him at length convinced that the baroness's opinion of my intellect was not so erroneous as he had once imagined.

A short spring and a long summer had passed away thus delightfully, and I was now to leave the castle and return to the capital. The idea of being torn away from Egeria was harrowing. I became again melancholy, but my grief was tender, not savage. I did not recur to my ancient gloom, for I was prevented by the consoling conviction that I was loved. Yet to her the sad secret must be confided. I could not quit her without preparation. How often in solitary possession of the dreadful fact, have I gazed upon her incomparable face, how often have I fancied that she was conscious of the terrible truth, and glanced reproachfully even amid her looks of love.

It was told: in broken acts of passionate we with streaming eyes, and amid embraces of mad dening rapture, it was told. I clung to her, I would have clung to her forever, but a dark and irresistible destiny doomed us to part, and I was left to my uninspired loneliness.

Returning home from my last visit to the dell, I met my tutor. He came upon me suddenly, otherwise I would have avoided him, as at this moment I would have avoided any thing else human. My swollen cheeks, my eyes dim with weeping, my wild and broken walk, attracted even his attention.

He inquired what ailed me. His appearance, so different from the radiant being from whom I had lately parted, his voice so strange after the music which yet lingered in my ear, his salutation so varying in style to the one that ever welcomed me, and ever and alone was welcome, the horrible contrast that my situation formed with the condition I had the instant quitted—all this overcame me. I expressed my horror by my extended arms and my averted head. I screamed, I foamed at the mouth, I fell into violent convulsions.

VII.

ALTHOUGH I have delineated with some detail the feelings of my first boyhood, I have been indebted for this record to the power of a faithful and analytic memory, and not to any early indulgence in the habits of introspection. For indeed, in these young years I never thought about myself, or if some extraordinary circumstances impelled me to idiosyncratic contemplation, the result was not cheering. For I well remember that when, on the completion of my eleventh year, being about to repair to a college where I was to pass some years preparatory to the university, I meditated on this great and coming change,—I was impressed with a keen conviction of inferiority. It had sometimes indeed crossed my mind that I was of a different order to those around me, but never that the difference was in my favour, and brooding over the mortifying contrast which my exploits exhibited in my private and my public world, and the general opinion which they entertained of me at home, I was at times strongly tempted to consider myself even half a fool.

Though change was ever agreeable, I thought of the vicissitude that was about to occur with the same apprehension that men look forward to the indefinite horror of a terrible operation. And the strong pride that supported me under the fear, and forbade me to demonstrate it, was indeed the cause of my sad forebodings. For I could not tolerate the thought that I should become a general jest, and a common agent. And when I perceived the state preparing for me, and thought of Egeria, I blushed. And that beautiful vision that had brought me such delicious solace was now only a source of depressing mortification. And for the first time in my life, in my infinite tribulation, and in the agony of my fancy, I mused why there should be such a devilish and tormenting variance between my thought and my action.

The hour came, and I was placed in the heart of a little and a busy world. For the first time in my life I was surrounded by struggling and excited beings. Joy, hope, sorrow, ambition, craft, courage, wit, dulness, cowardice, beneficence, awkwardness, grace, avarice, generosity, wealth, poverty, beauty, hideousness, tyranny, suffering, hypocrisy, truth, love, hatred, energy, inertness—they were all there, and all sounded, and moved, and acted about me. Light laughs, and bitter cries, and deep imprecations, and the deeds of the friendly, the prodigal, and the tyrant, and the exploits of the brave, the graceful, and the gay, and the flying words of native wit, and the pompous sentences of acquired knowledge—how new, how exciting, how wonderful!

Did I tremble? Did I sink into my innermost self? Did I fly? Never. As I gazed upon them,

a new principle rose up in my breast, and I perceived only beings whom I was determined to control. They came up to me with a curious glance of half-suppressed glee, breathless and mocking. They asked me questions of gay nonsense with a serious voice and a solemn look. I answered in their kind. On a sudden I seemed endowed with new powers, and blessed with the gift of tongues. I spoke to them with a levity which was quite new to me, a most unnatural ease. I even, in my turn, presented to them questions to which they found it difficult to respond. Some ran away to communicate their impressions to their comrades, some stayed behind, but these became more serious and more natural. When they found that I was endowed with a pregnant and decided character, their eyes silently pronounced me a good fellow, they vied with each other in kindness, and the most important led me away to initiate me in their mysteries.

Weeks flew away, and I was intoxicated with my new life and my new reputation. I was in a state of ceaseless excitement. It seemed that my tongue never paused: yet each word brought forth a new laugh, each sentence of gay nonsense fresh plaudits. All was rattle, frolic, and wild mirth. My companions caught my unusual manner, they adopted my new phrases, they repeated my extraordinary apophthegms. Every thing was viewed and done according to the new tone which I had introduced. It was decided that I was the wittiest, the most original, the most diverting of their society. A coterie of the most congenial insensibly formed around me, and my example gradually ruled the choice spirits of our world. I even mingled in their games, although I disliked the exertion, and in those in which the emulation was very strong, I even excelled. My ambition conquered my nature. It seemed that I was the soul of the school. Wherever I went, my name sounded, whatever was done, my opinion was quoted. I was caressed, adored, idolized. In a word, I was popular.

Yet sometimes I caught a flying moment to turn aside, and contrast my present situation with my past one. What was all this? Was I the same being? But my head was in a whirl, and I had not time, or calmness, to solve the perplexing inquiry.

There was a boy, and his name was Musæus. He was somewhat my elder. Of a kind, calm, docile, mellow nature, moderate in every thing, universally liked, but without the least influence,—he was the serene favourite of the school. It seemed to me that I never beheld so lovely and so pensive a countenance. His face was quite oval, his eyes deep blue: his rich brown curls clustered in hyacinthine grace upon the delicate rose of his downy cheeks, and shaded the light blue veins of his clear white forehead.

I beheld him: I loved him. My friendship was a passion. Of all our society, he alone crowded not around me. He was of a cold temperament, shy and timid. He looked upon me as a being whom he could not comprehend, and rather feared. I was unacquainted with his motives, and piqued with his conduct. I gave up my mind to the acquisition of his acquaintance, and of course I succeeded. In vain he endeavoured to escape. Wherever he moved, I seemed unintentionally to hover around him: whatever he wanted, I seemed providentially to supply. In the few words that this slight intercourse called forth, I addressed him in a tone strange to our rough life; I treated him with

a courtesy which seemed to elevate our somewhat coarse condition. He answered nothing, was confused, thankful, agitated. He yielded to the unaccustomed tenderness of my manner, to the unexperienced elegance of my address. He could not but feel the strange conviction, that my conduct to him was different to my behaviour to others, for in truth his presence ever subdued my spirit, and repressed my artificial and excited manner.

Musæus was lowly born, and I was noble; he poor, and I wealthy; I had a dazzling reputation, he but good report. To find himself an object of interest, of quiet and tender regard, to one to whose notice all aspired, and who seemed to exist only in a blaze of cold-hearted raillery and reckless repartee, developed even his dormant vanity. He looked upon me with interest, and this feeling soon matured into fondness.

O! days of rare and pure felicity, when Musæus and myself, with our arms around each other's neck, wandered together amid the meads and shady woods that formed our limits. I lavished upon him all the fanciful love that I had long stored up, and the mighty passions that yet lay dormant in my obscure soul, now first began to stir in that glimmering abyss. And indeed conversing with this dear companion was it, that I first began to catch some glimpses of my yet hidden nature. For the days of futurity were our usual topic, and in parcelling out their fortunes, I unconsciously discovered my own desires. I was to be something great, and glorious, and dazzling, but what we could not determine. The camp and the senate, the sword and the scroll, that had raised, and had destroyed, so many states—these were infinitely discussed. And then a life of adventure was examined, full of daring delight. One might be a corsair or a bandit. Foreign travel was what we could surely command, and must lead to much. I spoke to him, in the fulness of our sweet confidence, of the strangeness of my birth, and we marvelled together over mysterious Venice. And this led us to conspiracies, for which I fancied that I had a predisposition. But in all these scenes, Musæus was to be never absent. He was to be my heart's friend from the beginning to the death. And I mourned that nature had given me no sister, wherewith I could bind him to me by a still stronger and sweeter tie. And then, with a shy, hesitating voice, for he delighted not in talking of his home, he revealed to me that he was more blessed: and Caroline Musæus rose up at once to me like a star, and without having seen her, I was indeed her betrothed.

Thus, during these bright days, did I pour forth all the feelings I had long treasured up, and in endeavouring to communicate my desires to another, I learned to think. I ascended from indefinite reverie to palpable cogitation.

I was now seldom alone. To be the companion of Musæus, I participated in many pastimes which otherwise I should have avoided, and in return he, although addicted to sports, was content, for my sake, to forego much former occupation. With what eagerness I rushed, when the hour of study ceased—with what wild eagerness I rushed to resume our delicious converse! Nor indeed was his image ever absent from me, and when, in the hour of school, we passed each other, or our countenances chanced to meet, there was ever a sweet, faint smile, that, unmarked by others, interchanged our love

A love that I thought must last forever, and forever flow like a clear, bright stream, yet at times my irritable passions would disturb even these sweet waters. The temperament of Musæus was cold and slow. I was at first proud of having interested his affection, but, as our friendship grew apace, I was not contented with this calm sympathy and quiet regard. I required that he should respond to my affection with feelings not less ardent, and energetic than mine own. I was sensitive, I was jealous. I found a savage joy in harrowing his heart—I triumphed when I could draw a tear from his beautiful eye; when I could urge him to unaccustomed emotion; when I forced him to assure me, in a voice of agitation, that he loved me alone, and prayed me to be pacified.

From sublime torture to ridiculous teasing, too often Musæus was my victim. One day I detected an incipient dislike to myself, or a growing affection for another: then, I passed him in gloomy silence, because his indispensable engagements had obliged him to refuse my invitation to our walk. But the letters with which I overwhelmed him under some of these contingencies—these were the most violent infliction. What pages of mad eloquence!—solemn appeals, bitter sarcasms, infinite ebullitions of frantic sensibility. For the first time in my life, I composed. I grew intoxicated with my own eloquence. A new desire arose in my mind, novel aspirations which threw light upon old and often-experienced feelings. I began to ponder over the music of language; I studied the collocation of sweet words, and constructed elaborate sentences in lonely walks. Poor Musæus quite sunk under the receipt of my effusions. He could not write a line, and had he indeed been able, it would have been often difficult for him to have discovered the cause of our separations. The brevity, the simplicity of his answers were irresistible and heart-rending. Yet these distractions brought with them one charm, a charm to me so captivating, that I fear it was sometimes a cause—reconciliation was indeed a love-feast.

The sessions of our college closed. The time came that Musæus and myself must for a moment part, but for a moment, for, I intended that he should visit me in our vacation, and we were also to write to each other every week. Yet even under these palliating circumstances parting was anguish.

The eve of the fatal day, we took our last stroll in our favourite meads. The whole way I wept, and leaned upon his shoulder. With what jealous care I watched to see if he too shed a tear. One clear drop at length came quivering down his cheek, like dew upon a rose. I pardoned him for its beauty. The bell sounded. I embraced him, as if it sounded for my execution, and we parted.

VIII.

I was once more at home, once more silent, once more alone. I found myself changed. My obscure aspirations after some indefinite happiness, my vague dreams of beauty, or palpable personifications of some violent fantastic idea, no longer inspired, no longer soothed, no longer haunted me. I thought only of one subject, which was full of earnest novelty, and abounded in interest, curious, serious, and engrossing. I speculated upon my own nature. My new life had developed many qualities, and had filled me with self-confidence

The clouds seemed to clear off from the dark landscape of my mind, and vast ambition might be distinguished on the far horizon, rearing its head like a mighty column. My energies stirred within me, and seemed to pant for the struggle and the strife. A deed was to be done, but what? I entertained at this time a deep conviction that life must be intolerable, unless I were the greatest of men. It seemed that I felt within me the power that could influence my kind. I longed to wave my inspiring sword at the head of armies, or dash into the very heat and blaze of eloquent faction.

When I contrasted my feelings and my situation I grew mad. The constant jar between my conduct and my conceptions was intolerable. In imagination a hero, I was in reality a boy. I returned from a victorious field to be criticised by a woman: in the very heart of a deep conspiracy, which was to change the fate of nations, to destroy Rome or to free Venice, I was myself the victim of each petty domestic regulation. I cannot describe the insane irritability which all this produced. Infinite were the complaints of my rudeness, my violence, my insufferable impertinence: incessant the threats of pains and penalties. It was universally agreed that college had ruined me. A dull, slow boy I had always been, but, at least, I was tolerably kind and docile. Now, as my tutor's report correctly certified, I was not improved in intellect, and all witnessed the horrible deterioration of my manners and my morals.

The baroness was in despair. After several smart skirmishes, we at length had a regular pitched battle.

She began her delightful colloquy in the true style of domestic reprimand; dull, drony nonsense, adapted, as I should hope, to no state in which human intellect can ever be found, even if it have received the full benefit of the infernal tuition of nurses, which would be only ridiculous, if its effects were not so fatally and permanently injurious. She told me that whenever I spoke I should speak in a low voice, and that I should never think for myself. That if any thing were refused, I should be contented, and never ask the reason why, because it was not proper ever to ask questions, particularly when we were sure that every thing was done for our good. That I should do every thing that was bidden, and always be ready to conform to everybody's desires, because at my age no one should have a will of his own. That I should never, on any account, presume to give my opinion, because it was quite impossible that one so young could have one. That on no account, also, should I ever be irritable, which never could be permitted; but she never considered that every effect has a cause, and never attempted to discover what might occasion this irritability. In this silly, superficial way she went on for some time, repeating dull axioms by rote, and offering to me the same useless advice that had been equally thrown away upon the tender minds of her generation.

She said all this, all this to me, all this to one who, a moment before, was a Cæsar, an Alcibiades. Now I had long brooded over the connexion that subsisted between myself and this lady. I had long formed in my mind and caught up from books, a conception of the relations which must exist between a stepmother and her unwelcome son. I was therefore prepared. She grew pale as I de-

scribed in mad heroics our exact situation. She had no idea that any people, under any circumstances, could be influenced by such violent, such wicked, such insane sentiments. She stared, in stupid astonishment, at my terrible and unexpected fluency. She entirely lost her presence of mind, and burst into tears—tears not of affection, but of absolute fright, the hysteric offspring of a cold, alarmed, puzzled mind.

She vowed she would tell my father. I inquired, with a malignant sneer, of what? She protested she certainly would tell. I dilated on the probability of a stepdame's tale. Most certainly she would tell. I burst into a dark, foaming rage. I declared that I would leave the house, that I would leave the country, that I would submit no longer to my intolerable life, that suicide (and here I kicked down a chair) should bring me immediate relief. The baroness was terrified out of her life. The fall of the chair was the perfection of fear. She was one of those women who have the highest respect for furniture. She could not conceive a human being, much less a boy, voluntarily kicking down a chair, if his feelings were not very keen indeed. It was becoming too serious. She tried to soothe me. She would not speak to my father. All should be right, all should be forgotten, if I only would not commit suicide, and not kick down the chairs.

After some weeks, Musæus paid his long meditated visit. I had never, until I invited him, answered his solitary letter. I received him with a coldness which astonished me, and must have been apparent to any one but himself. I was distressed by the want of unction in my manner, and tried to compensate by a laboured hospitality which, like ice, was dazzling, but frigid. Many causes, perhaps, conduced to occasion this change, then inscrutable to me. Since we had parted, I had indulged in lofty ideas of self, and sometimes remembered, with a feeling approaching to disgusting mortification, the influence which had been exercised over me by a fellow-child. The reminiscence savoured too much of boyish weakness, and painfully belied my proud theory of universal superiority. At home, too, when the permission for the invitation was accorded, there was much discussion as to the quality of the invited. They wished to know who he was, and when informed looked rather grave. Some caution was muttered about the choice of my companions. Even my father, who seldom spoke to me, seemed alarmed at the prospect of a bad connexion. His intense worldliness was shocked. He talked to me for an unusual time upon the subject of school friendships, and his conversation, which was rare, made an impression. All this influenced me, for at that age I was, of course, the victim of every prejudice. Must I add to all this, what is perhaps the sad and dreary truth, that in loving all this time Musæus with such devotion, I was in truth rather enamoured of the creature of my imagination than the companion of my presence. Upon the foundation which he had supplied, I had built a beautiful and enchanted palace. Unceasing intercourse was a necessary ingredient of the spell. We parted, and the fairy fabric dissolved into the clouds.

Certain it is, that his visit was a failure. Musæus was too little sensitive to feel the change of my manner, and my duty, as his host, impelled me to conceal it. But the change was great. He

appeared to me to have fallen off very much in his beauty. The baroness thought him a little coarse, and praised the complexion of her own children, which was like chalk. Then he wanted constant attention, for it was evident that he had no resources of his own, and certainly he was not very refined. But he was pleased, for he was in a new world. For the first time in his life he moved in theatres and saloons, and mingled in the splendour of high civilization. I took him everywhere; in fact, I could bear every thing but to be alone with him. So he passed a very pleasant fortnight, and then quitted us. How different from our last parting! Cheerful indeed it was, and, in a degree, cordial. I extended him my hand with a patronising air, and mimicking the hollow courtesy of maturer beings, I expressed, in a flimsy voice of affected regard, a wish that he might visit us again. And six weeks before I had loved this boy better than myself, would have perilled for him my life, and shared with him my fortune!

IX.

I RETURNED to college gloomy and depressed. Not that I cared for quitting home: I hated home. I returned in the fullness of one of my dark humours, and which promised to be one of the most terrible visitations that had ever fallen upon me. Indeed, existence was intolerable, and I should have killed myself had I not been supported by my ambition, which now each day became more quickening, so that the desire of distinction and of astounding action raged in my soul, and when I recollected that at the soonest many years must elapse before I could realize my ideas, I gnashed my teeth in silent rage and cursed my existence.

I cannot picture the astonishment that pervaded our little society, when they found the former hero of their gayety avoiding all contact and conversation, and moving about always in gloomy silence. It was at first supposed, that some great misfortune had happened to me, and inquiries were soon afloat, but nothing could be discovered. At length one of my former prime companions, I should say, perhaps, patrons, expostulated with me upon the subject: I assured him with grim courtesy that nothing had happened, and wished him good morning. As for Musæus, I just contrived the first day to greet him with a faint agonizing smile, and ever after I shunned him. Nothing could annoy Musæus long, and he would soon have forgotten his pain, as he had already perhaps freed his memory of any vivid recollection of the former pleasure which our friendship had undoubtedly brought him. He welcomed enjoyment with a smile, and was almost as cheerful when he should have been much less pleased.

But although Musæus was content to be thus quiet, the world in which he lived determined that he should be less pliegmatic. As they had nothing better to do, they took his quarrel upon themselves. "He certainly has behaved infamously to Musæus. You know they were always together. I wonder what it can be! As for the rest of the school, that is in comparison nothing; but Musæus—you know they were decided cronies. I never knew fellows more together. I wonder what it can be! If I were Musæus, I certainly would come to an explanation. We must put him up to it. If Musæus asks him, he cannot refuse, and then we shall know what it is all about."

They at length succeeded in beating it into poor Musæus's head, that he had been very ill-treated, and must be very unhappy, and they urged him to insist upon an explanation. But Musæus was no hand at demanding explanations, and he deputed the task to a friend.

I was alone, sitting on a gate in a part of the grounds which was generally least frequented, when I heard a shout which, although I could not guess its cause, sounded in my ear with something of a menacing and malignant expression. The whole school, headed by the deputy, were finding me out, in order that the important question might be urged, that the honour of Musæus might be supported, and their own curiosity gratified.

Now at that age, whatever I may be now, I could not be driven. A soft word, and I was an Abel; an appearance of force, and I scowled a Cain. Had Musæus, instead of being a most commonplace character, which assuredly he was, had it been in his nature to have struck out a single spark of ardent feeling, to have indulged in a single sigh of sentiment, he might perhaps yet have been my friend. His appeal might have freed me from the domination of the black spirit, and in weeping over our reconciliation upon his sensitive bosom, I might have been emancipated from its horrid thrall. But the moment that Musæus sought to influence my private feelings by the agency of public opinion, he became to me, instead of an object of indifference, an object of disgust, and only not of hatred, because of contempt.

I did not like the shout, and when, at a considerable distance, I saw them advancing towards the gate with an eager run, I was almost tempted to retire; but I had never yet flinched in the course of my life, and the shame and sickness which I now felt at the contemplation of such an act impelled me to stay.

They arrived, they gathered round me, they did not know how to commence their great business: breathless and agitated, they looked first at their embarrassed leader, and then at me.

When I had waited a sufficient time for my dignity, I rose to quit the place.

"We want you, Fleming," said the chief.

"Well!" and I turned round and faced the speaker.

"I tell you what, Fleming," said he, in a rapid nervous style, "you may think yourself a very great man; but we do not exactly understand the way you are going on. There is Musæus; you and he were the greatest friends last half, and now you do not speak to him, nor to any one else. And we all think that you should give an explanation of your conduct. And, in short, we come here to know what you have got to say for yourself."

"Do you!" I answered, with a sneer.

"Well, what have you got to say?" he continued in a firmer voice and more peremptory tone.

"Say! say that either you or I must leave this gate. I was here first, but as you are the largest number, I suppose I must yield."

I turned my heel upon him and moved. Some one hissed. I returned, and inquired in a very calm, mild voice, "Who hissed?"

Now the person who hissed was a boy, who was indeed my match in years, and perhaps in force, but a great coward. I knew it was he, because he was just the fellow who would hiss, and looked quite pale when I asked the question. Besides, no

one answered it, and he was almost the only boy who, under such circumstances, would have been silent.

"Are you afraid to own it?" I asked, in a contemptuous tone, but still very subdued.

This great mob of nearly two hundred boys were very much ashamed at the predicament in which their officious and cowardly member had placed them. So their leader, proud in a fine frame, a great and renowned courage, unrivalled achievements in combat, and two years of superiority of age over myself, advanced a little and said, "Suppose I hissed, what then?"

"What then!" I exclaimed, in a voice of thunder, and with an eye of lightning—"what then! Why, then I will thrash you."

There was an instantaneous flutter and agitation, and pausing monosyllabic whisper in the crowd; they were like birds when the hawk is first detected in airy distance. Unconsciously, they withdrew like waves, and the arena being cleared, my opponent and I were left in opposition. Apparently there never was a more unequal match: but indeed he was not fighting with Contarini Fleming, but with a demon that had usurped his shape.

"Come on, then," he replied, with brisk confidence.

And I came—as the hail upon the tall corn. I flew at him like a wild beast; I felt not his best blow, I beat down his fine guard, and I sent him to the ground, stunned and giddy.

He was up again in a moment, and indeed I would not have waited for their silly rules of mock combat, but have destroyed him in his prostration. But he was up again in a moment. Again I flew upon him. He fought with subtle energy, but he was like a serpent with a tiger. I fixed upon him: my blows told with the rapid precision of machinery. His bloody visage was not to be distinguished. I believe that he was terrified with my frantic air.

I would never wait between the rounds. I cried out in a voice of madness for him to come on. There was breathless silence. They were thunder-struck. They were too generous to cheer their leader. They could not refrain from sympathizing with inferior force and unsupported courage. Each time that he came forward, I made the same dreadful spring, beat down his guard, and never ceased working upon his head, until at length my fist seemed to enter his very brain, and after ten rounds he fell down quite blind. I never felt his blows—I never lost my breath.

He could not come to time—I rushed forward—I placed my knee upon his chest. "I fight no more," he faintly cried.

"Apologize," I exclaimed; "apologize."

He did not speak.

"By heavens, apologize," I said, "or I know not what I shall do."

"Never!" he replied.

I lifted up my arm. Some advanced to interfere. "Oil, dogs," I shouted; "Oil, off." I seized the fallen chief, rushed through the gate, and dragged him like Achilles through the mead. At the bottom there was a dung hill: upon it I flung the half-inanimate body.

X.

I STROLLED away to one of my favourite haunts; I was calm and exhausted; my face and hands were smeared with gore. I knelt down by the side

of the stream, and drank the most delicious draught that I had ever quaffed. I thought that I should never have ceased. I felt invigorated, and a plunge in the river soon completed my renovation.

I reclined under a branching oak, and moralized on the part. For the first time in my life, I had acted. Hitherto I had been a creature of dreams, but within the last month unconsciously I found myself a stirrer in existence. I perceived that I had suddenly become a responsible agent. There were many passions, many characters, many incidents. Love, hatred, faction, vengeance, Musæus, myself, my antagonist, his followers, who were indeed a world; our soft walks, the hollow visit, the open breach, the organized party, the great and triumphant struggle.

And as I mused, all these things flitted across my vision, and all that had passed was again present, and again performed, except indeed that my part in the drama was of a more studied and perfect cast. For I was conscious of much that might have been finely expressed and dexterously achieved; and to introduce all this, I indulged in imaginary scenes. There was a long interview between myself and Musæus, most harrowing; a logomachy between myself and the chief of the faction, most pungent. I became so excited, that I could no longer restrain the outward expression of my strong feeling. My voice broke into impassioned tones; I audibly uttered the scornful jest. My countenance was in harmony with my speech; my action lent a more powerful meaning to my words.

And suddenly there was a great change whose order I cannot trace. For Musæus, though he looked upon me, was not Musæus, but a youth in a distant land, and I was there in a sumptuous dress, with a brilliant star; and we were friends. And a beautiful woman rose up, a blending of Christiana and Egeria. Both of us loved her, and she yielded herself to me, and Musæus fled for aid. And there came a king with a great power, and as I looked upon his dazzling crown, lo! it encircled the brow of my late antagonist.

And I beheld and felt all this growing and expanding life with a bliss so keen, so ravishing, that I can compare it to nothing but to joys, which I was then too young even to participate. My brain seemed to melt into a liquid, rushing stream; my blood quickened into action, too quick even to recognise pulsation, fiery and fleet, yet delicate and soft. With difficulty I breathed, yet the oppression was delicious. But in vain I endeavour to paint the refined excitement of this first struggle of my young creation.

The drama went on, nor was it now in my power to restrain it. At length, oppressed with the vitality of the beings I had formed, dazzled with the shifting brilliancy of the scenes in which they moved, exhausted with the marvellous action of my shadowy self, who figured before me in endless exploit, now struggling, now triumphing, now pouring forth his soul in sentences of burning love, now breathing a withering blast of proud defiance, I sought for means to lay the wild ghosts that I had unconsciously raised.

I lifted my hand to my face, that had been gazing all this time, in fixed abstraction, upon a crimson cloud. There was a violent struggle, which I did not comprehend. Every thing was chaos, but soon, as it were, a mystic music came rising out of the incongruous mass, a mighty secret was

revealed to me, all was harmony, and order, and repose, and beauty. The whirling scene no longer changed; and there was universal stillness; and the wild beings ceased their fierce action, and bending down before me in humility, proffered their homage to their creator.

"Am I then," I exclaimed, looking around with an astonished and vacant air, "am I then, after all, a poet?"

I sprang up—I paced up and down before the tree, but not in thought. The perspiration ran down my forehead—I trembled—I panted—I was lost. I was not conscious of my existence. My memory deserted me—the rudder of my mind broke away.

My thought came back—I threw myself upon the ground. "Yes," I exclaimed, "beautiful beings, I will release you from the prison-house of my brain. I will give you to freedom and to light. You shall exist not only for me—you shall go forth to the world to delight and to conquer."

And this was the first time in my life that the idea of literary creation occurred to me. For I disliked poetry, of which indeed I had read little except plays, and although I took infinite delight in prose fiction, it was only because the romance, or the novel, offered to me a life more congenial to my feelings, than the world in which I lived. But the conviction of this day threw light upon my past existence. My imaginary deeds of conquest, my heroic aspirations, my long, dazzling dreams of fanciful adventure, were perhaps but sources of ideal action; that stream of eloquent and choice expression that seemed ever flowing in my ear was probably intended to be directed in a different channel than human assemblies, and might melt, or kindle the passions of mankind in silence. And the visions of beauty and the vows of love—were they too to glitter and glow only in imagination.

XI.

I REPAIRED the next day to my favourite tree, armed with a pencil and a paper book. My mind was, as I thought, teeming with ideas. I had composed the first sentence of my work in schooltime—it seemed full of music. I had repeated it a thousand times—I was enchanted with its euphony. It was now written, fairly written. With rapture I perceived it placed in its destined position. But what followed?—Nothing. In vain I rubbed my forehead; in vain I summoned my fancies. The traitors would not listen. My mind seemed full to the very brink, but not a drop of the rich stream overflowed. I became anxious, nervous, fretful. I walked about; I resealed myself. Again I threw down the pencil. I was like a man disenchanting. I could scarcely recall the visions of yesterday, and if, with an effort, I succeeded, they appeared cold, tame, dull, lifeless. Nothing can describe my blank despair.

They know not, they cannot tell—the cold, dull world—they cannot even remotely conceive the agony of doubt and despair which is the doom of youthful genius. To sigh for Fame in obscurity is like sighing in a dungeon for light. Yet the votary and the captive share an equal hope. But to feel the strong necessity of fame, and to be conscious without intellectual excellence life must be insupportable, to feel all this with no simultaneous faith in your own power—these are moments of de-

spendency for which no immortality can compensate.

As for myself, repeated experiments only brought repeated failures. I would not die without a struggle, but I struggled only to be vanquished. One day was too hot; another I fancied too cold. Then again I was not well, or perhaps I was too anxious. I would try only a sentence each day. The trial was most mortifying, for I found when it came to this practical test, that in fact I had nothing to write about. Yet my mind had been so full, and even now a spark, and it would again light up; but the flame never kindled, or if ever I fanned an appearance of heat, I was sure only to extinguish it. Why could I not express what I seemed to feel? All was a mystery.

I was most wretched. I wandered about in very great distress, for my pride was deeply wounded, and I could no longer repose on my mind with confident solace. My spirit was quite broken. Had I fought my great battle now, I should certainly have been beaten. I was distracted with disquietude—I had no point of refuge—hope utterly vanished. It was impossible that I could be any thing. I must always fail. I hated to think of myself. The veriest dunce in the school seemed my superior. I grew meek and dull. I learned my dry lessons—I looked upon a grammar with a feeling of reverence; my lexicon was constantly before me. But I made little advance. I no longer ascribed my ill progress to the uninteresting task, but to my own incapacity. I thought myself, once more, half a fool.

XII.

HAD I now been blessed with a philosophic friend, I might have found consolation and assistance. But my instructors, to whom I had a right to look up for this aid, were, of course, wanting. The system which they pursued taught them to consider their pupils as machines, which were to fulfil a certain operation, and this operation was word-learning. They attempted not to discover, or to develop, or to form character. Predisposition was to them a dark oracle: organization, a mystery in which they were not initiated. The human mind was with them always the same soil, and one to which they brought ever the same tillage. And mine was considered a sterile one, for they found that their thistles did not flourish where they should have planted roses.

I was ever considered a lazy, idle boy, because I required ideas instead of words. I never would make any further exertion than would save me from their punishments: their rewards I did not covet. Yet I was ever reading, and in general knowledge was immeasurably superior to all the students—for aught I know, to all the tutors. For indeed in any chance observations in which they might indulge, I could even then perceive that they were individuals of the most limited intelligence. They spoke sometimes of great men, I suppose for our emulation, but their great men were always commentators. They sometimes burst into a eulogium of a great work; you might be sure it was ever a huge bunch of annotations. An unrivalled exploit turned out to be a happy conjecture—a marvellous deed was the lion's skin that covered the ears of a new reading. I was confounded to hear the same epithets applied to their obscure demi-gods that I associated with the names of Cæsar

and Socrates, and Pericles, and Cicero. It was perplexing to find that Pharsalia or a Philippic—the groves of Academus or the fanes of the Acropolis, could receive no higher admiration than was lavished upon the unknown exploits of a hunter after syllables.

After my battle, I was never annoyed by my former friends. As time advanced I slightly relaxed in my behaviour, and when it was necessary, we interchanged words, but I never associated with any one. I was however no longer molested. An idea got afloat that I was not exactly in my perfect senses, and on the whole, I was rather feared than disliked.

Reading was my only resource. I seldom indulged in revery. The moment that I perceived my mind wandering, I checked it with a mixed feeling of disgust and terror. I made, however, during this period, more than one attempt to write, and always with signal discomfiture. Neither of the projected subjects in any way grew out of my own character, however they might have led to its delineation, had I proceeded. The first was a theme of heroic life, in which I wished to indulge in the gorgeousness of remote antiquity. I began with a fine description, which again elevated my hopes, but when the scene was fairly painted, my actors would not come on. I flung the sheet into the river, and cursed my repeated idiotism.

After an exposure of this kind, I always instantaneously became practical, and grave, and stupid; as a man, when he recovers from intoxication, vows that he will never again taste wine. Nevertheless, during the vacation, a pretty little German lady one night took it into her head to narrate some of the traditions of her country. Among these I heard, for the first time, the story of the Wild Huntsman of Rodenstein. It was most unlucky. The baroness, who was a fine instrumental musician, but who would never play when I requested her, chanced this night to be indulging us. The mystery and the music combined their damnable spells, and I was again enchanted. Infinite characters and ideas seemed rushing in my mind. I recollected that I had never yet given my vein a trial at home. Here I could command silence, solitude, hours unbroken and undisturbed. I walked up and down the room, once more myself. The music was playful, gay, and joyous. A village dance was before my vision—I marked with delight the smiling peasantry bounding under the clustering vines, the girls crowned with roses—the youth adorned with flowing ribands. Just as a venerable elder advanced, the sounds became melancholy, wild, and ominous. I was in a deep forest, full of doubt and terror—the wind moaned—the big branches heaved—in the distance I heard the baying of a hound. It did not appear, for suddenly the trumpet announced a coming triumph: I felt that a magnificent procession was approaching, that each moment it would appear: each moment the music became louder, and already an advanced and splendid guard appeared in the distance. I caught a flashing glimpse of a sea of waving plumes and glistening arms. The music ceased—the procession vanished—I fell from the clouds, I found myself in a dull drawing-room, a silly boy, very exhausted.

I felt so excessively stupid that I instantly gave up all thoughts of the Hunter of Rodenstein—and

went to bed gloomy and without hope; but in the morning when I rose, the sun was shining so softly, the misty trees and the dewy grass were so tender and so bright, the air was so fresh and fragrant, that my first feeling was the desire of composition, and I walked forth into the park cheerful, and moved by a rising faith.

The excited feelings of the evening seemed to return, and when I had sufficiently warmed my mind with revery, I sat down to my table surrounded by every literary luxury that I could remember. Ink enclosed in an ornolu Cupid, clear and brilliant, quires of the softest cream-coloured paper, richly gilt, and a perfect magazine of the finest pens. I was exceedingly nervous, but on the whole not unsuccessful. I described a young traveller arriving at night at a small inn on the borders of a Bohemian forest. I did not allow a single portion of his dress to escape, and even his steed and saddle-bags duly figured. The hostess was founded on our own housekeeper, therefore I was master of my subject. From her ear-rings to her shoe-buckles, all was perfect. I managed to supply my hero with supper, and at length I got him, not to bed, but to his bed-room—for heroes do not get into bed, even when wearied, with the expedition of more commonplace characters. On the contrary, he first opened the window, it was a lattice window, and looked at the moon. I had a very fine moonlight scene. I well remember that the trees were tipped with silver, but O! triumph of art, for the first time in my life, I achieved a simile, and the evening breeze came sounding in his ear soft as a lover's sigh!

This last master-touch was too much for me. I was breathless, and indeed exhausted. I read over the chapter. I could scarcely believe its existence possible. I rushed into the park—I hurried to some solitude where, undisturbed by the sight of a human being, I could enjoy my intense existence.

I was so agitated, I was in such a tumult of felicity, that for the rest of the day I could not even think. I could not find even time to determine on my hero's name, or to ascertain the reason for which I had brought him to such a wild scene, and placed him in such exceedingly uncomfortable lodgings. The next morning I had recovered my self-possession. Calm and critical, I reviewed the warm product of brain which had the preceding day so fascinated me. It appeared to me that it had never been my unfortunate fate to read more crude, ragged, silly stuff in the whole course of my experience. The description of costume, which I had considered so perfect, sounded like a catalogue of old clothes. As for the supper, it was very evident that so lifeless a personage could never have an appetite. What he opened the window for I certainly knew not, but certainly if only to look at the moon he must have been disappointed, for in spite of all my asseverations it was very dim indeed, and as for the lover's sigh, at the same time so tame, and so forced, it was absolutely sickening.

I threw away the wretched effusion, the beautiful inkstand, the cream-coloured paper, the fine pens—away they were all crammed in a drawer, which I was ever after ashamed to open. I looked out of the window, and saw the huntsman going out. I called to him, I joined him. I hated field-sports. I hated every bodily exertion except riding, which

indeed is scarcely one, but now any thing that was bodily, that was practical, pleased, and I was soon slaughtering birds in the very bowers in which I had loved Egeria.

On the whole, this was a most miserable and wretched year. I was almost always depressed, often felt heartbroken. I entirely lost any confidence in my own energies, and while I was deprived of the sources of pleasure which I had been used to derive from reverie, I could acquire no new ones in the pursuits of those around me.

It was in this state of mind that after a long solitary walk I found myself at a village which I had never before visited. On the skirts was a small Gothic building, beautiful and ancient. It was evening. The building was illuminated, the door open. I entered—I found myself in a Catholic church. A Lutheran in a Lutheran country, for a moment I trembled, but the indifference of my father on the subject of religion had prevented me at least from being educated a bigot, and in my Venetian meditations I sometimes would recollect, that my mother must have professed the old faith.

The church was not very full—groups were kneeling in several parts. All was dusk except at the high altar. There, a priest in a flaming vest officiated, and, ever and anon, a kneeling boy, in a scarlet dress, rang a small, and musical, and silver bell. Many tall white candles, in golden sticks, illuminated the sacred table, redolent of perfumes, and adorned with flowers. Six large burnished lamps were suspended above, and threw a magical light upon a magical picture. It was a Magdalen kneeling and weeping in a garden. Her long golden hair was drawn off her ivory forehead, and reached to the ground. Her large blue eyes, full of ecstatic melancholy, pierced to heaven. The heavy tears studded like pearls her wan, but delicate cheek. Her clasped hands embraced a crucifix.

I gazed upon this picture with a strange fascination, I came forward, I placed myself near the altar. At that moment, the organ burst forth, as if heaven were opening; clouds of incense rose and wreathed round the rich and vaulted roof, the priest advanced and revealed a God, which I fell down and worshipped. From that moment I became a Catholic.

XIII.

THERE was a mystery in the secret creed full of delight. Another link too seemed broken in the chain that bound me to the country, which, each day, I more detested. Adoration also was ever a resource teeming with rapture, for a creed is imagination. The Magdalen succeeded to Christiana and to Egeria. Each year my mistress seemed to grow more spiritual. First reality, then fancy, now pure spirit: a beautiful woman, a mystical nymph, a canonized soul. How was this to end? Perhaps I was ultimately designed for angelic intercourse, perhaps I might mount the skies, with the presiding essence of a star.

My great occupations were devout meditation and solitary prayer. I inflicted upon myself many penances. I scrupulously observed every fast. My creative power was exercised in the production of celestial visitants; my thirst for expression gratified in infinite invocation. Wherever I moved, I perceived the flashing of a white wing, the streaming of radiant hair; however I might apparently

be employed, I was, in fact, pondering over the music of my next supplication.

One mundane desire alone mingled with these celestial aspirations, and in a degree sprang out of their indulgence. Each day I languished more for Italy. It was a strong longing. Nothing but the liveliness of my faith could have solaced and supported me under the want of its gratification. I pined for the land where the true religion flourished in becoming glory, the land where I should behold temples worthy of the beautiful mysteries which were celebrated within their sumptuous walls, the land which the Vicar of God and the Ruler of Kings honoured and sanctified by his everlasting presence. A pilgrimage to Rome occupied my thoughts.

My favourite retreat now, when at the college, were the ruins of a Gothic abbey, whither an hour's stroll easily carried me. It pleased me much to sit among these beautiful relics, and call back the days when their sanctity was undefiled, and their loveliness unimpaired. As I looked upon the rich framework of the oriel window, my fancy lent perfection to its shattered splendour. I beheld it once more beaming with its saints and martyrs, and radiant with chivalric blazonry. My eye wandered down the mouldering cloisters. I pictured a procession of priests solemnly advancing to the high altar, and blending in sacred melody, with their dark garments and their shining heads, elevating a golden and gigantic crozier, and waving on high a standard of Madonna.

One day, as I was indulging in these soothing visions I heard a shout, and looking around, I observed a man seated at no great distance, who, by his action, had evidently called to me. I arose, and coming out of the ruins, advanced to him. He was seated on a mass of ancient brick-work, and appeared to be sketching. He was a tall man, fair and blue-eyed, but very sunburnt. He was hawk-nosed, with a quick glancing vision, and there was an air of acuteness in his countenance which was very striking. His dress was not the dress of our country, but I was particularly pleased with his cap, which was of crimson cloth, with a broad border of fur, and fell on one side of his head like a cap in a picture.

"My little man," said he, in a brisk, clear voice, "I am sorry to disturb you, but as probably you know this place better than I, you can perhaps tell me whether there be a spring at hand."

"Indeed, sir, a very famous one, for I have often drunk its water, which is most sweet, and clear, and cold, and if you will permit me, I will lead you to it."

"With all my heart, and many thanks, my little friend." So saying, he arose, and placing his portfolio under one arm, with the other lifted up a knapsack, which I offered to carry.

"By no means, kind sir," said he, in a most cheerful voice, "I am ever my own servant."

So leading him on round the other side of the abbey, and thence through a small but very fragrant mead, I brought him to the spring of which I had spoken. Over it was built a small, but fair arch, the keystone being formed of a mitre and escutcheon, and many parts very much covered with thick ivy.

The eye of the stranger kindled with pleasure when he looked upon the arch, and then, sitting down upon the bank, and opening his knapsack, he

took out a large loaf and broke it, and, as I was retiring, he said, "Prithee do not go, my little friend, but stay and share my meal. It is rough, but there is plenty. Nay, refuse not, little gentleman, for I wish to prolong our acquaintance. In not more than as many minutes, you have conferred upon me two favours. In this world such characters are rare. You have given me that which I love better than wine, and you have furnished me with a divine sketch, for indeed this arch is of a finer style than any part of the great building, and must have been erected by an abbot of grand taste, I warrant you. Come, little gentleman, eat, prithee, eat."

"Indeed, sir, I am not hungry; but if you would let me look at your drawing of the abbey, I should be most delighted."

"What, dost love art? What! have I stumbled upon a little artist!"

"No, sir, I cannot draw, nor indeed do I understand art, but I love every thing which is beautiful."

"Ah! a comprehensive taste," and he gave me the portfolio.

"O!" I exclaimed, "how beautiful!" for the drawing turned out, not, as I had anticipated, a lean skeleton pencil sketch, but one rapidly and richly coloured. The abbey rose as in reality, only more beautiful, being suffused with a warm light, for he had dashed in a sunset full of sentiment.

"O! sir, how beautiful! I could look at it forever. It seems to me that some one must come forth from the pass of those blue mountains. Cannot you fancy some bright cavalier, sir, with a flowing plume, or even a string of mules, even that would be delicious!"

"Bravo! bravo! my little man," exclaimed the stranger, shooting a sharp, scrutinizing side glance. "You deserve to see sketches. There! undo that strap and open the folio, for there are many others, and some which may please you more."

I opened it as if I were about to enter a sanctuary. I perceived it very full. I culled a drawing which appeared the most richly coloured, as one picks the most glowing fruit. There seemed a river and many marble palaces on each side, and long, thin, gliding boats shooting in every part, and over the stream there sprang a bridge, a bridge with a single arch, an ancient and solemn bridge, covered with buildings. I gazed upon the scene for a moment with breathless interest, a tear of agitating pleasure stole down my cheek, and then I shouted, "Venice! Venice!"

"Little man," said the stranger, "what is the matter?"

"O! sir, I beg your pardon, you must think me very foolish indeed. I am sure I did not mean to call out, but I have been longing all my life to go to Venice, and when I see any thing connected with it, I feel, sir, quite agitated. Your drawing, sir, is so beautiful, that I know not how—I thought for a moment that I was really looking upon these beautiful palaces, and crossing the famous Rialto."

"Never apologize for showing feeling, my friend. Remember that when you do so, you apologize for truth. I too am fond of Venice; nor is there any city where I have made more drawings."

"What, sir, have you been at Venice?"

"Is that so strange a deed! I have been in much stranger places."

"O! sir, how happy you must be! To see

Venice, and to travel in the distant countries, I could die at the condition of such enjoyment."

"You know as yet too little of life to think of death," said the stranger.

"Alas! sir," I mournfully sighed, "I have often wished to die."

"But can one so young be unhappy?" asked the stranger.

"O! sir, most, most unhappy." I am alone supported in this world by a fervent persuasion, that the holy Magdalen has condescended to take me under her especial protection."

"The holy Magdalen!" exclaimed the stranger, with an air of great astonishment—"indeed! and what made you unhappy before the holy Magdalen condescended to take you under her especial protection? Do you think, or has anybody told you, that you have committed any sin?"

"No! sir, my life has been, I hope, very innocent; nor do I see indeed how I could commit any sin, for I have never been subject to any temptation. But I have ever been unhappy, because I am perplexed about myself. I feel that I am not like other persons, and that which makes them happy is to me a source of no enjoyment."

"But you have, perhaps, some sources of enjoyment which are peculiar to yourself, and not open to them. Come, tell me how you have passed your life. Indeed, you have excited my curiosity, for I observed to-day, while I was drawing, that you were a good four hours reclined in the same position."

"Four hours, sir! I thought that I had been there but a few minutes."

"Four hours by the sun, as well as by this watch. What were you doing? Were you thinking of the blessed Magdalen?"

"No, sir!" I gravely replied, "not to-day."

"How then?"

"Indeed, sir!" I answered, reddening, "if I tell you, I am afraid, you will think me very foolish."

"Speak out, little man. We are all very foolish; and I have a shrewd suspicion, that if we understood each other better, you might perhaps turn out the least foolish of the two. Open, then, your mind, and fear nothing. For believe me, it is dishonourable to blush when you speak the truth, even if it be to your shame."

There was something in the appearance and manner of the stranger that greatly attracted me. I sought him with the same eagerness with which I always avoided my fellow-creatures. From the first, conversation with him was no shock. His presence seemed to sanctify, instead of outraging my solitude. His voice subdued my sullen spirit, and called out my hidden nature. He inspired me not only with confidence, but even with a degree of fascinating curiosity.

"Indeed, sir," I began, still with a hesitating voice, but a more assured manner—"indeed, sir, I have never spoken of these things to any one, for I feel they could not believe or comprehend what I would wish to express, nor indeed is it delightful to be laughed at. But know that I ever like to be alone, and it is this—that when I am alone, I can indulge in thought, which gives me great pleasure. For I would wish you to comprehend, sir, that I have ever lived in, as it were, two worlds, a public world and a private world. But I should not be unhappy in the private world but for one reason, which is nothing, but I was ever most happy; but

n the public world, I am indeed miserable. For you must know, sir, that when I am alone, my mind is full with what seem to me beautiful thoughts, nor indeed are they thoughts alone that make me so happy, but in truth I perform many strange and noble acts, and these too in distant countries, and in unknown places, and other persons appear, and they also act. And we all speak in language more beautiful than common words. And, sir, many other things occur, which it would take long to recount, but which, indeed, I am sure, that is, I think, would make any one very happy."

"But all this is a source of happiness, not of unhappiness," said the stranger. "Am I to comprehend, then, the source has dried up?"

"O! no, sir, for only this morning I had many visions, but I checked them."

"But why check them?"

"Ah! sir," I answered, heaving a deep sigh, "it is this which makes me unhappy; for when I enter into this private world, there arises in the end a desire to express what has taken place in it, which indeed I cannot gratify."

The stranger for a moment mused. Then he suddenly said, "And when you looked upon my sketch of the abbey, there seemed to you a cavalier advancing, I think you said?"

"From the pass of the blue mountains, sir. When ever I look upon pictures, it is thus."

"And when you beheld the Rialto, tell me what occurred then?"

"There was a great rush, sir, in my mind, and when my eye caught that tall young signior who is stepping off the stairs of a palace into a gondola, I wished to write a tale of which he should be the hero."

"It appears to me, my young friend," said the stranger, in a serious tone, and looking at me very keenly—"it appears to me, my young friend, that you are a poet."

"Alas! sir," I exclaimed, extremely agitated and nearly seizing his hand—"alas! alas! sir, I am not. For I once thought so myself, and have often tried to write; and either I have not produced a line, or something so wretchedly flat and dull that even I have felt it intolerable. It is this that makes me so miserable, so miserable that were it not for feeling, in the most marked manner, that I am under the especial protection of the blessed Magdalen, I think I should kill myself."

A gentle smile played upon the lip of the stranger, but it was in an instant suppressed. Then turning to me he said, "Supposing a man were born with a predisposition for painting, as I might have been myself, and that he were enabled to fancy pictures in his eye, do you think that if he took up a brush for the first time, he could transfer these pictures to the canvass?"

"By no means, sir, for the artist must learn his art."

"And is not a poet an artist, and is not writing an art, equally with painting? Words are but chalk and colour. The painter and the poet must follow the same course. Both must study before they execute. Both must alike consult nature and invent the beautiful. Those who delineate imitate nature, and those who describe her must equally study her, if they wish to excel in their own creations; and for man, if the painter study the outward form of the animal, the inward must be equally investigated by the poet. Thus far for the natural; and for the

ideal, which is an improvement upon nature, and which you will some day more clearly comprehend, remember this, that the painter and the poet, however assisted by their own organization, must alike perfect their style by the same process—I mean by studying the works themselves of great painters and great poets. See, then, my young friend, how unreasonable you are, that because you cannot be a great artist without studying your art, you are unhappy."

"O! sir, indeed, indeed, I am not. There is no application—there is no exertion, I feel, I feel it strongly, of which I am not capable to gain knowledge. Indeed, sir, you speak to me of great things, and my mind opens to your wisdom, but how am I to study?"

"Be not too rapid. Before we part, which will be in a moment, I will write you some talismanic rules, which have been of great service to myself. I copied them from off an old obelisk amid the ruins of Thebes. They will teach you all that is now necessary."

"O! sir, how good, how kind you are. How different would have been my life, had I been taught by somebody like you."

"Where, then, were you educated?"

"I am a student of the college about two miles off. Perhaps you may have passed it!"

"What, the large house upon the hill, where they learn words?" said the stranger, with a smile.

"Indeed, sir, it is too true. For though it never occurred to me before, I see now why, with an ardent love of knowledge, I have indeed there gained nothing but an ill name."

"And now," said the stranger, rising, "I must away, for the sun will in a few-minutes sink, and I have to reach a village which is some miles off for my night's encampment."

I beheld him prepare to depart with a feeling of deep regret. I dropped for a moment into profound abstraction; then rushing to him, I seized his hand, and exclaimed, "O, sir, I am noble, and I am rich, yet let me follow you!"

"By no means," said the stranger, very good-naturedly, "for our professions are different."

"Yet a poet should see all things."

"Assuredly. And you too will wander, but your hour has not yet come."

"And shall I ever see Venice?"

"I doubt not, for when a mind like yours thinks often of a thing it will happen."

"You speak to me of mysteries."

"There is little mystery; there is much ignorance. Some day you will study metaphysics, and you will then understand the nature of volition."

He opened his knapsack and took out two small volumes, in one of which he wrote some lines. "This is the only book," he said, "I have with me, and, as, like myself, you are such a strong Venetian, I will give it you, because you love art and artists, and are a good boy. When we meet again, I hope I may call you a great man."

"Here," he said, giving them to me, "they are full of Venice. Here, you see, is a view of the Rialto. This will delight you. And in the blank leaf I have written all the advice you at present require. Promise me, however, not to read it till you return to your college. And so farewell, my little man—farewell!"

He extended me his hand. I took it, and although it is an awkward thing at all times, and chiefly for

a boy, I began telling him my name and condition, but he checked me. "I never wish to know anybody's name. Were I to become acquainted with every being who flits across me in life, the callousness of my heart would be endangered. If your acquaintance be worth preserving, fate or fortune will some day bring us again together."

He departed. I watched his figure until it melted in the rising haze of evening. It was strange the ascendancy that this man exercised over me. When he spoke I seemed listening to an oracle, and now that he had departed, I felt as if some supernatural visitant had disappeared.

I quickened my walk home from the intense anxiety to open the volume in which I was to find the talismanic counsel. When I had arrived, I read written in pencil these words.

"Be patient. Cherish hope. Read more. Ponder less. Nature is more powerful than education. Time will develop every thing. Trust not overmuch in the blessed Magdalen: learn to protect yourself."

XIV.

INDEED I could think of nothing but the stranger. All night his image was before my eyes, and his voice sounded in my ear. I recalled each look, I repeated each expression. When I woke in the morning, the first thing I did was to pronounce from memory his oracular advice. I determined to be patient, I resolved never to despair. Revery was no longer to be endured, and a book was to be ever in my hand.

He had himself enabled me to comply with this last rule. I seized the first opportunity to examine his present. It was the History of Venice in French, by Amelot de la Houssaye—a real history of Venice, not one written years after the extinction of the republic by some solemn sage, full of first principles and dull dissertations upon the vicious constitution—a prophet of the past, trying to shuffle off his commonplace deductions for authentic inspiration—but a history of Venice written by one who had witnessed the doge sitting on his golden throne, and receiving awe-struck ambassadors in his painted halls.

I read it with an avidity with which I had never devoured any book: some parts of it indeed with absolute rapture. When I came to the chapter upon the nobility, a dimness came over my sight: for a moment I could not proceed. I saw them all; I marked all the divisions; the great magnificoes, who ranked with crowned heads, the nobles of the war of Candia, and the third, and still inferior class. I was so excited, that for a moment I did not observe that the name of Contarini did not appear. I looked for it with anxiety. But when I read that there were yet four families of such pre-eminent ancestry, that they were placed even above the magnificoes, being credited descendants of Roman consular families, and that of these the unrivalled house of Contarini was the chief, I dashed down the book in a paroxysm of nervous exultation, and rushed into the woods.

I ran about like a madman for some time, cutting down the underwood that opposed my way with a sharp stick, leaping trenches, hallooing, spouting, shouting, dashing, through pools of water. At length I arrived at a more open part of the wood. At a slight distance was a hill. I rushed on up

the hill, and never stopped till I had gained the summit. That steep ascent a little tamed me. I found myself upon a great ridge, and a vast savage view opened upon all sides. I felt now more at ease, for the extent of the prospect harmonized with the largeness and swell of my soul.

"Ha! ha!" I cried, like a wild horse. I snorted in the air, my eyes sparkled, my crest rose, waved my proud arm. "Ha! ha! have I found it out at last! I knew there was something. Nature whispered it to me, and time has revealed it. He said truly; time has developed every thing. But shall these feelings subside into poetry? Away! give me a sword, give me a sword! My consular blood demands a sword. Give me a sword, ye winds, ye trees, ye mighty hills, ye deep cold waters, give me a sword. I will fight! I will fight! I will fight! I will conquer. Why am I not a doge? A curse upon the tyranny of man, why is she not free! why am I not a doge? By the God of heaven, I will be a doge! O! thou fair and melancholy saint," I continued, falling on my knees, "who in thy infinite goodness condescended, as it were, to come down from heaven to call me back to the true and holy faith of Venice, and to take me under thy especial protection, blessed and beautiful Mary Magdalene, look down from thy glorious seat above, and smile upon thy elected and favourite child!"

I rose up refreshed by this short prayer, calmer and cooler, and began to meditate upon what was now fitting to be done. That Contarini Fleming must with all possible despatch cease to be a school-boy was indeed evident, necessary, and indispensable. The very idea of the great house upon the hill, where they teach words, was ludicrous. Nor indeed would it become me ever again, under any pretence whatever, to acknowledge a master, or, as it would appear, to be subject to any laws, save the old laws of Venice, for I claimed for myself the rights and attributes of a Venetian noble of the highest class, and they were those pertaining to blood royal. But when I called to my recollection the cold, worldly, practical character of my father, the vast quantity of dull, lowering, entangling ties that formed the great domestic mesh, and bound me to a country which I detested, covered me with a climate which killed me, surrounded me with manners with which I could not sympathize, and duties which nature impelled me not to fulfil, I felt that, to ensure my emancipation, it was necessary at once to dissolve all ties of blood and affection, and to break away from those links which chained me as a citizen to a country which I abhorred. I resolved therefore immediately to set out for Venice. I was, for the moment, I conceived, sufficiently well supplied with money, for I possessed one hundred six-dollars, more than any five of my fellow-students together. This, with careful husbandry, I counted would carry me to the nearest sea-port, perhaps even secure me a passage. And for the rest, I had a lively conviction that something must always turn up to assist me in any difficulties, for I was convinced that I was a hero, and heroes are never long forlorn.

On the next morning, therefore, long ere the sun had risen, I commenced my adventures. I did not steal away. First I kissed a cross three times, which I carried next to my breast, and then recommending myself to the blessed Magdalen, I walked off proudly and slowly, in a manner becoming Corio-

Ianus or Cæsar, who, after some removes, were both of them, for aught I knew, my great-grandfathers. I carried in a sort of knapsack, which we used for our rambles, a few shirts, my money, a pair of pocket pistols, and some ammunition. Nor did I forget a large loaf of bread—not very heroic food, but classical in my sight, from being the victual of the mysterious stranger. Like him also I determined in future only to drink water.

XV.

I JOURNEYED for some hours without stopping along a road, about which all I knew was, that it was opposite to the one that had first carried me to the college, and consequently, I supposed, did not lead home. I never was so delighted in my life. I had never been up so early in my life. It was like living in a new world. Every thing was still, fresh, fragrant. I wondered how long it would last, how long it would be before the vulgar days, to which I had been used, would begin. At last a soft luminous appearance commenced in the horizon, and gradually gathered in strength and brightness. Then it shivered into brilliant streaks, the clouds were dabbled with rich flaming tints, and the sun rose. I felt grateful when his mild but vivifying warmth fell upon my face, and it seemed to me that I heard the sound of trumpets, when he came forth, like a royal hero, out of his pavilion.

All the birds began singing, and the cocks crowed with renewed pride. I felt as if I myself could sing, my heart was so full of joy and exultation. And now I heard many pleasant rural sounds. A horse neighed, and a whip smacked, there was a whistle, and the sound of a cart-wheel. I came to a large farm-house. I felt as if I were indeed travelling, and seeing the world and its wonders. When I had rambled about before, I had never observed any thing, for I was full of nonsensical ideas. But now I was a practical man, and felt capable, as the stranger said, of protecting myself. Never was I so cheerful.

There was a great barking, and several dogs rushed out at me, all very fierce, but I hit the largest over the nose with my stick, and it retreated yelping into the yard, where it again barked most furiously behind the gate; the lesser dogs were so frightened that they slunk away immediately through different hedges, nor did they bark again till I passed the gate; but I heard them then, though very feeble, and rather snappish than fierce.

The farmer was coming out of the gate, and saluted me. I returned him the salute with a firm voice and a manly air. He spoke then of the weather, and I differed with him to show that I was a thinking being, and capable of protecting myself. I made some inquiries respecting the distance of certain places, and I acquired from him much information. The nearest town was fifteen miles off. This I wished to reach by night, as there was no great village, and this I doubted not to do.

When the heat increased, and I felt a little fatigued, I stopped at a beautiful spring, and taking my loaf out of my knapsack like the stranger, I ate with a keen relish, and slaked my slight thirst in the running water. It was the coldest and purest water that I had ever tasted. I felt quite happy, and was full of confidence and self-gratulation at my prosperous progress. I reposed here till noon, and as the day, though near midsummer, became

cloudy, I then recommenced my journey without dread of the heat.

On I went, full of hope. The remembrance of the cut that I had given the great dog over the nose had wonderfully inflamed my courage. I longed to knock down a man. Every step was charming. Every flower, every tree gave me delight, which they had not before yielded. Sometimes, yet seldom, for it was an unfrequented road, I met a traveller, and always prepared myself for an adventure. It did not come, but there was yet time. Every person I saw, and every place I observed, seemed strange and new: I felt in a far land. And for adventures, my own consciousness was surely a sufficient one, for was I not a nobleman incognito, going on a pilgrimage to Venice! To say nothing of the adventures that might then occur, here were materials for the novelist! Pah! my accursed fancy was again wandering. I forgot that I was no longer a poet, but something which, though difficult to ascertain, I doubted not in the end all would agree to be infinitely greater.

As the afternoon advanced, the thin gray clouds melted away, the sun mildly shone in the warm, light-blue sky. This was again fortunate, and instead of losing my gay heart with the decline of day, I felt inspired with fresh vigour, and shot on joyous and full of cheerfulness. The road now ran through the skirts of a forest. It was still less like a commonplace journey. On each side was a large plot of turf, green and sweet. Seated on this at some little distance I perceived a group of men and women. My heart beat at the prospect of an incident. I soon observed them with more advantage. Two young women were seated together repairing a bright garment, which greatly excited my wonder. It seemed of very fine stuff, and richly embroidered with gold and silver. Greatly it contrasted with their own attire and that of their companions, which was plain, and indeed shabby. As they worked, one burst into repeated fits of laughter, but the other was more sedulous, and looking grave, seemed to reprove her. A man was feeding with sticks a fire, over which boiled a great pot; a middle-aged woman was stirring its contents. A young man was lying asleep upon the grass; an older one was furbishing up a sword. A lightly built but large wagon was on the other side of the road, the unharnessed horses feeding on the grass.

A little dog shrilly barked when I came up, but I was not afraid of dogs. I flourished my stick, and the laughing girl called out "Harlequin," and the cur ran to her. I stopped and inquired of the fire-lighter the distance to the town where I hoped to sleep. Not only did he not answer me, but he did not even raise up his head. It was the first time in my life that I had not obtained an answer. I was astonished at his insolence. "Sir," I said, in a tone of offended dignity, "how long is it since you have learned not to answer the inquiry of a gentleman?"

The laughing girl burst into a renewed fit. All stopped their pursuits. The fire-lighter looked up with a puzzled sour face, the old woman stared with her mouth open, and the furbisher ran up to him with his naked weapon. He had the oddest and most comical face that I had ever seen. It was like that of a seal, but full of ludicrous mobility. He came rushing up, saying, with an air and voice of mock heroism, "To arms, to arms!"

I was astonished, and caught the eye of the laughing girl. She was very fair, with a small nose, and round cheeks breaking into most charming dimples. When I caught her eye, she made a wild grimace at me, and I also laughed. Although I was trudging along with a knapsack, my dress did not befit my assumed character, and in a moment of surprise, I had given way to a manner which still less became my situation. Women are quicker than men in judging of strangers. The two girls were evidently my friends from the first, and the fair laugher beckoned me to come and sit down by her. This gay wench had wonderfully touched my fancy. I complied with her courteous offer without hesitation. I threw away my knapsack and my stick, and stretched my legs with the air of a fine gentleman. I was already ashamed of my appearance, and forgot every thing in the desire to figure to the best advantage to my new friend. "This is the first time," I drawled out, with a languid air, and looking in her face, "this is the first time in life that I ever walked, and I am heartily sick of it."

"And why have you walked, and where have you come from, and where are you going to?" eagerly she demanded.

"I was tired to death of riding every day of my life," I rejoined, with the tone of a man who had exhausted pleasure. "I am not going anywhere, and I forget where I came from."

"O! you odd thing!" said the wench, and she gave me a pinch.

The other girl, who was handsome, but dark, and of a more serious beauty, at this moment rose, and went and spoke to the crusty fire-lighter. When she returned, she seated herself on my other side, so I was now between both, but as she seated herself, though doubtless unconsciously, she pressed my hand in a very sentimental manner.

"And what is your name?" asked the laughing girl.

"Theodora! how can you be so rude?" remarked the serious beauty.

"Do you know," said the laughing girl, whispering in my ear, "I think you must be a little count."

I only smiled in answer, but it was a smile which complimented her penetration.

"And now, may I ask who you may be, and whether you may be going?"

"We are going to the next town," replied the serious beauty, "where, if we find the public taste not disinclined, we hope to entertain them with some representations."

"You are actors, then. O! what a charming profession. How I love the theatre. When I am at home I go in my father's box every night. I have often wished to be an actor."

"Be one," said the serious beauty, pressing my hand.

"Join us," said the laughing girl, pinching my elbow.

"Why not?" I replied, and almost thought. "Youth must be passed in adventure."

The fairy nymph produced a box of sugarplums, and taking out a white almond, kissed it, and pushed it into my mouth. While I laughed at her wild kitten-like action, the dark girl drew a deep-coloured rose from her bosom, and pressed it to my nose. I was nearly stifled with their joint sweets and kindness. Neither of them would take away their hands. The dark girl pressed her rose with in-

creased force; the sugarplum melted away, but I found in my mouth the tip of a little finger scarcely larger, and as white and sweet. There was giggling without end; I sank down upon my back. The dark girl snatched a hasty embrace, her companion fell down by my side, and bit my cheek.

"You funny little count!" said the fair beauty.

"I shall keep these in remembrance of a happy moment," said her friend, with a sentimental air, and she glanced at me with her flashing eye. So saying, she picked up the scattered leaves of the rose.

"And I! am I to have nothing?" exclaimed the blue-eyed girl with an air of mock sadness, and she crossed her arms upon her lap with a drooping head.

I took a light iron chain from my neck, and threw it over hers. "There," I said, "Miss Sugarplum, that is for you."

She jumped up from the ground, and bounded about as if she were the happiest of creatures, laughing without end, and kissing the slight gift. The dark girl rose and began to dance full of grace and expression: Sugarplum joined her, and they fell into one of their stage figures. The serious beauty strove to excel, and indeed was the greater artist of the two, but there was a wild grace about her companion which pleased me most.

"Can you dance, little count?" she cried.

"I am too tired," I answered.

"Nay, then, another day, for it is pleasant to look forward to frolic."

The man with the odd face now advanced towards me. He fell into the most ridiculous attitudes. I thought that he would never have finished his multiplied reverences. Every time he bowed he saluted me with a new form of visage. It was the most ludicrous medley of pomposity, and awkwardness, and humour. I thought that I had never seen such a droll person, and was myself a little impregnated with his oddity. I also made him a bow with assumed dignity, and then he became more subdued.

"Sir," said he, placing his huge hand upon his breast, and bowing nearly to the ground, "I assure you, sir, indeed, sir, the greatest honour, sir, your company, sir, a very great honour indeed."

"I am equally sensible of the honour," I replied, "and think myself most fortunate to have found so many and such agreeable friends."

"The greatest honour, sir, the greatest honour, indeed, sir, very sensible, sir, always sensible, sir."

He stopped, and I again returned his reverence, but this time without speaking.

"The greatest liberty, sir, the greatest liberty indeed, sir, never take liberties, sir, but fear you will consider it a very great liberty, a very great liberty indeed, sir."

"Indeed, I shall esteem myself very fortunate to comply with any wish that you can express."

"O! sir, you are too kind, sir, too kind, indeed, sir, always are kind, have no doubt, no doubt at all, sir, but our meal, sir, our humble meal, very humble indeed, we venture to request the honour, very great honour indeed, sir, your company, sir," and he pronounced the last and often-repeated monosyllable with a musical shake, and renewed reverence.

"Indeed I fear that I have already too much, and too long intruded."

"O come, pray come!" and each girl seized an arm and led me to their banquet.

I sat down between my two friends. The fire-lighter, who was the manager, and indeed proprietor of the whole concern, now received me with great courtesy. When they were all seated, they called several times, "Frederick, Frederick," and then the young man who was on the ground jumped up, and seated himself. He was not ill-looking, but I did not like the expression of his face. His countenance and his manner seemed to me vulgar. I took rather a prejudice against him. Nor indeed did my appearance seem much to please him, for he stared at me not very courteously, and when the manager mentioned that I was a young gentleman travelling, who had done them the honour to join their repast, he said nothing.

The repast was not very humble. There was plenty to eat. While the manager helped the soup, they sat very quiet and demure; perhaps my presence slightly restrained them. Even the laughing girl was, for a moment, calm. I had a keen appetite, and though I at first, from shame, restrained it, I played my part well. The droll carved a great joint of boiled meat. I thought I should have died; he seldom spoke, but his look made us all full of merriment. Even the young man sometimes smiled.

"We prefer living in this way to sojourning in dirty inns," said the manager, with an air of dignity.

"You are quite right," I replied. "I desire nothing better than to live always so."

"Inns are indeed wretched things," said the old mother. "How extravagantly they charge for what costs them in a manner nothing!"

Wine was now produced. The manager filled a cup, and handed it to me. I was just going to observe, that I drank only water, when Sugarplum, first touching it with her lips, placed it in my hand, and pledging them all, I drank it off.

"You are eating rough fare," said the old mother, "but you are welcome."

"I never enjoyed any thing so much in my life," I truly replied. "How I envy you all the happy life you lead!"

"Before you style it happy you should have experienced it," remarked Frederick.

"What you say is in part true. But if a person have imagination, experience appears to me of little use, since both are means by which we can equally arrive at knowledge."

"I know nothing about imagination," said the young man, "but what I know, I owe to experience. It may not have taught me as much as imagination has taught you."

"Experience is every thing," said the old mother, shaking her head.

"It sometimes costs dear," said the manager.

"Terrible, terrible," observed the droll with a most sad and solemn shake of the head, and lifting up his hands. I burst into a fit of laughter, and poured down another draught of wine.

Conversation now became more brisk, and I took more than my share of it, but I being new, they all wished me to talk. I got very much excited by my elocution as much as by the wine. I discussed upon acting, which I pronounced to be one of the first and finest of arts. I treated this subject indeed very deeply, and in a spirit of æsthetic criticism, with which they seemed unacquainted, and a little surprised.

"Should we place it," I asked, "before painting?"

"Before scene-painting, certainly," said the droll, in a hoarse thick voice, "for it naturally takes its place there."

"I never knew but one painter," said the old mother, "and therefore cannot give an opinion." The manager was quite silent.

"All employments are equally disgusting," said the young man.

"On further reflection," I continued, "it appears to me that if we examine"—but here the white girl pinched me so severely under the table, that I could not contain myself, and was obliged to call out. All stared, and she looked quite demure, as if nothing had happened.

After this all was merriment, fun, and frolic. The girls pelted the droll with plums, and he unfurled an umbrella to protect himself. I assisted them in the attack. The young man lighted his pipe and walked off. The old mother in vain proclaimed silence. I had taken too much wine, and for the first time in my life. All of a sudden I felt the trees dancing and whirling round. I took another bumper to set myself right. In a few minutes I fell down quite flat, and remember nothing more.

XVI.

"I must get out. I am so hot."

"You shall not," said Thalia.

"I must, I must. I am so very hot."

"Will you desert me?" exclaimed Melpomene.

"O! how hot I am. Pray let me out."

"No one can get out at night," said the dark girl, earnestly, and in a significant voice, which intimated to her companion to take up the parable.

"No, indeed," said her friend.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because it is a rule. The manager will not permit it."

"Confound the manager! What is he to me? I will get out."

"O! what a regular little count," said Thalia.

"Let me out, let me out. I never was so hot in my life."

"Hush! hush! hush! or you will wake them."

"If you do not let me out, I will scream."

The manager and the droll were in the fore part of the wagon affecting to drive, but they were both asleep. The old mother was snoring behind them. They had put me in the back part of the wagon with my two friends.

"Let him out, Theodora," for the other was afraid of a contention.

"Never," said Theodora, and she embraced me with increased energy. My legs were in the other girl's lap. I began to kick and struggle.

"O! you naughty little count," said one.

"Is this the return for all our love!" exclaimed the other.

"I will get out, and there is an end of it. I must have some air. I must stretch my legs. Let me out at once, or I will wake them all."

"Let him out, Theodora."

"He is certainly the wickedest little count,—but promise you will come back in five minutes."

"Any thing, I will promise any thing; only let me out."

They unbolted the back of the wagon, the fresh air came in. They shivered, but I felt it delightful.

"Farewell, dearest," exclaimed Melpomene, "one parting embrace. How heavily will the moments roll until we again meet!"

"Adieu, count," said Thalia, "and remember you are to come back in five minutes."

I jumped into the road. It was a clear, sharp night, the stars shining very brightly. The young man was walking behind, wrapped up in a great-coat, and smoking his pipe. He came up and assisted me in shutting the door with more courtesy than he had hitherto shown, and asked me if I would try a cigar.

I declined this offer, and for some little way we walked on in silence. I felt unwell, my head ached, my mouth was parched. I was conscious that I had exposed myself. I had commenced the morning by vowing that I would only drink water, and, for the first time in my life, I had got tipsy with wine. I had committed many other follies, and altogether felt much less like a hero. I recalled all my petty vanity and childish weaknesses with remorse. Imagination was certainly not such a sure guide as experience. Was it possible that one who had already got into such scrapes, could really achieve his great purpose? My conduct and my situation were assuredly neither of them Roman.

As I walked on, the fresh air did its kind office. My head was revived by my improved circulation, my companion furnished me with an excellent draught of water. Hope did not quite desert my invigorated frame. I began to turn in my mind how I might yet prosper.

"I feel better," I said to my companion, with a feeling of gratitude.

"Ay! ay! that wagon is enough to make any one ill, at least any one accustomed to a more decent conveyance. I never enter it. To say nothing of their wine, which is indeed intolerable to those who may have tasted a fair glass in the course of this sad life."

"You find life, then, sad?" I inquired, with a mixed feeling of curiosity and sympathy.

"He who knows life will hardly style it joyous."

"Ah! ah!" I thought to myself, "here is some chance of philosophical conversation. Perhaps I have found another stranger, who can assist me in self-knowledge." I began to think that I was exceedingly wrong in entertaining a prejudice against this young man, and in a few minutes I had settled that his sullen conduct was the mark of a very superior mind, and that he himself must be a very interesting personage.

"I have found life very gloomy myself," I rejoined; "but I think it arises from our faulty education. We are taught words and not ideas."

"There is something in that," said the young man, thoughtfully.

"After all, perhaps, the best is to be patient, and cherish hope."

"Doubtless," said the young man.

"And I think it equally true, that we should read more and ponder less."

"O! curse reading," said my friend, "I never could read."

"You have, like myself, then, indulged in your own thoughts?"

"Always," he affirmed.

"Ah! indeed, my dear friend, there is, after all, nothing like it. Let them say what they will, but give me the glorious pleasure of my private world, and all the jarring horror of a public one I leave

without regret to those more fitted to struggle with them."

"I believe that most public men are scoundrels," said the young man.

"It is their education," I rejoined, although I did not clearly detect the connexion of his remark. "What can we expect?"

"No, sir, it is corruption," he replied, in a firm tone.

"Pray," said I, leading back the conversation to a point which I more fully comprehended, "is it your opinion that nature is stronger than education?"

"Why," said my friend, taking a good many whiffs of his pipe, "there is a great deal to be said on both sides."

"One of the wisest and most extraordinary men I ever knew, however, was of a decided opinion that nature would ultimately prevail."

"Who might he be?" asked my companion.

"Why, really, his name—but it is a most extraordinary adventure, and to this hour I cannot help half believing that he was a supernatural being—but the truth is, I do not know his name, for I met him casually, and under very peculiar circumstances, and though we conversed much and of very high matters, he did not, unfortunately, favour me with his name."

"That certainly looks odd," said Mr. Frederick, "for when a man sheers off giving his name, I, for one, never think him better than he should be."

"Had he not spoken of the blessed Magdalen in a way which can scarcely reconcile with his other sentiments, I should certainly have considered him a messenger from that holy personage, for I have the best reason for believing that I am under her especial protection."

"If he abused her, that could scarcely be," remarked Frederick.

"No. Certainly I think he must have been only a man. For he presented me with a gift before his departure—"

"That was handsome."

"And I can hardly believe that he was really deputed—though I really do not know. Every thing seems mysterious, although I believe, after all, there is little mystery, but, on the contrary, much ignorance."

"No doubt: though they are opening schools now in every parish. And how much did he give you?" continued Frederick.

"How much! I do not understand you."

"I mean what did he give you?"

"A most delightful book, to me particularly interesting."

"A book?"

"A book which I shall no doubt find of great use in my travels."

"I have myself some thoughts of travelling," said Frederick, "for I am sick of this life, which is ill-suited to my former habits, but one gets into scrapes without thinking of it."

"One does in a most surprising manner." I never made an observation in a tone of greater sincerity.

"You have led a very different sort of life, then?" I asked—"To tell you the truth, I thought so. You could not disguise from me that you were superior to your appearance. I suppose, like myself, you are incog.?"

"That is the exact truth."

"Good heavens! how lucky it is that we have met. Do not you think that we could contrive to travel together? What are your plans?"

"Why, to say truth, I care little where I go. It is necessary that I should travel about for some time, and see the world, until my father, the count, is reconciled."

"You have quarrelled with your father?"

"Do not speak of it. It is a sad affair. But I hope that it will end well. Time will show."

"Time indeed develops every thing."

"I hope every thing from my mother the countess's influence—but I cannot bear speaking about it. I am supported now by my sister Lady Caroline, out of her own allowance too, poor creature. There is nothing like those sisters."—And he raised his hand to his face, and would have brushed away the tear that nearly started from his manly eye.

I was quite affected. I respected his griefs, and would not press him for details. I exhorted him to take courage.

"Ay! ay! it is very easy talking, but when a man accustomed to the society and enjoyments I have been, finds himself wandering about the world in this manner—it is very easy to talk—but, curse it—do not let us speak of it. And now where do you intend to go?"

"I am thinking of Venice."

"Venice! just the place I should long to see. But that requires funds. You are very welcome to share mine as far as they will last—but have you any thing yourself?"

"I have one hundred rix-dollars." I replied, "not too much, certainly, but I quitted home without notice; you understand?"

"O, yes! I have done these things myself. I was just such a fellow as you are at your age. A hundred rix-dollars?—not too much, to be sure, but with what I have got, it will do. I scorn to leave a companion in distress like you. Let me be shivered, if I would not share the last farthing with the fellow I liked."

"You shall never repent, sir, your kindness to me; of that feel assured. The time may come, when I may be enabled to yield you assistance, nor shall it be wanting."

We now began seriously to consult over our plans. He recommended an immediate departure even that night, or else, as he justly remarked, I should get perhaps entangled with these girls. I objected to quitting so unceremoniously, and without thanking my kind friends for their hospitality, and making some little present to the worthy manager, but he said that that worthy manager already owed him a year's salary, and therefore I need not be anxious on his account. Hamburg, according to him, was the port to which we must work our way, and indeed our departure must not be postponed an hour, for, luckily for us, the next turning was the route to Hamburg. I was delighted to find for a friend such a complete man of the world, and doubted not, under his auspices, most prosperously to achieve my great object.

XVII.

"HERE is your knapsack. I woke the girls getting it. They thought it was you, and would have given me more kind words and kisses than I care for. Theodora laughed heartily when she

found out her mistake, but Emilia was in a great rage."

"Good-natured lasses! I think I must give them a parting embrace."

"Pooh! pooh! that will spoil all. Think of Venice. I cannot get at my portmanteau. Never mind, it matters little. I always carry my money about me. We must make some sacrifices, and we shall get on the better for it, for I can now carry provisions; and yet my riband of the order of the Fox is there—pah! I will not think of it. See! here runs the Hamburg road. Cheerily, boy, and good-bye to the old wagon."

He hurried me along. I had no time to speak.

We pushed on with great spirit. The road again entered the forest, on the skirts of which I had been the whole day journeying.

"I know this country well," said Frederick, "for in old days I have often hunted here with my father's hounds. I can make many a short cut that will save us much. Come along down this glade. We are making fine way."

We continued in this forest several hours, walking with great speed. I was full of hope, and confidence, and self-congratulation, that I had found such a friend. He took the whole management upon himself, always decided upon our course, never lost his readiness. I had no care. The brisk exercise prevented me from feeling wearied. We never stopped.

The morning broke and gave me fresh courage. The sun rose. It was agreeable to think that I was still nearer Venice. We came to a pleasant piece of turf, fresh from the course of a sparkling rivulet.

"We have gone as good as thirty miles," said Frederick. "Had we kept the common road, we should have got through barely half."

"Have we, indeed!" I said. "This is indeed progress; but there is nothing like willing hearts. May we get on as well each day."

"Here I propose to rest a while," said my companion, "a few hours repose will bring us quite round. You must not forget that you rather debauched yesterday."

Now that I had stopped, I indeed felt wearied and exceedingly sleepy. My companion kindly plucked some fern, and made me an excellent bed under a branching tree.

"This is indeed a life of adventure," I said. "How very kind you are. Such a bed in such a scene would alone repay me for all our fatigue."

He produced some bread and a bottle, and gathered some cresses; but I felt no desire to eat or drink, and before he had finished his meal, I had sunk into a deep slumber.

I must have slept many hours, for when I woke it was much past noon. I woke wonderfully refreshed. I looked round for Frederick, but, to my surprise, he was not there. I jumped up. I called his name. No answer. I became alarmed. I ran about the vicinity of our encampment shouting "Frederick!" There was still no answer. Suddenly I observed that my knapsack also was gone. A terrible feeling of doubt, or rather dismay, came over me. I sank down and buried my face in my hands, and it was some minutes before I could even think.

"Can it be! It is impossible! Infamous knave, or rather miserable ass! Have I been deceived, entrapped, plundered! O, Contarini, Contarini,

you are at length punished for all your foolery! Frederick, Frederick! he cannot surely have left me! He is joking, he is trying to frighten me. I will not believe that I have been deceived. I will not appear frightened. I will not shout the least. Ah! I think I see him behind that tree." I jumped up again and ran to the tree, but there was no Frederick. I ran about in turn shouting his name, execrating my idiotism, confiding in his good faith, proclaiming him a knave. An hour, a heavy but agitating hour, rolled away before I was convinced of the triumph of experience over imagination.

I was hungry, I was destitute, I was in a wild and unknown solitude, I might be starved, I might be murdered, I might die. I could think of nothing but horrible events. I felt for the first time in my life like a victim. I could not bear to recall my old feelings. They were at once maddening and mortifying. I felt myself, at the same time, the most miserable and the most contemptible of beings. I entirely lost all my energy. I believed that all men were villains. I sank upon the ground and gave myself up to despair. In a word, I was fairly frightened.

I heard a rustling in a neighbouring copse. I darted up. I thought it was Frederick. It was not Frederick, but it was a human being. An ancient woodman came forth from a grove of oaks, a comely and venerable man. His white hair, his fresh hale face, his still keen eye, and the placid, benignant expression of his countenance, gave me hope. I saluted him, I told him my story. My appearance, my streaming eyes, my visible emotion, were not lost upon him. Sharply he scrutinized me, many were the questions he asked, but he finally credited my tale. I learned from him, that during the night I had advanced far into the interior of the forest, that he himself lived in a cottage on its skirts some miles off, that he was about to return from his daily labour, and that I should accompany him. As for the road to Hamburg, that was a complete invention. I also collected, that home as well as the college were very distant.

We proceeded together along a turf road, with his donkey laden with the day's spoils. I entirely regained my cheerfulness, and was very much interested by my new companion. Never had I seen any one so kind, and calm, and so truly venerable. We talked a great deal about trees. He appeared to be entirely master of his calling. I began to long to be a woodman, to pass a quiet, and contemplative, and virtuous life, amid the deep silence and beautiful scenery of forests—exercising all the primitive virtues which became so unostentatious a career.

His dog darted on before us with joyful speed. We had arrived at his cottage. It was ancient, and neat, and well ordered as himself. His wife, attentive to the welcome bark, was ready at the gate. She saluted me, and her husband, shortly telling my tale, spoke of me in kind terms. Never had I been treated with greater kindness, never was I more grateful for it. The twilight was dying away, the door was locked and the lamp lighted, a blazing log thrown upon the fire, and the round table covered with a plenteous and pleasant meal. I felt quite happy, and indeed to be happy yourself, you must live among the happy.

The good woman did not join us in our meal.

She sat by the fireside, under the lamp, watching us with a fond smile. Her appearance delighted me, and seemed like a picture.

"Now does not the young gentleman remind you of Peter?" said the dame. "For that is just where he used to sit, God bless him. I wonder when we shall hear of him again!"

"She speaks of our son, young master," said my host, turning to me in explanation.

"A boy as has been seldom seen among people of our condition, sir, I can well say," continued the old woman, speaking with great animation. "O! why should he have ever left home! Young people are ever full of fancies, but will they ever find friends in the world they think so much of, like the father who gives them bread, and the mother who gives them milk?"

"My father brought me up at home, and I have ever lived at home," observed Peter. "I have ever lived in this old forest. Many is the tree that is my forest brother, and that is sixty-eight years come Martinmas. I saw my father happy and wished no more. Nor had I ever a heavy hour till Peter began to take these fancies in his head, and that indeed was from a boy this high, for he was ever full of them, and never would do any thing with the axe. I am sure I do not know how they got there. The day will come he will wish he had never left home, and perhaps we may yet see him."

"Too late, too late," said the old woman; "he might have been the prop of our old age. Many is the girl that would have given her eyes for Peter. Our grandchildren might have been running this moment about the room. God bless them, whom we shall never bless. And the old man now must work for the old woman as if it were his wedding year."

"Pooh! pooh! as for that, say nothing," rejoined Peter; "for I praise God my arms and legs are hearty yet. And indeed were they not, we cannot say that our poor boy has ever forgotten us."

"Indeed it is true. He is our own son. But where does the money come from? that is the question. I am sure I think what I dare not say, and pray God to forgive me. How can a poor woodman's son, who never works, gain wherewith to support himself, much more to give away? I fear that if all had their rights, we should have better means to succour Peter, than Peter us."

"Nay, nay, say not that, Mary," said her husband, reprovingly, "for it is in a manner tempting the devil."

"The devil perhaps sent the thought, but it often comes," answered the old woman, firmly.

"And where is your son, sir?" I asked.

"God, who knows all, can tell, not I," said the old man; "but wherever he be, I pray God to bless him."

"Has he left you long, sir?"

"Fifteen years last September; but he ran away once before, when he was barely your height, but that was not for long."

"Indeed," I said, reddening.

"I believe he is a good lad," said the father, "and will never believe harm against him till I hear it. He was a kind boy, though strong-tempered, and even now every year he sends us something, and sometimes writes a line, but never tells

us where he is, only that he is very happy, if we are. But for my part, I rather thiak he is in foreign parts."

"That is certain," interrupted Dame Mary. "I dare say he has got among the French."

"He was ever a wrong headed, qucer chap," continued the father, in an under-tone, to me: "sometimes he wanted to be a soldier, then a painter, then he was all for travelling about, and I used to say, 'Peter, my boy, do you know what you are?' And when I sent him into the woods to work, when he came home at night, I found he had been painting the trees!"

The conversation had taken a turn which induced meditation. I was silent, and thoughtful; the dame busied herself with work, the old man resumed his unfinished meal. Suddenly there was a loud shouting at the garden gate. All stared and started. The dog jumped up, and barked. The shouting was repeated, and was evidently addressed to the inmates of the cottage. The old woodman seized his rifle, and opened the casement.

"Who calls," he demanded, "and what want you?"

"Dwellesh Peter Winter here?" was inquired.

"He speaks to you," was the reply.

"Open the door, then," said the shouter.

"Tell me first who you are."

"My name has been already mentioned," answered the shouter, with a laugh.

"What mean you?"

"Why, that my name is Peter Winter."

The old woman screamed, a strange feeling also was my lot, the woodman dropped the loaded rifle. I prevented it from going off—neither of them could move. At last I opened the door, and the stranger of the abbey entered.

XVIII.

THERE was some embracing, much blessing, the old woman never ceased crying, and the eyes of the father were full of tears. The son was calm, and unperturbable, and smiling.

"Are you indeed Peter?" exclaimed the old woman, sobbing with joy.

"I never heard so from any one but you," answered the son.

"And am I blessed with a sight of you before my death?" continued the mother.

"Death! why you look ten years younger than when I last saw you!"

"O! dear, no, Peter. And why did not you tell us where you were?" she continued.

"Because I never knew."

"O! my dear, dear son, how tall you have grown! and pray how have you managed to live? honestly, I am sure: your face says so."

"As for that, it does not become me to praise myself, but you see I have saved my neck."

"And what would you like to eat?"

"Any thing."

The father could not speak for silent joy. I had retired to the remotest corner of the room.

"The old cottage, pretty as ever. I have got a drawing of it in my portfolio—always kept it, and your portrait too, mother, and my father cutting down Schinkel's oak, do you remember?"

"Do I remember! Why what a memory the child has got, and only think of its keeping its poor old mother's head in its pocketbook, and the

picture of the cottage, and father cutting down Schinkel's oak. Do I remember!—Why, I remember—"

"Come, my dear old lady, give me something to eat, and, father, your hand again. You flourish like one of your foster brothers. A shower of blessings on you both."

"Ah! what do we want more than to see our dear Peter!" said the old woman, bustling about the supper. "And as for working, I warrant you, you shall be plagued no more about working; shall be as idle as it pleases, that's for it. For old Peter was only saying this evening, that he could do more work now, and more easily, than when he first married—Ay! he will make old bones, I warrant him."

"I said, Mary—"

"Pooh! pooh! never mind what you said, but get the brandy bottle, and give our dear Peter a sup. He shall be plagued no more about working, and that's for it. But Lord bless us, where is the young master all the time, for I want him to help me get the things."

I advanced forward and caught the eye of the son.—"What," he exclaimed, "my little embryo poet—and how came you here, in the name of the holy Magdalen?"

"It is a long story," I said.

"O! then, pray, do not tell it," he replied.

Supper soon appeared. He ate heartily, talking between each mouthful, and full of jests. The father could not speak, but the mother was never silent. He asked many questions about old acquaintances, and I fancied he asked them with little real interest, and only to gratify his mother, who, at each query, burst into fresh admiration of his memory, and his kind-heartedness. At length, after much talk, he said, "Come, old people, to bed, to bed; these hours are not for gray hairs. We shall have you all knocked up to-morrow, instead of fresh and joyful."

"I am sure I cannot sleep," said the dame. "I am in such a taking."

"Pooh! you must sleep, mother—good-night to you, good-night," and kissing her, he pushed her into the next room—"Good-night, dear father," he added, in a soft and serious tone, as he pressed the honest woodman's hand.

"And now, little man, you may tell me your story, and we will try to talk each other to sleep." So saying, he flung a fresh log on the fire, and stretched his legs in his father's ancient seat.

XIX.

It was settled that I should remain at the cottage for a few days, and then that, accompanying Winter, I should repair to the capital. Hither he was bound—and for myself, both from his advice, and his own impulse, I had resolved to return home.

On the next morning the woodman went not to his usual labour, but remained with his son. They strolled out together, but in a short time returned. The mother bustled about preparing a good dinner. For her, this was full employment, but time hung heavy on the old man. At last he took his axe, and fairly set at work at an old tree near his dwelling, which he had long condemned, and never found time to execute. His son and he had few ideas to exchange, and he enjoyed his happiness more while

he was employed. Winter proposed to me a ramble, and I joined him.

He was very gay, but would not talk about himself, which I wished. I longed to know what he exactly was, but deemed a direct inquiry indelicate. He delighted to find out places he had known when he was young, and laughed at me very much about my adventures.

"You see what it is to impart knowledge to youth like you. In eight-and-forty hours all these valuable secrets are given to Master Frederick, who will perhaps now turn out a great poet."

I bore his rallying as good-humouredly as he could wish, and tried to lead our conversation to subjects which interested me. "Ask me no more questions," he said, "about yourself—I have told you every thing. All that I can recommend you now is to practise self-forgetfulness."

We rested ourselves on a bank, and talked about foreign countries, of which, though he himself never figured in his tales, he spoke without reserve. My keen attention proved with what curiosity and delight I caught each word. Whenever he paused, I led him by a question to fresh narrative. I could not withstand expressing how I was charmed by such conversation. "All that I tell you," he said, "and much more, may be found in books. Those that cannot themselves observe, can at least acquire the observation of others. These are indeed shadows, but by watching these shadows we learn that there are substances. Little man, you should read more. At your time of life, you can do nothing better than read good books of travellers."

"But is it not better myself to travel?"

"Have I not told you that your wandering days have not yet come? Do you wish to meet another Mr. Frederick? You are much too young. Travel is the great source of true wisdom, but to travel with profit, you must have such a thing as previous knowledge. Do you comprehend?"

"Ah! sir! I fear me much that I am doomed to be unhappy."

"Pooh! pooh! Clear your head of all such nonsense. There is no such thing as unhappiness."

"No such thing as unhappiness, sir? How may this be, for all men believe—"

"All men believe many things which are not true; but remember what I say, and when you have lived as long as I have, you will perhaps discover that it is not a paradox. In the mean time it is nonsense talking about it, and I have got an enormous appetite. A fine dinner to-day for us, I warrant you."

So we returned home at a brisk pace. The old woman looked out at the door when she heard our steps, and nodding to her son with a smile of fondness, "You must walk in the garden a while, Peter," she said, "for I am busy getting the room ready. Now, I dare say, you are thinking of the dinner, but you cannot tell me what there is for Peter, that you cannot. But I'll tell you, for if you fret yourself with guessing, mayhap it will hurt your relish. Do you remember crying once for a pig, Peter, and father saying a woodman's boy must not expect to live like the forest farmer's son? Well, he may say what he likes, Peter, there is a pig."

The father joined us cleanly shaved, and in his Sunday raiment. I never saw any one look so truly respectable as did this worthy old peasant in his long blue coat with large silver buttons, deep

waistcoat covered with huge pink flowers and small green leaves, blue stockings, and massy buckles.

The three days at the woodman's cottage flew away most pleasantly. I was grieved when they were gone, and in spite of my natural courage, which was confirmed by meditation, and heightened by my constantly trying it in ideal conjectures, I thought of my appearance at home with a little anxiety.

We were to perform our journey on foot. The morning of the third day was to light us into the city. All was prepared. I parted with my kind friends with many good wishes, hearty shakes of the hand, and frequent promises of another visit. Peter was coming to them again very shortly. They hoped I might again be his companion. The father walked on with us some little way. The mother stood in the cottage door till we were out of sight, smiling through her tears, and waving her hand with many blessings.

"I must take care of my knapsack," said the younger Winter; "evil habits are catching."

"Nevertheless, I hope you will sometimes let me carry it. At any rate, give me your portfolio."

"No, no, you are not to be trusted, and so come on."

XX.

"But, my dear friend, you have lodged, you have fed, you have befriended, you have supported me. If my father were to know that we parted thus, he would never forgive me. Pray, pray, tell me."

"Prithee, no more. You have told me your name, which is against my rules; you know mine, no one of my fellow-travellers ever did before; and yet you are not contented. You grow unreasonable. Did I not say that if our acquaintance were worth maintaining, we should meet again. Well! I say the same thing now—and so good-bye."

"Dear sir, pray, pray—"

"This is my direction—your course lies over that bridge—look sharp about you, and do not enter into your private world, for the odds are, you may find your friend Count Frederick picking a pocket. Good morning, little man."

We parted. I crossed the bridge. The stir of man seemed strange after the silence of the woods. I did not feel quite at my ease; my heart a little misgave me. I soon reached the street in which my father resided. I thought of the woodman's cottage, and the careless days I had spent under that simple roof. I wished myself once more by Schinkel's oak, talking of Arabia the Blessed with that strange man with whom my acquaintance, although so recent, seemed now only a dream. Did he really exist—were they all real beings with whom I seemed lately to have consorted? Or had I indeed been all this time plunged in one of my incurable reveries! I thought of the laughing girl, and her dark sentimental friend. I felt for the chain which I always wore round my neck. It was gone. No doubt, then, it must all be true.

I had reached the gate. I uttered an involuntary sigh. I took up the knocker. It was for a moment suspended. I thought of the Contarinis, and my feeble knock hurried into a sharp rap. . . entered. "Tis a nervous business," thought I, "there is no concealing it. 'Tis flat rebellion—'tis desertion—'tis an outrage of all parental orders—'tis a viola-

tion of the law of nature and of nations." I sighed again. "Yet these are all bug-bears, for what can they do to me? Is there any punishment that they can inflict that I care for? Certainly not, and 'tis likely it will all blow over. Yet the explanations, and the vile excuses, and the petty examinations, there is something pitiful, and contemptible, and undignified in the whole process. What is it that so annoys me? 'Tis not fear. I think it is the disgust of being accountable to any human being."

I went up stairs. My father, I felt sure, was away. I found the baroness alone. She started when I entered, and looked sullen. Her countenance, she flattered herself, was a happy mixture of the anxiety which became both a spouse and a mother, pity for my father, pity for me, and decided indignation at my very improper conduct.

"How do you do, madam?" I inquired, in as quiet a tone as I could command. "My father is, I suppose, at his office."

"I am sure I cannot tell," she replied, speaking in a very subdued, serious tone, as if there were death in the house. "I believe he *has* gone out to-day. He has been very agitated indeed, and I think is extremely unwell. We have all been extremely agitated and alarmed. I have kept myself as quiet as I can, but can bear no noise whatever. The baron has received a fine letter from your tutor," she continued, in a brisker and rather malignant tone, "but your father will speak to you. I know nothing about these things, I wished to have said something to soothe him, but I know I never interfere for any good."

"Well," I observed, with a dogged, desperate tone, speaking through my teeth, "well! all I can say is, that if my father has been prejudiced against me by a parcel of infamous falsehoods, as it appears by your account. I know how to protect myself. I see how the ground lies; I see that I have already been judged, and am now to be punished without a trial. But I will not submit any longer to such persecution. Kindness in this house I never expect, but justice is a right enjoyed by a common woodman, and denied only to me."

"Dear me, Contarini, how violent you are! I never said your father was even angry. I only said I thought he was a little unwell—a little bilious, I think. My dear Contarini, you are always so very violent. I am sure I said I was confident you would never have left college without a very good cause indeed. I have no doubt you will explain every thing in the most satisfactory manner possible. I do not know what you mean always by talking of not expecting kindness in this house. I am sure I never interfered with you. I make it a rule always, when your interest is in the least concerned, never to give an opinion. I am sure I wish you were quite happy and less violent. As for judging and punishing without a trial, you know your father never punishes any one, nor has he decided any thing, for all he knows is from the letter of your tutor, and that is merely a line, merely saying you had quitted the college without leave, and, as they supposed, had gone home. They said, too, that they were the more surprised, as your general behaviour was quite unexceptionable. Not at all against you the letter was, not at all, I assure you. I pointed out to your father more than once, that the letter was, if any thing, rather in your favour, because I had no doubt that you would explain the step in the most satisfactory manner; and they

said, you see, that your conduct, otherwise, was perfectly unexceptionable."

"Well, my dear madam, I am very sorry it I have offended you. How are my brothers?"

"I am very willing to forget it. You may say and think what you please, Contarini, as long as you are not violent. The children are pretty well. Ernest quite ready to go to college, and now there is no one to take care of him. I always thought of your being there with quite a feeling of satisfaction, for I was sure that you would not refuse to do what you could for him among the boys. As it is, I have no doubt he will be killed the first half year, or, at least, have a limb broken, for, poor dear boy, he is so delicate, he cannot fight."

"Well, my dear madam, if I be not there, I can recommend him to some one who will take care of him. Make yourself quite easy. A little rough life will do him no harm, and I will answer he is not killed, and even have not a limb broken. Now, what do you recommend me to do about my father? Shall I walk down to him?"

"I certainly think not. You know that he will certainly be at home this afternoon, though, to be sure, he will be engaged, but to-morrow, or the day after, I have no doubt he will find half an hour to speak to you. You know he is so very busy."

I immediately resolved to walk down to him. I had no idea of having a scene impending over me in this manner for days. My father at this time filled the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He had been appointed to this post recently, and I had never yet visited him at his new office. I repaired to it immediately. It was at some distance from his house. His horses were waiting at the door, therefore I was sure that he was to be found. When I entered, I found myself in a hall. A porter was loitering in a large chair. I asked him for Baron Fleming. He did not deign to answer me, but pointed to a mahogany door. I entered, and found myself in a large well-furnished room, fitted up with desks. At the end, two young men were fencing. Another, seated at a round table covered with papers, was copying music, and occasionally trying a note on his guitar. A fourth was throwing himself into attitudes before a pier-glass; and the fifth, who was the only one whose employment was in any degree of a political nature, was seated at his desk, reading the newspaper.

No one noticed my entrance. I looked in vain for my father, and with some astonishment at those I found in his place. Then I inquired for Baron Fleming, and, for the second time in one day, I did not receive any answer. I repeated my query in a more audible tone, and the young gentleman who was reading the newspaper, without taking his eyes off the columns, demanded, in a curt voice, what I wanted with him.

"What is that to you?" I ingenuously asked.

This unusual reply excited attention. They all looked at me, and when they had looked at me, they looked at each other, and smiled. My appearance indeed, of which, till I had seen myself in the pier-glass, I was not sensible, was indeed well calculated to excite a smile, and to attract a stare. My clothes were not unattracted, and were very much soiled, being covered with shreds of moss and blades of grass, and stuck over with thistle-tops; my boots had not been cleaned for a week, my shirt frill, which fell over my shoulders, was torn and dirtied, my dishevelled and unbrushed locks reached my

neck, and could scarcely be said to be covered by the small forester's cap, which I always wore at school, and in which I had decamped. Animate the countenance of this strange figure with that glow of health which can only be obtained by the pedestrian, and which seemed to shock the nerves of this company of dapper youths.

"If you want Baron Fleming, then you must go up stairs," said the student of the newspaper in a peevish voice.

As I shut the door, I heard the burst of laughter, I mounted up the great staircase and came into an antechamber.

"What do you want, sir, what do you want, sir? You must not come here," said a couple of pompous messengers, nearly pushing me out.

"I shall not go away," I replied; "I want Baron Fleming."

"Engaged, young gentleman, engaged—can't see any one—impossible."

"I shall wait, then."

"No use waiting, young gentleman; better go."

"It is not such an easy matter, I perceive, to see one's father," I thought to myself.

I did not know which was his room, otherwise I would have gone in: but turning round, I detected written on a door, "Under Secretary's Office," and I ran to it.

"Stop, sir, stop," said the messengers.

But I had hold of the lock. They pulled me, I kicked the door, and out came the private secretary of the under secretary.

"What is all this, what is all this?" asked the private secretary. He was a fit companion for the young gentlemen I had left down stairs.

"I want Baron Fleming," I replied, "and these men will not tell me where he is, and therefore I come to the under secretary to ask." So saying, I most indignantly freed my arm from the capture of one of the messengers, and kicked the shin of the other.

"May I ask who you are?" demanded the private secretary.

"I am Baron Contarini Fleming," I replied.

"Pray sit down," said the private secretary, "I will be with you in a moment."

The two messengers darted back, and continued bowing without turning their backs, until they unexpectedly reached the end of the room.

The private secretary returned with the under secretary. The under secretary told me that my father was engaged with the chancellor, and that his door was locked, but that the moment the door was unlocked, and the chancellor departed, he would take care that he was informed of my arrival. In the mean time, as he himself had a deputation to receive in his room, who were to come to-day to complain in form of what they had for months been complaining informally, he begged that I would have the kindness to accompany his private secretary to the room down stairs.

The room down stairs I again entered. The private secretary introduced me. All looked very confused, and the young gentleman who was still reading the newspaper immediately handed it to me. I had never read a newspaper in my life, but I accepted his offer to show my importance. As I did not understand politics, I turned the back of the sheet, where there is generally an article on the fine arts, or a review of a new book. My wandering eye fixed upon a memoir of the Che-

valier de Winter. I was equally agitated and astonished. My eye quivered over the page. I saw in an instant enough to convince me it was my friend, and that my friend was styled "a great ornament to the country," and the Northmen were congratulated on at length producing an artist whom the Italians themselves acknowledged unrivalled among the living. I learned how he was the son of a peasant; how his genius for painting early developed itself; how he had led four years an eccentric and wandering life; how he had returned to Rome, and at once produced a master-piece: how he had gained prizes in academies; how he was esteemed and honoured by foreign princes; how his own illustrious monarch, ever alive to the patronage of the fine arts, had honoured him with two commissions; how he had returned to his native country with these magnificent pictures, which were daily exhibiting at the Royal Academy of Arts; how the king had conferred on him the collar of a high order and offered him a great pension; how he had refused the pension, and requested only that a competency might be settled on his parents.

I was bewildered, I fell into a deep revery, the paper dropped from my hand, the door opened, and the private secretary summoned me to the presence of my father.

XXI.

It is time you should know something of my father. You must remember that he was little more than a score of years my senior. Imagine then a man about four-and-thirty years of age, tall and thin, slightly bald, handsome and elegant, pensive and pale. His clear broad brow, his aquiline, but delicately-chiselled nose, his gray, deep-set, and penetrating eye, and his compressed lips, altogether formed a countenance which enchanted women, and awed men.

His character is more difficult to delineate. It was perhaps inscrutable. I will attempt to sketch it, as it might then have appeared to those who considered themselves qualified to speculate upon human nature.

His talents were of a high order, and their exercise alone had occasioned his rise in a country in which he had no interest and no connexions. He had succeeded in every thing he had undertaken. As an orator, as a negotiator, and in all the details of domestic administration he was alike eminent, and his luminous interpretation of national law had elevated the character of his monarch in the opinion of Europe, and had converted a second-rate power into the mediator between the highest.

The minister of a free people, he was the personal as well as the political pupil of Metternich. Yet, he respected the institutions of his country, because they existed, and because experience proved that, under their influence, the natives had become more powerful machines.

His practice of politics was compressed in two words—subtlety and force. The minister of an emperor, he would have maintained his system by armies; in the cabinet of a small kingdom, he compensated for his deficiency by intrigue.

His perfection of human nature was a practical man. He looked upon a theorist either with alarm or with contempt. Proud in his own energies, and conscious that he owed every thing to his own dexterity, he believed all to depend upon the ind

ence of individual character. He required men not to think but to act, not to examine but to obey, and animating their brute force with his own intelligence, he found the success which he believed could never be achieved by the rational conduct of an enlightened people.

Out of the cabinet, the change of his manner might perplex the superficial. The moment that he entered society, his thoughtful face would break into a fascinating smile, and he listened with interest to the tales of levity, and joined with readiness in each frivolous pursuit. He was sumptuous in his habits, and was said to be even voluptuous. Perhaps he affected gallantry because he was deeply impressed with the influence of women, both upon public and upon private opinion. With them he was a universal favourite; and as you beheld him assenting with conviction to their gay or serious nonsense, and waving, with studied grace, his perfumed handkerchief in his delicately-white and jewelled hand, you might have supposed him for a moment a consummate lord-chamberlain—but only for a moment,—for had you caught his eye, you would have withdrawn your gaze with precipitation, and perhaps with awe. For the rest, he spoke all languages, never lost his self-possession, and never in my recollection, had displayed a spark of strong feeling.

I loved my father deeply, but my love was mixed with more than reverence; it was blended with fear. He was the only person before whom I ever quailed. To me he had been universally kind. I could not recall, in the whole period of my existence, a single harsh word directed to myself that had ever escaped him. Whenever he saw me, he smiled and nodded; and sometimes, in early days, when I requested an embrace, he had pressed my lips. As I grew in years, every thing was arranged that could conduce to my happiness. Whatever I desired was granted, whatever wish I expressed was gratified. Yet with all this, by some means or other which I could not comprehend, the intercourse between my father and myself seemed never to advance. I was still to him as much an infant as if I were yet a subject of the nursery, and the impending and important interview might be considered the first time that it was ever my fortune to engage with him in serious converse.

The door was opened, my heart palpitated, the private secretary withdrew, I entered the lofty room. My father was writing. He did not look up as I came in. I stood at his table a second. He raised his eyes, stared at my odd appearance, and then pointing to a chair, he said, "How do you do, Contarini? I have been expecting you some days." Then he resumed his writing.

I was rather surprised, but my entrance had so agitated me that I was not sorry to gain time. A clock was opposite to me, and I employed myself in watching the hands. They advanced over one, two, three minutes very slowly and solemnly; still my father wrote; even five minutes disappeared, and my father continued writing. I thought five minutes had never gone so slowly; I began to think of what I should say, and to warm up my courage by an imaginary conversation. Suddenly I observed that ten minutes had flown, and these last five had scudded in a most surprising manner. Still my father was employed. At length he rang his bell. One of my friends the messengers entered. My father sent for Mr. Strelamb, and before Mr. Strelamb,

who was his private secretary, appeared, he had finished his letter and given it to the other messenger. Then Mr. Strelamb came in and seated himself opposite to my father, and took many notes with an attention and quickness which appeared to me quite marvellous, and then my father, looking at the clock, said he had an appointment with the Prussian ambassador at his palace; but, while Mr. Strelamb was getting some papers in order for him, he sent for the under secretary and gave him so many directions, that I thought the under secretary must have the most wonderful memory in the world. At length my father left the room, saying, as he quitted it, "Rest you here, Contarini."

I was consoled for his neglect by the consciousness that my father was a very great man indeed. I had no idea of such a great man. I was filled with awe. I looked out of the window to see him mount his horse, but just as he had one foot in his stirrup, a carriage dashed up to the door, my father withdrew his foot, and saluting the person in the carriage, entered it. It was the Austrian ambassador. In ten minutes he came out, but just as the steps were rattled up, and the chasseur had closed the door with his best air, my father returned to the carriage, but he remained only a minute, and then, mounting his horse, galloped off.

"This is indeed a great man," I thought, "and I am his son." I began to muse upon this idea of political greatness. The simple woodman, and his decorous cottage, and his free forest life recurred to my mind, unaccompanied by that feeling of satisfaction which I had hitherto associated with them, and were pictured in faded and rather insipid colours. Poetry, and philosophy, and the delights of solitude, and the beauty of truth, and the rapture of creation—I know not how it was, they certainly did not figure in such paramount beauty and colossal importance as I had previously viewed them. I thought of my harassing hours of doubt and diffidence with disgust, I sickened at the time wasted over imperfect efforts, at what, when perfect, seemed somehow of questionable importance. I was dissatisfied with my past life. Ambassadors, and chancellors, under secretaries, and private secretaries, and public messengers, flitted across my vision. I was sensibly struck at the contrast between all this greatness achieved, and moving before me in its quick and proud reality, and my weak meditations of unexecuted purposes and dreamy visions of imaginary grandeur. I threw myself in my father's chair, took up a pen, and, insensibly to myself, while I indulged in these reflections, scribbled Contarini Fleming over every paper that afforded itself for my signature.

My father was a long while away. I fell into a profound reverie. He entered the room. I did not observe him, I was entirely lost. I was engaged in a conversation with both the Prussian and Austrian ambassadors together. My father called me; I did not hear him. My eyes were fixed on vacancy, but I was listening with the greatest attention to their excellencies. My father approached, lifted me gently from his seat, and placed me in my original chair. I stared, looked up, and shook myself like a man awakened. He slightly smiled, and then seating himself, shrugging up his shoulders at my labours, and arranging his papers, he said, at the same time,

"Now, Contarini, I wish you to tell me why you have left your college!"

This was a home query, and entirely brought me to myself. With the greatest astonishment, I found that I had no answer. I did not speak, and my father commenced writing. In two or three instances he said, "Well can you answer my question?"

"Yes, sir," I replied, to gain time.

"Well! tell me."

"Because, sir, because it was no use staying there."

"Why?"

"Because I learned nothing!"

"Were you the first boy in the school, or the last? had you learned every thing that they could teach you, or nothing?"

"I was neither first nor last. Not that I should be ashamed of being last where I considered it no honour to be first."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not think that it is an enviable situation to be the first among the learners of words."

My father gave me a sharp glance, and then said, "Did you leave college because you considered that they taught you only words?"

"Yes, sir, and because I wished to learn ideas."

"Some silly book has filled your head, Contarini, with these ridiculous notions about the respective importance of words and ideas. Few ideas are correct ones, and what are correct no one can ascertain. But with words we govern men."

This observation completely knocked up all my philosophy, and I was without an answer.

"I tell you what, Contarini: I suspect that there must be some other reason for this step of yours. I wish you to tell it to me. If you were not making there that progress which every intelligent youth desires, such a circumstance might be a very good reason for your representing your state to your parent, and submitting it to his consideration, but you—you have never complained to me upon the subject. You said nothing of the kind when you were last with me, you never communicated it by letter. I never heard of a boy running away from school because they did not teach him sufficient, or sufficiently well. Your instructors do not complain of your conduct, except with regard to this step. There must be some other reason which induced you to adopt a measure which, I flatter myself, you have already learned to consider as both extremely unauthorized and very injudicious."

I had a good mind to pour it all out. I had a good mind to dash Venice in his teeth, and let him chew it as he could. I was on the point of asking a thousand questions, which I had been burning all my life to know, but the force of early impressions was too strong. I shunned the fatal word, and remained silent with a clouded brow, and my eyes fixed upon the ground.

"Answer me, Contarini," he continued; "you know that all I ask is only for your good. Answer me, Contarini; I request that you answer me. Were you uncomfortable? Were you unhappy?"

"I am always unhappy," I replied, in a gloomy tone.

My father moved round his chair. "You astonish me, Contarini. Unhappy! always unhappy! Why are you unhappy? I should have thought you the happiest boy of my acquaintance. I am sure I cannot conceive what makes you unhappy.

Pray tell me. Is there any thing you want? Have you done, has anybody done any thing to annoy you? Have you any thing upon your mind?"

I did not answer, my eyes were still fixed upon the ground, the tears stealing down my cheek, tears not of tenderness, but rage.

"My dear Contarini," continued my father, "I must indeed earnestly request you to answer me. Throughout life you have never disobeyed me. Do not let to-day be an epoch of rebellion. Speak to me frankly. Tell me why you are unhappy."

"Because I have no one I love, because there is no one who loves me, because I hate this country, because I hate every thing and everybody, because I hate myself." I rose from my seat and stamped about the room.

My father was perfectly astounded. He had thought that I might possibly have got into debt, or had a silly quarrel, but he did not lose his self-command.

"Sit down, Contarini," he said very calmly, "never give way to your feelings. Explain to me quietly what all this means. What book have you been reading to fill your head with all this nonsense! What could have so suddenly altered your character?"

"I have read no book, my character is what I always was, and I have only expressed to-day, for the first time, what I have ever felt. Life is intolerable to me, and I wish to die."

"What can you mean by persons not loving you?" resumed my father, "I am sure the baroness—"

"The baroness!" I interrupted him in a sharp tone; "what is the baroness to me! Always this wretched nursery view of life—always considered an insignificant, unmeaning child—What is the baroness, and her petty persecutions to me?—Pah!"

I grew bold. The truth is, my vanity was flattered by finding the man, who was insensible to all, and before whom all trembled, yield his sympathy and his time to me. I began to get interested in the interview. I was excited by this first conversation with a parent. My suppressed character began unconsciously to develop itself, and I unintentionally gave way to my mind, as if I were in one of my own scenes.

"I should be sorry if there were even petty persecutions," said my father, "and equally so, if you were insensible to them; but I hope that you speak only under excited feelings. For your father, Contarini, I can at least answer, that his conscience cannot accuse him of a deficiency in love for one who has such strong claims upon a father's affection. I can indeed say that I have taken no important step in life which had not for its ulterior purpose your benefit; and what, think you, can sweeten this all-engrossing and perhaps fatal labour, to which I am devoted, but the thought that I am toiling for the future happiness of my child? You are young, Contarini. Some day you will become acquainted with the feelings of a father, and you will then blush with shame and remorse that you have ever accused me of insensibility."

While he spoke I was greatly softened. The tears stole down my cheek. I leaned my arm upon the table, and tried to shade my face with my hand. My father rose from his seat, turned the key of the door, and resumed his place

"Occupied with affairs," he resumed, "which do not always allow me sleep, I have never found time for those slight parental offices which I do not think less delightful because it has been my misfortune not to fulfil, or to enjoy them. But you, Contarini, have never been absent from my thoughts, and I had considered that I had made such arrangements as must secure you the gratification of every innocent desire. But to-day I find, for the first time, that I have been mistaken for years. I regret it: I wish, if possible, to compensate for my unhappy neglect, or rather unfortunate ignorance. Tell me, Contarini, what do you wish me to do?"

"Nothing, nothing," I sobbed and sighed.

"But if necessity have hitherto brought us less together than I could wish, you are now, Contarini, fast advancing to that period of life, to which I looked forward as a consolatory recompense for this deplorable estrangement, I hoped to find in you a constant companion. I hoped that I might have the high gratification of forming you into a great and good man—that I might find in my son, not merely a being to be cherished, but a friend, a counsellor, a colleague—yes! Contarini, perhaps a successor."

I clasped my hands in agony, but restrained a cry.

"And now," he continued, "I am suddenly told, and by himself, that I have never loved him; but still more painful, still more heart-rending, is the accompanying declaration, which indeed is what I could not be prepared for. Misconception on his part, however improbable, might have accounted for his crediting my coldness, but alas! I have no room for hope or doubt; his plain avowal can never be misconstrued. I must then yield to the terrible conviction that I am an object of abhorrence to my child."

I flung myself at his feet, I seized his hand, I kissed it, and bathed it with my tears.

"Spare me, O! spare me," I faintly muttered. "Henceforth I will be all you wish!" I clung upon his hand, I would not rise till he pardoned me. "Pardon me," I said, "pardon me, I beseech you, father, for I spoke in madness! Pardon me, pardon me, dear father! It was in madness, for indeed there is something which comes over me sometimes like madness, but now it will never come, because you love me. Only tell me that you love me, and I will always do every thing. I am most grieved for what I said about the baroness. She is too good! I will never give you again an uneasy moment, not a single uneasy moment. Now that I know that you love me, you may depend upon me, you may indeed. You may depend upon me forever."

He smiled, and raised me from the ground, and kissed my forehead. "Compose yourself, dearest boy! Strelamb must soon come in. Try more to repress your feelings. There, sit down and calm yourself."

He resumed his writing directly, and I sat sobbing myself into composure. In about a quarter of an hour, he said, "I *must* send for Strelamb now, love. If you go into the next room, you can wash your face."

When I returned, my father said, "Come! come! you look quite blooming. By-the-by, are you aware what a very strange figure you are, Contarini? After being closeted all the morning with me, they will think, from your costume, that you

are a foreign ambassador. Now, go home, and dress, for I have a large dinner-party to-day, and I wish you to dine with me. There are several persons whom you should know. And, if you like, you may take my horses, for I had rather walk home."

XXII.

I WAS so very happy that, for some time, I did not think of the appalling effort that awaited me. It was not till I had fairly commenced dressing, that I remembered, that in the course of an hour, for the first time in my life, I was to enter a room full of strangers, conducting themselves with ease in all that etiquette of society in which I was entirely unpractised. My heart misgave me. I wished myself again in the forest. I procrastinated my toilet to the last possible moment. Ignorant of the art of dress, I found myself making a thousand experiments, all of which failed. The more I consulted my glass, the less favourable was the impression. I brushed my hair out of curl. I confined my neck for the first time in a cravat. Each instant my appearance became more awkward, more formal, and ineffectual. At last I was obliged to go down, and less at my ease, and conscious of appearing worse than I ever did in my life, at the only moment of that life in which appearance had been of the slightest consequence, and had ever occupied my thoughts, I entered the room at the side door. It was very full, as I had expected. I stole in, without being observed, which a little reanimated my courage. I looked round in vain for a person I knew; I crept to a corner. All seemed at their ease. All were smiling, all exchanging words, if not ideas. The women all appeared beautiful, the men all elegant. I painfully felt my wretched inferiority. I watched the baroness, magnificently attired, and sparkling with diamonds, wreathed with smiles, and scattering, without effort, phrases which seemed to diffuse universal pleasure. This woman, whom I had presumed to despise, and dared to insult, became to me an object of admiration and of envy. She even seemed to me beautiful. I was bewildered.

Suddenly a gentleman approached me. It was the under secretary. I was delighted by his notice. I answered his many uninteresting questions about every school pastime, which I detested, as if I felt the greatest interest in their recollection. All that I desired was, that he would not leave me, that I might at least appear to be doing what the others were, and might be supposed to be charmed, although I was in torture. At length he walked off to another group, and I found myself once more alone, apparently without a single chance of keeping up the ball. I felt as if every one were watching with wonder, the strange, awkward, ugly, silent boy. I coined my cheek into a base smile, but I found that it would not pass. I caught the eye of the baroness; she beckoned me to come to her. I joined her without delay. She introduced me to a lady who was sitting at her side. This lady had a son at the college, and asked me many questions. I answered in the most nervous, rapid manner, as if her son were my most intimate friend, gave the anxious mother a complete detail of all his occupations, and praised the institution up to the seventh heaven. I was astonished at the tone of affection with which the baroness addressed me, at the inte-

rest which she took in every thing which concerned me. It was ever "Contarini, dear"—"Contarini, my love"—"You have been riding to-day. Where have you been? I have hardly had time to speak to you. He only came home to-day. He is looking vastly well—very well indeed—very much grown—O! amazingly—quite a beau for you, baroness—O! yes, quite delightful."

What amiable people, I thought, and what would I give to be once more in old Winter's cottage!

The door opened, the Chevalier de Winter was announced. My fellow-traveller entered the room, though I could scarcely recognise him in his rich, and even fanciful dress, and adorned with his brilliant order. I was struck with his fine person, his noble carriage, and his highly-polished manner. Except my father, I had never seen so true a nobleman. The baron went forward to receive him with his most courteous air, and most fascinating smile. I withdrew as he led him to my mother. I watched the baroness as she rose to greet him. I was surprised at the warmth of her welcome, and the tone of consideration with which she received him. Some of the guests, who were the highest nobles in the country, requested my father to present them to him: with others Winter was already acquainted, and they seemed honoured by his recognition.

"This also is a great man," I exclaimed, "but of a different order." Old feelings began to boil up from the abyss in which I had plunged them. I sympathized with this great and triumphant artist. In a few days it seemed that the history of genius had been acted before me for my instruction, and for my encouragement. A combination of circumstances had allowed me to trace this man from his first hopeless obscurity. I had seen all—the strong predisposition, the stubborn opposition of fortune, the first efforts, the first doubts, the paramount conviction, the long struggle, the violated ties, the repeated flights, the deep studies, the sharp discipline, the great creation, and the glorious triumph.

My father, crossing the room, saw me. "Contarini," he said, "where have you been all this time? I have been often looking for you. Come with me, and I will introduce you to the Chevalier de Winter, one of the first painters in the world, and who has just come from Rome. You must go and see his pictures; every one is talking of them. Always know eminent men, and always be master of the subject of the day. Chevalier," for we had now come up to him, "my son desires your acquaintance."

"Ah! fellow-traveller, welcome, welcome—I told you we should soon meet again," and he pressed my hand with warmth.

"Sir, I had a prescience that I had been the companion of a great man."

This was pretty well said for a bashful youth, but it was really not a compliment. The moment I addressed Winter, I resumed unconsciously my natural tone, and, reminded by his presence that higher accomplishments and qualities existed than a mere acquaintance with etiquette, and the vivacity which could enliven the passages of ordinary conversation, I began to feel a little more at my ease.

Dinner was announced. The table was round. I sat between the under secretary and the lady to whom I had been introduced. The scene was a

very novel one, and I was astonished at observing a magnificent repast, which all seemed to pique themselves upon tasting as little as possible. They evidently assembled here, then, I thought, for the sake of conversation, yet how many are silent, and what is said might be omitted. But I was then ignorant of the purposes for which human beings are brought together. My female companion, who was a little wearied by a great general, who, although a hero and a strategist, was soon beaten and bewildered in a campaign of repartee, turned round to amuse herself with her other supporter. Her terrific child was again introduced. I had drank a glass or two of wine, and altogether had, in a great degree, recovered my self-possession. I could support her tattle no longer. I assured the astonished mother that I had never even heard of her son; that, if really at college, he must be in a different part of the establishment; and that I had never met him, that I did not even know the name, that the college was a very bad college indeed, that nobody learned any thing there, that I abhorred it, and that I hoped I should never return, and then I asked her to do me the honour of taking wine.

XXIII.

THE day after the party, I went with the baroness to see the great pictures of Winter in the Royal Academy of Arts. They both of them seemed to me magnificent, but one, which was a national subject, and depicted the emancipating exploits of one of the heroic monarchs, was the most popular. I did not feel so much interested with this. I did not sympathize with the gloomy, savage scene, the black pine forests, the rough mountains, the feudal forms and dresses; but the other, which was of a very different character, afforded me exquisite delight. It represented a procession going up to sacrifice at a temple in a Grecian isle. The brilliant colouring, the beautiful and beautifully-clad forms, the Ionian fane, seated on a soft acclivity covered with sunny trees, the classical and lovely background, the deep-blue sea, broken by a tall white scudding sail, and backed by undulating and azure mountains—I stood before it in a trance, a crowd of ideas swiftly gathered in my mind. It was a poem.

After this, I called upon Winter, and found him in his studio. Many persons were there, and of high degree. It was the first time I had ever been in the studio of an artist. I was charmed with all I saw; the infinite sketches, the rough studies, the unfinished pictures, the lay figure, the beautiful cast, and here and there some choice relic of antiquity, a torso, a bust, or a gem. I remained here the whole morning examining his Venetian sketches: and a day seldom passed over that I did not drop in to pay my devotions at this delightful temple.

I was indeed so much at home, that if he were engaged, I resumed my portfolio without notice, so that in time I knew perhaps more about Venice than many persons who had passed their whole lives there.

When I had been at home a fortnight, my father one day invited me to take a ride with him, and began conversing with me on my plans. He said that he did not wish me to return to college, but that he thought me at least a year too young to repair to the university, whither, on every account,

he desired me to go. "We should consider, then," he continued, "how this interval can be turned to the greatest advantage. I wish you to mix as much as is convenient with society. I apprehend that you have, perhaps, hitherto indulged a little too much in lonely habits. Young men are apt to get a little abstracted, and occasionally to think that there is something singular in their nature, when the fact is, if they were better acquainted with their fellow-creatures, they would find they were mistaken. This is a common error, indeed the commonest. I am not at all surprised that you have fallen into it. All have. The most practical business-like men that exist have many of them, when children, conceived themselves totally disqualified to struggle in the world. You may rest assured of this. I could mention many remarkable instances. All persons, when young, are fond of solitude, and when they are beginning to think, are sometimes surprised at their own thoughts. There is nothing to be deplored, scarcely to be feared, in this. It almost always wears off; but sometimes it happens, that they have not judicious friends by them to explain, that the habits which they think peculiar are universal, and, if unreasonably indulged, can ultimately only turn them into indolent, insignificant members of society, and occasion them lasting unhappiness."

I made no reply, but gave up all idea of writing a tale, which was to embrace both Venice and Greece, and which I had been for some days meditating.

"But to enter society with pleasure, Contarini, you must be qualified for it. I think it quite time for you to make yourself master of some accomplishments. Decidedly, you should make yourself a good dancer. Without dancing, you can never attain a perfectly graceful carriage, which is of the highest importance in life, and should be every man's ambition. You are yet too young fully to comprehend how much in life depends upon manner. Whenever you see a man who is successful in society, try to discover what makes him pleasing, and, if possible, adopt his system. You should learn to fence. For languages, at present, French will be sufficient. You speak it fairly—try to speak it elegantly. Read French authors. Read Rochefoucault. The French writers are the finest in the world, for they clear our heads of all ridiculous ideas. Study precision.

"Do not talk too much at present—do not *try* to talk. But, whenever you speak, speak with self-possession. Speak in a subdued tone, and always look at the person whom you are addressing. Before one can engage in general conversation with any effect, there is a certain acquaintance with trifling, but amusing subjects, which must be first attained. You will soon pick up sufficient by listening and observing. Never argue. In society nothing must be discussed—give only results. If any person differ with you—bow, and turn the conversation. In society, never think—always be on the watch, or you will miss many opportunities, and say many disagreeable things.

"Talk to women—talk to women as much as you can. This is the best school. This is the way to gain fluency—because you need not care what you say, and had better not be sensible. They, too, will rally you on many points, and, as they are women, you will not be offended. Nothing is of so much importance, and of so much use,

to a young man entering life, as to be well criticised by women. It is impossible to get rid of those bad habits which we pick up in boyhood without this supervision. Unfortunately, you have no sisters. But never be offended if a woman rally you. Encourage her. Otherwise, you will never be free from your awkwardness, or any little oddities, and certainly never learn to dress.

"You ride pretty well, but you had better go through the manège. Every gentleman should be a perfect cavalier. You shall have your own groom and horses, and I wish you to ride regularly every day.

"As you are to be at home for so short a time, and for other reasons, I think it better that you should not have a tutor in the house. Parcel out your morning, then, for your separate masters. Rise early and regularly, and read for three hours. Read the memoirs of the Cardinal de Retz—the life of Richelieu—every thing about Napoleon—read works of that kind. Strelamb will prepare you a list. Read no history—nothing but biography, for that is life without theory. Then fence. Talk an hour with your French master, but do not throw the burden of the conversation upon him. Give him an account of something. Describe to him the events of yesterday, or give him a detailed account of the constitution. You will have then sufficiently rested yourself for your dancing. And, after that, ride and amuse yourself as much as you can. Amusement to an observing mind is study."

I pursued the system which my father had pointed out with exactness, and soon with pleasure. I sacredly observed my hours of reading, and devoted myself to the study of the lives of what my father considered really great men—that is to say, men of great energies and violent volition, who look upon their fellow-creatures as mere tools, with which they can build up a pedestal for their solitary statue, and who sacrifice every feeling, which should sway humanity, and every high work which genius should really achieve, to the short-sighted gratification of an irrational and outrageous selfishness. As for my manners, I flattered myself that they had advanced in measure with my mind, although I already emulated Napoleon. I soon overcame the fear which attended my first experiments in society, and by scrupulously observing the paternal maxims, I soon became very self-satisfied. I listened to men with a delightful mixture of deference and self-confidence: were they old, and did I differ with them, I contented myself by positively stating my opinion in a most subdued voice, and then either turning the subject or turning upon my heel. But as for women, it is astonishing how well I got on. The nervous rapidity of my first rattle soon subsided into a continuous flow of easy nonsense. Impertinent and slipshod, I was universally hailed an original and a wit. But the most remarkable incident was, that the baroness and myself became the greatest friends. I was her constant attendant, and rehearsed to her flattered ear all my evening performance. She was the person with whom I practised, and as she had a taste in dress, I encouraged her opinions. Unconscious that she was at once my lay figure and my mirror, she loaded me with presents, and announced to all her coterie, that I was the most delightful young man of her acquaintance.

From all this, it may easily be suspected that, at

the age of fifteen, I had unexpectedly become one of the most affected, conceited, and intolerable atoms that ever peopled the sunbeam of society.

A few days before I quitted home for the university, I paid a farewell visit to Winter, who was himself on the point of returning to Rome.

"Well, my dear chevalier," I said, seizing his hand, and speaking in a voice of affected interest, "I could not think of leaving town without seeing you. I am off to-morrow, and you—you, too, are going. But what a difference—a Gothic university and immortal Rome! Pity me, my dear chevalier," and I shrugged my shoulders.

"O! yes, certainly—I think you are to be pitted."

"And how does the great work go on? Your name is everywhere. I assure you, Prince Besborodsko was speaking to me last night of nothing else. By-the-by, shall you be at the opera to-night?"

"I do not know."

"O! you must go. I am sorry I have not a box to offer you. But the baroness's, I am sure, is always at your service."

"You are vastly kind."

"'Tis the most charming opera. I think his master-piece. That divine air—I hum it all day. I do indeed. What a genius! I can bear no one else. Decidedly the greatest composer that ever existed."

"He is certainly very great, and you are, no doubt, an excellent judge of his style; but the air you meant to hum is an introduction, and by Pacini."

"Is it, indeed? Ah! Italy is the land of music. We men of the north must not speak of it."

"Why is Italy the land of music? Why not Germany?"

"Perhaps music is more cultivated in Germany at present, but do not you think that it is, as it were, more indigenous in Italy?"

"No."

As I never argued, I twirled my cane, and asked his opinion of a new Casino.

"Ah! by-the-by, is it true, chevalier, that you have at last agreed to paint the princess-royal? I tell you what I recommend you seriously to do—most seriously, I assure you—most decidedly it is my opinion—most important thing, indeed—should not be neglected a day. Certainly, I should not think of going to Italy without doing it."

"Well, well!"

"Countess Arnfeldt, chevalier. By heavens, she is divine! What a neck, and what a hand! A perfect study."

"Poh!"

"Don't you think so, really? Well, I see I am terribly breaking into your morning. Adieu! Let us hope we may soon meet again. Perhaps at Rome—who knows? *Au revoir, au revoir.*"

I kissed my hand, and tripped out of the room in all the charming fulness of a perfectly graceful manner.

we contrast our worn and harassed existence with that sweet prime, free from anxiety, and fragrant with innocence. I cannot share these feelings. I was a most miserable child, and school I detested more than I ever abhorred the world in the darkest moments of my experienced manhood. But the university—this new life yielded me different feelings, and still commands a grateful reminiscence.

My father, who studied to foster in me every worldly feeling, sought all means which might tend to make me enamoured of that world to which he was devoted. An extravagant allowance, a lavish establishment, many servants, numerous horses were forced upon, rather than solicited by me. According to his system, he acted dexterously. My youthful brain could not be insensible to the brilliant position in which I was placed. I was now, indeed, my own master, and every thing around me announced that I could command a career flattering to the rising passions of my youth. I well remember the extreme self-complacency with which I surveyed my new apartments, how instantaneously I was wrapped up in all the mysteries of furniture, and how I seemed to have no other purpose in life than to play the honoured and honourable part of an elegant and accomplished host.

My birth, my fortune, my convivial habits, rallied around me the noble and the gay, the flower of our society. Joyously flew our careless hours, while we mimicked the magnificence of men. I had no thought but for the present moment. I discoursed only of dogs and horses, of fanciful habiliments and curious repasts. I astonished them by a new fashion, and decided upon the exaggerated charms of some ordinary female. How long the novelty of my life would have been productive of interest, I know not. An incident occurred which changed my habits.

A new professor arrived in the university. He was by birth a German. I attended, by an accident, his preliminary lecture on Grecian history. I had been hunting, and had suddenly returned home. Throwing my gown over my forest frock, I strolled, for the sake of change, into the theatre. I nodded, with a smile, to some of my acquaintance, I glanced with listlessness at their instructor. His abstracted look, the massiness of his scull, his large luminous eye, his long gray hair, his earnest and impassioned manner, struck me. He discoursed on that early portion of Grecian history which is entirely unknown. I was astonished at the fulness of his knowledge. That which to a common student appears but an inexplicable or barren tradition, became, in his magical mould, a record teeming with deep knowledge and picturesque interest. Hordes, who hitherto were only dimly distinguished wandering over the deserts of antiquity, now figured as great nations, multiplying in beautiful cities, and moving in the grand and progressive march of civilization; and I listened to animated narratives of their creeds, their customs, their manners, their philosophy, and their arts. I was deeply impressed with this mystical creation of a critical spirit. I was charmed with the blended profundity and imagination. I revelled in the sagacious audacity of his revolutionary theories. I yielded to the full spell of his archaic eloquence. The curtain was removed from the sacred shrine of antique ages, and an inspired prophet, ministering in the sanctuary, expounded the mysteries which had perplexed

PART THE SECOND.

I.

OUR schoolboy days are looked back to by all with fondness. Oppressed with the cares of life,

the imperfect intelligence of their remote posterity.

The lecture ceased; I was the first who broke into plaudits; I advanced, I offered to our master my congratulations and my homage. Now that his office had finished, I found him the meekest, the most modest, and nervous being that ever trembled in society. With difficulty he would receive the respectful compliments even of his pupils. He bowed, and blushed, and disappeared. His reserve only the more interested me. I returned to my rooms, musing on the high matters of his discourse. Upon my table was a letter from one of my companions, full of ribald jests. I glanced at its uncomplimentary lines, and tossed it away unread. I fell into a reverie of Arcadian loveliness. A beautiful temple rose up in my mind like the temple in the picture of Winter. The door opened, a band of loose revellers burst into their accustomed gathering room. I was silent, reserved, cold, moody. Their inane observations amazed me. I shrank from their hollow tattle, and the gibberish of their foul slang. Their unmeaning, idiotic shouts of laughter tortured me. I knew not how to rid myself of their infernal presence. At length one offered me a bet. I rushed out of the chamber.

I did not stop until I reached the room of the professor. I found him buried in his books. He stared at my entrance. I apologized, I told him all I felt, all I wanted; the wretched life I was leading, my deep sympathy with his character, my infinite disgust at my own career, my unbounded love of knowledge, and admiration of himself.

The simplicity of the professor's character was not shocked by my frank enthusiasm. Had he been a man of the world, he would have been alarmed, lest my strong feeling and unusual conduct should have placed us both in a ridiculous position. On the contrary, without a moment's hesitation, he threw aside his papers, and opened his heart to all my wants. My imperfect knowledge of the Greek language was too apparent. Nothing could be done until I mastered it. He explained to me a novel and philosophical mode of acquiring a full acquaintance with it. As we proceeded in our conversation, he occasionally indicated the outlines of his grand system of metaphysics. I was fascinated by the gorgeous prospect of comprehending the unintelligible. The professor was gratified by the effect that his first effusion had produced. He was interested by the ardour of my mind. He was flattered in finding an enthusiastic votary in one whose mode of life had hitherto promised any thing but study, and whose position in society was perhaps an apology, if not a reason, for an irrational career.

I announced to my companions that I was going to read. They stared, they pitied me. Some deemed the avowal affectation, and trusted that increased frolic would repay them for the abstinence of a week of application. Fleming and his books was only a fresh instance of his studied eccentricity. But they were disappointed. I worked at Greek for nearly fourteen hours a-day, and at the end of a month I had gained a very ample acquaintance with the construction of the language, and a still fuller one of its signification. So much can be done by an ardent and willing spirit. I had been for six or seven years nominally a Greek student, and had learned nothing, and how many persons

waste even six or seven more, and only find themselves in the same position!

I was amply rewarded for my toilsome effort. I felt the ennobling pride of learning. It is a fine thing to know that which is unknown to others, it is still more dignified to remember that we have gained it by our own energies. The struggle after knowledge too is full of delight. The intellectual chase, not less than the material one, brings fresh vigour to our pulses, and infinite palpitations of strange and sweet suspense. The idea that is gained with effort affords far greater satisfaction than that which is acquired with dangerous facility. We dwell with more fondness on the perfume of the flower that we have ourselves tended, than on the odour which we cull with carelessness, and cast away without remorse. The strength and sweetness of our knowledge depend upon the impression which it makes upon our own minds. It is the liveliness of the ideas that it affords, which renders research so fascinating, so that a trifling fact or deduction, when discovered or worked out by our own brain, affords us infinitely greater pleasure than a more important truth obtained by the exertions of another.

I thought only of my books; I was happy, I was quite emancipated from my painful selfism. My days passed in unremitting study. My love of composition unconsciously developed itself. My note-books speedily filled, and my annotations soon swelled into treatises. Insensibly I had become an author. I wrote with facility, for I was master of my subject. I was fascinated with the expanding of my own mind. I resolved to become a great historical writer. Without intention, I fixed upon subjects in which imagination might assist erudition. I formed gigantic schemes which many lives could not have accomplished: yet I was sanguine I should achieve all. I mused over an original style which was to blend profound philosophy, and deep learning, and brilliant eloquence. The nature of man, and the origin of nations, were to be expounded in glowing sentences of oracular majesty.

Suddenly the university announced a gold medal for the writer of the ablest treatise upon the Dorian people. The subject delighted me. Similar ones had already engaged my notice. I determined to be a candidate.

I shut myself up from all human beings; I collected all the variety of information that I could glean from the most ancient authors, and the rarest modern treatises. I moulded the crude matter into luminous order. A theory sprang out of the confused mass like light out of chaos. The moment of composition commenced. I wrote the first sentence while in chapel, and under the influence of music. It sounded like the organ that inspired it. The whole was composed in my head before I committed it to paper,—composed in my daily rides, and while pacing my chamber at midnight. The action of my body seemed to lend vitality to my mind.

Never shall I forget the moment when I finished the last sentence of my fair copy, and, sealing it, consigned it with a motto to the principal. It was finished, and at the very instant, my mind seemed exhausted, my power vanished. The excitement had ceased. I dashed into the forest, and throwing myself under a tree, passed the first of many days

that flew away in perfect indolence, and vague and unmeaning reverie.

In spite of my great plans, which demanded the devotion of a life, and were to command the admiration of a grateful and enlightened world, I was so anxious about the fate of my prize essay, that all my occupations suddenly ceased. I could do nothing. I could only think of sentences which might have been more musical, and deductions which might have been more logically true. Now that it was finished, I felt its imperfectness. Week after week I grew more desponding, and the very morning of the decision I had entirely discarded all hope.

It was announced: the medal was awarded,—and to me. Amid the plaudits of a crowded theatre, I recited my triumphant essay. Full of victory, my confident voice lent additional euphony to the flowing sentence, and my bright, firm eye added to the acuteness of my reasoning, and enforced the justice of my theory. I was entirely satisfied. No passage seemed weak. Noble, wealthy, the son of the minister, congratulations came thick upon me. The seniors complimented each other on such an example to the students. I was the idol of the university. The essay was printed, lavishly praised in all the journals, and its author, full of youth and promise, anticipated as the future ornament of his country. I returned to my father in a blaze of glory.

II.

I ADDRESSED him with the confidence that I was now a man, and a distinguished one. My awe of his character had greatly worn off. I was most cordial to the baroness, but a slight strain of condescension was infused into my courtesy. I had long ceased to view her with dislike: on the contrary, I had even become her protégé. That was now over. We were not less warm, but I was now the protector, and if there was a slight indication of pique, or a chance ebullition of temper, instead of their calling forth any simultaneous sentiments on my side, I only bowed with deference to her charms, or mildly smiled on the engaging weaknesses of the inferior sex. I was not less self-conceited or less affected than before, but my self-conceit and my affectation were of a nobler nature. I did not consider myself a less finished member of society, but I was also equally proud of being the historiographer of the Dorians. I was never gloomy. I was never in repose. Self-satisfaction sparkled on my countenance, and my carriage was agitated with the earnestness and the excitement with which I busied myself with the trivial and the trite. My father smiled, half with delight and half with humour, upon my growing consciousness of importance, and introduced me to his friends with increased satisfaction. He even listened to me while, one day after dinner, I disserted upon the Pelasgi, but when he found that I believed in innate ideas, he thought my self-delusion began to grow serious.

As he was one of those men who believe that directly to oppose a person in his opinions is a certain mode of confirming him in his error, he attacked me by a masked battery. Affecting no want of interest in my pursuits, he said to me one day, in a very careless tone, "Contarini, I am no great friend to reading, but as you have a taste that way, if I

were you, during the vacation, I would turn over Voltaire."

Now I had never read any thing of Voltaire's. The truth is, I had no very great opinion of the philosopher of Ferney, for my friend the professor assured me that Voltaire knew nothing of the Dorians, that his Hebrew also was invariably incorrect, and that he was altogether a very superficial person,—but I chanced to follow my father's counsel.

I stood before the hundred volumes; I glanced with indifference upon the wondrous and witching shelf. History, poetry, philosophy, the lucid narrative, and the wild invention, and the unimpassioned truth—they were all before me, and with my ancient weakness for romance I drew out Zadig. Never shall I forget the effect this work produced on me. What I had been long seeking offered itself. This strange mixture of brilliant fantasy and poignant truth, this unrivalled blending of ideal creation and worldly wisdom—it all seemed to speak to my two natures. I wandered a poet in the streets of Babylon, or on the banks of the Tigris. A philosopher and a statesman, I moralized over the condition of man and the nature of government. The style enchanted me. I delivered myself up to the full abandonment of its wild and brilliant grace.

I devoured them all, volume after volume. Morning, and night, and noon, a volume was ever my companion. I ran to it after my meals, it reposed under my pillow. As I read, I roared, I laughed, I shouted with wonder and admiration, I trembled with indignation at the fortunes of my race, my bitter smile sympathized with searching ridicule and withering mockery.

Pedants, and priests, and tyrants, the folios of dunces, the fires of inquisitors, and the dungeons of kings, and the long, dull system of imposture and misrule, that had sat like a gloating incubus on the fair neck of nature, and all our ignorance, and all our weakness, and all our folly, and all our infinite imperfection—I looked round—I thought of the dissertation of the Dorians, and I considered myself the most contemptible of my wretched species.

I returned to the university: I rallied round me my old companions, whom I had discarded in a fit of disgusting pedantry. But not now merely to hold high revels. The goblet indeed still encircled, but a bust of the author of "Candide" over the head of the president, warned us, with a smile of prophetic derision, not to debase ourselves, and if we drank deep, our potations were perhaps necessary to refresh the inexperienced efforts of such novices in philosophy. Yet we made way: even the least literary read the romances, or parts of the Philosophical Dictionary: the emancipation of our minds was rapidly effecting, we entirely disembarrassed ourselves of prejudice, we tried every thing by the test of first principles, and finally we resolved ourselves into a Secret Union for the Amelioration of Society.

Of this institution I had the honour of being elected president by acclamation. My rooms were the point of meeting. The members were in number twelve, chiefly my equals in rank and fortune. One or two of them were youths of talents, and not wholly untinctured by letters; the rest were ardent, delighted with the novelty of what they did and heard, and, adopting our thoughts, arrived at conclusions the truth of which they did not doubt.

My great reputation at the university long prevented these meetings from being viewed with sus

vision, and when the revolutionary nature of our opinions occasionally developed itself in a disregard for the authorities by some of our society, who perhaps considered such license as the most delightful portion of the new philosophy, my interest often succeeded in stifling a public explosion. In course of time, however, the altered tenor of my own conduct could no longer be concealed. My absence from lectures had long been overlooked, from the conviction that the time thus gained was devoted to the profundity of private study; but the systematic assembly at my rooms of those who were most eminent for their disregard of discipline, and their neglect of study, could no longer be treated with inattention, and after several intimations from inferior officers, I was summoned to the presence of the High Principal.

This great personage was a clear-headed, cold-minded, unmanageable individual. I could not cloud his intellect, or control his purpose. My ever-successful sophistry, and my ever-fluent speech failed. At the end of every appeal, he recurred to his determination to maintain the discipline of the university, and repeated with firmness that this was the last time our violation of it should be privately noticed. I returned to my rooms in a dark rage. My natural impatience of control and hatred of responsibility, which had been kept off of late years by the fondness of society, which developed itself with my growing passions, came back upon me. I cursed authority, I paced my room like Cataline.

At this moment my accustomed companions assembled. They were ignorant of what had passed, but they seemed to me to look like conspirators. Moody and ferocious, I headed the table, and filling a bumper, I drank confusion to all government. They were surprised at such a novel commencement, for, in general, we only arrived at this great result by the growing and triumphant truths of a long evening, but they received my proposition, as indeed they ever did, with a shout.

The wine warmed me. I told them all. I even exaggerated in my rage the annoying intelligence. I described our pleasant meetings about to cease for ever. I denounced the iniquitous system which would tear us from the pursuit of real knowledge and ennobling truths—knowledge that illuminated, and truths that should support the destinies of existing man—to the deplorable and disgusting study of a small collection of imperfect volumes, written by Greeks, and preserved by Goths. It was bitter to think that we must part. Surely society, cruel society, would too soon sever the sweet and agreeable ties that bound our youth. Why should we be parted ever? Why, in pursuance of an unnatural system, abhorred by all of us—why were we to be dispersed and sent forth to delude the world in monstrous disguises of priests, and soldiers, and statesmen? Out upon such hypocrisy! A curse light upon the craven knave who would not struggle for his salvation from such a monotonous and degrading doon. The world was before us. Let us seize it in our prime. Let us hasten away—let us form a society in some inviolate solitude founded upon the eternal principles of truth and justice. Let us fly from the feudal system. Nobles and wealthy, let us cast our titles to the winds, and our dross to the earth which produced it. Let us pride ourselves only on the gifts of nature, and exist only on her beneficence.

I ceased, and three loud rounds of cheering announced to the High Principal and all his slaves that we had not yet yielded.

We drank deep. A proposition came forth with the wine of every glass. We all talked of America. Already we viewed ourselves in a primeval forest, existing by the chase, to which many of us were devoted. The very necessary toil of life seemed, in such an existence, to consist of what, in this worn-out world, was considered the choicest pastime and the highest pleasure. And the rich climate, and the simple manners, and the intelligible laws, and the fair aborigines, who must be attracted by such interesting strangers—all hearts responded to the glowing vision. I alone was grave and thoughtful. The remembrance of Master Frederick and the Venetian expedition, although now looked back to as a childish serape, rendered me nevertheless the most practical of the party. I saw immediately the invincible difficulty of our reaching with success such a distant land. I lamented the glorious times when the forests of our own northern land could afford an asylum to the brave and free.

The young Count de Pahlen was a great hunter. Wild in his life, and daring in his temper, he possessed, at the same time, a lively and not uncultivated intellect. He had a great taste for poetry, and, among other accomplishments, was an excellent actor. He rose up as I spoke, like a volcano out of the sea. "I have it, Fleming, I have it!" he shouted, with a dancing eye and exulting voice. "You know the great forest of Jonsterna. Of en have I hunted in it. The forest near us is but, as it were, a huge root of that vast woodland. Nearly in its centre is an ancient and crumbling castle, which, like all old ruins, is of course haunted. No peasant dare approach it. At its very mention the face of the forest-farmer will grow grave and serious. Let us fly to it. Let us become the scaring-ghosts whom all avoid. We shall be from man—we shall live only for ourselves—we—" but his proposition was drowned in our excited cheers, and rising together, we all pledged a sacred vow to stand or fall by each other in this great struggle for freedom and for nature.

The night passed in canvassing plans to render this mighty scheme practicable. The first point was to baffle all inquiries after our place of refuge, and to throw all pursuers off the scent. We agreed that on a certain day, in small and separate parties, we should take our way by different routes to the old castle, which we calculated was about sixty miles distant. Each man was to bear with him a rifle, a sword, and pistols, a travelling cloak, his knapsack, and as much ammunition as he could himself carry. Our usual hunting dress afforded an excellent uniform, and those who were without it were immediately to supply themselves. We were to quit the university without notice, and each of us on the same day was to write to his friends, to notify his sudden departure on a pedestrian tour in Norway. Thus we calculated to gain time, and effectually to baffle pursuit.

In spite of our lavish allowances, as it ever happens among young men, money was wanted. All that we possessed was instantly voted a common stock, but several men required rifles, and the funds were deficient. I called for a crucible: I opened a cabinet: I drew out my famous gold medal. I gazed at it for a moment, and the classic cheer.

amid which it had been awarded seemed to rise upon my ear. I dashed away the recollection, and in a few minutes the splendid reward of my profound researches was melting over the fire, and affording the means of our full equipment.

III.

It was the fourth morning of our journey. My companion was Ulric de Brahe. He was my only junior among the band, delicate of frame and affectionate in disposition, though hasty if excited, but my enthusiastic admirer. He was my great friend, and I was almost as intent to support him under the great fatigue, as about the success of our enterprise. I had bought a donkey in our progress of a farmer, and loaded it with a couple of kegs of the brandy of the country. We had travelled the last two days entirely in the forest, passing many farmhouses, and several villages, and as we believed, were now near our point of rendezvous. I kicked on the donkey before me, and smiled on Ulric. I would have carried his rifle, as well as my own, but his ardent temper and devoted love maintained him, and when I expressed any anxiety about his toil, he only laughed, and redoubled his pace.

We were pushing along an old turf road cut through the thick woods, when suddenly, at the end of a side vista, I beheld the tower of a castle. "Jonsterna!" I shouted, and I ran forward without the donkey. It was more distant than it appeared, but at length we came to a large piece of clear land, and at the other side of it we beheld the long-dreamt-of building. It was a vast structure, rather dilapidated than ruined. With delight I observed a human being moving upon the keep, whom I recognised by his uniform to be one of us, and as we approached nearer we distinguished two or three of our comrades stretched upon the turf. They all jumped up and ran forward to welcome us. How heartily we shook hands, and congratulated each other on our reunion! More than half were already assembled. All had contrived, besides their own equipments, to bring something for the common stock. There was plenty of bread, and brandy, and game. Some were already out collecting wood. Before noon the rest arrived, except Pahlen and his comrade. And they came at last, and we received them with a cheer, for the provident vice-president, like an ancient warrior, was seated in a cart. "Do not suppose that I am done up, my boys," said the gay dog, "I have brought gunpowder."

When we had all assembled we rushed into the castle, and, in the true spirit of boyhood, examined every thing. There was a large knights'-hall, covered with tapestry, and tattered banners. This was settled to be our chief apartment. We even found a huge oak table, and some other rude and ancient furniture. We appointed committees of examination. Some surveyed the cellars and dungeons, some the out-buildings. We were not afraid of ghosts, but marvellously fearful that we might have been anticipated by some human beings, as wild and less philosophical than ourselves. It was a perfect solitude. We cleared and cleaned out the hall, lighted an immense fire, arranged our stores, appointed their keeper, made beds with our cloaks, piled our arms, and cooked our dinner. An hour after sunset our first meal was prepared, and

the Secret Union for the Amelioration of Society resumed their sittings almost in a savage state.

I shall never forget the scene, and the proud exultation with which I beheld it. The vast and antique hall, the mystic tapestry, moving and moaning with every gust of the windy night—the deep shades of the distant corners, the flickering light flung by the blazing hearth, and the huge pine torches, the shining arms, the rude but plenteous banquet, the picturesque revellers, and I their president, with my sword pressing on a frame ready to dare all things. "This, this is existence," I exclaimed. "O! let us live by our own right arms, and let no law be stronger than our swords!"

I was even surprised by the savage yell of exultation with which my almost unconscious exclamation was received. But we were like young tigers, who, for a moment tamed, had for the first time tasted blood, and rushed back to their own natures. A band of philosophers, we had insensibly placed ourselves in the most antiphilosophical position. Flying from the feudal system, we had, unawares, taken refuge in its favourite haunt. All our artificial theories of universal benevolence vanished. We determined to be what fortune had suddenly made us. We discarded the abstract truths which had in no age of the world ever been practised, and were, of course, therefore impracticable. We smiled at our ignorance of human nature and ourselves. The Secret Union for the Amelioration of Society suddenly turned into a corps of bandits, and their philosophical president was voted their captain.

IV.

It was midnight. They threw themselves upon their rough couches, that they might wake fresh with the morning. Fatigue and brandy in a few minutes made them deep slumberers, but I could not sleep. I flung a log upon the fire, and paced the hall in deep communion with my own thoughts. The rubicon was passed. Farewell my father, farewell my step-country, farewell literary invention, maudlin substitute for a poetic life, farewell effeminate arts of morbid civilization! From this moment I ceased to be a boy. I was surrounded by human beings, bold and trusty, who looked only to my command, and I was to direct them to danger, and guide them through peril. No child's game was this, no ideal play. We were at war, and at war with mankind.

I formed my plans, I organized the whole system. Action must be founded on knowledge. I would have no crude abortive efforts. Our colossal thoughts should not degenerate into a frolic. Before we commenced our career of violence, I was determined that I would have a thorough acquaintance with the country. Every castle and every farmhouse should be catalogued. I longed for a map, that I might muse over it like a general. I looked upon our good arms with complacency. I rejoiced that most of us were cunning of fence. I determined that they should daily exercise with the broadsword, and that each should become a dead shot with his rifle. In the perfection of our warlike accomplishments, I sought a substitute for the weakness of our numbers.

The morning at length broke. I was not the least fatigued. I longed to commence my arrangements. It grew very cold. I slept for an hour. I was the first awake. I determined in future to have

a constant guard. I roused Pahlen. He looked fierce in his sleep. I rejoiced in his determined visage. I appointed him my lieutenant. I impressed upon him how much I depended upon his energy. We lighted an immense fire, arranged the chamber, and prepared their meal before any woke. I was determined that their resolution should be supported by the comfort which they found around them. I felt that cold and hunger are great sources of cowardice.

They arose in high spirits. Every thing seemed delightful. The morn appeared only a continuation of the enjoyment of the evening. When they were emboldened by a good meal, I developed to them my plans. I ordered Ulric de Brahe to be first on guard, a duty from which no one was to be exempt but Pahlen and myself. The post was the tower, which had given me the first earnest of their fealty in assembling. No one could now approach the castle without being perceived, and we took measures that the guard should be perfectly concealed. Parties were then ordered out in different directions, who were all to bring their report by the evening banquet. Pahlen alone was to repair to a more distant town, and to be absent four days. He took his cart, and we contrived to dress him as like a peasant as our wardrobe would permit. His purpose was to obtain different costumes, which were necessary for our enterprise. I remained with two of my men, and worked at the interior arrangements of our dwelling.

Thus passed a week, and each day the courage of my band became more inflamed. They panted for action. We were in want of meal. I determined to attack a farmer's grange on the ensuing eve, and I resolved to head the enterprise myself. I took with me Ulric and three others. We arrived an hour before sunset at the devoted settlement. It had been already well reconnoitred. Robberies in this country were unknown. We had to encounter no precautions. We passed the door of the granary, rifled it, stored our cart, and escaped without a dog barking. We returned two hours before midnight, and the excitement of this evening I never shall forget. All were bursting with mad enthusiasm. I alone looked grave, as if every thing depended upon my mind. It was astonishing the influence, that this assumption of seriousness, in the midst of their wild mirth, already produced upon my companions. I was indeed their chief. They placed in me unbounded confidence, and almost viewed me as a being of another order.

I sent off Pahlen the next day in the disguise of a pedlar to a neighbouring village. The robbery was the topic of universal conversation. Everybody was astounded, and no one was suspected. I determined, however, not to hazard in a hurry another enterprise in the neighbourhood. We wanted nothing except wine. Our guns each day procured us meat, and the farmer's meal was a plentiful source of bread. Necessity develops much talent. Already one of our party was pronounced an excellent cook; and the last fellow in the world we should ever have suspected, put an old oven into perfect order, and turned out a most ingenious mechanic.

It was necessary to make a diversion in a distant part of the forest. I sent out my lieutenant with a strong party. They succeeded in driving home from a very rich farm four fine cows in milk. This was a great addition to our luxuries, and Pahlen,

remaining behind, paid in disguise an observatory visit to another village in the vicinity, and brought us home the gratifying intelligence, that it was scouted that the robbers were a party from a town far away on the other side of the forest.

These causes of petty plundering prepared my band for the deeper deeds which I always contemplated. Parties were now out for days together. We began to be familiar with every square mile of country. Through this vast forest-land, but much removed from the castle, ran a high road on which there was great traffic. One evening, as Ulric and myself were prowling in this neighbourhood, we perceived a band of horsemen approaching. They were cloth-merchants, returning from a great fair, eight in number, but only one or two armed, and merely with pistols. A cloth-merchant's pistol, that had been probably loaded for years, and was borne, in all likelihood, by a man who would tremble at its own fire, did not appear a very formidable weapon. The idea occurred to both of us simultaneously. We put on our masks, and one of us ran out of each side of the road, and seized the bridle of the foremost horseman. I never saw a man so astonished in my life. He was, perhaps, even more astonished than afraid. But we gave them no time. I can scarcely describe the scene. There was dismounting, and the opening of the saddle-bags, and the clinking of coin. I remember wishing them good-night in the civilest tone possible, and then we were alone.

I stared at Ulric, Ulric stared at me, and then we burst into a loud laugh, and danced about the road. I quite lost my presence of mind, and rejoiced that no one but my favourite friend was present to witness my unheroic conduct. We had a couple of forest ponies, that we had driven home one day from a friendly farmer, tied up in an adjoining wood. We ran to them, jumped on, and scampered away without stopping for five or six hours, at least I think so, for it was an hour after sunset before the robbery was committed, and it was the last hour of the moon before we reached our haunt.

"The captain is come, the captain is come," was a sound that always summoned my band; fresh faggots were thrown on the fire, beakers of wine and brandy placed on the tables. I called for Pahlen and my pipe, flung myself on my seat, and dashing the purses upon the board, "Here," I said, "my boys, here is our first gold."

V.

THIS affair of the cloth-merchants made us quite mad. Four parties were stopped in as many days. For any of our companions to return without booty, or what was much more prized, without an adventure, was considered flat treason. Our whole band was now seldom assembled. The travellers to the fair were a never-failing source of profit.

Each day we meditated bolder exploits, and understanding that a wedding was about to take place at a neighbouring castle, I resolved to surprise the revellers in their glory, and capture the bride.

One evening, as seated in an obscure corner of the hall, I was maturing my plans for this great achievement, and most of my companions were assembled at their meal, Pahlen unexpectedly returned. He was evidently much fatigued. He

panted for breath, he was covered with sweat and dirt, his dress was torn and soiled, he reached the table with staggering steps, and seizing a mighty flask of Rhenish, emptied it at a draught.

"Where is the captain?" he anxiously inquired.

I advanced. He seized me by the arm, and led me out of the chamber.

"A strong party of police and military have entered the forest. They have taken up their quarters at a town not ten miles off. Their orders to discover our band are peremptory. Every spot is to be searched, and the castle will be the first. Not daring to return by our usual route, I have fought my way through the uncut woods. You must decide to-night. What will you do?"

"Their strength?"

"A company of infantry, a party of rangers, and a sufficiently stout body of police. Resistance is impossible."

"It seems so."

"And escape, unless we fly at once. To-morrow we shall be surrounded."

"The devil!"

"I wish to heaven we were once more in your rooms, Fleming!"

"Why, it would be as well! But, for Heaven's sake, be calm. If we quaver, what will the rest do? Let us summon our energies. Is concealment impossible? The dungeons?"

"Every hole will most assuredly be searched."

"An ambush might destroy them. We must fight if they run us to bay."

"Poh!"

"Blow up the castle, then!"

"And ourselves?"

"Well?"

"Heavens! what a madman you are! It was all you, Fleming, that got us in this infernal scrape. Why the devil should we become robbers, whom society has evidently intended to be robbed?"

"You are poignant, Pahlen. Come, let us to our friends." I took him by the arm, and we entered the hall together.

"Gentlemen," I said, "my lieutenant brings important intelligence. A strong party of military and police have entered the forest to discover and secure us. They are twenty to one, and therefore too strong for open combat; the castle cannot stand an hour's siege, and ambush, although it might prove successful, and gain us time, will eventually only render our escape more difficult, and our stay here impossible. I propose, therefore, that we should disperse for a few days, and before our departure, take heed that no traces of recent residence are left in this building. If we succeed in baffling their researches, we can again assemble here, or, which I conceive will be more prudent and more practicable, meet once more only to arrange our plans for our departure to another and a more distant country. We have ample funds, we can purchase a ship. Mingling with the crew as amateurs, we shall soon gain sufficient science. A new career is before us. The Baltic leads to the Mediterranean. Think of its blue waters, and beaming skies, its archipelagoes, and picturesque inhabitants. We have been bandits in a northern forest, let us now become pirates on a southern sea!"

No sympathetic cheer followed this eloquent appeal. There was a deep, dull, dead, dismal silence. I watched them narrowly. All looked with fixed

eyes upon the table. I stood with folded arms. The foot of Pahlen nervously patting against the ground was the only sound. At length, one by one, each dared to gaze upon another, and tried to read his fellow's thoughts. They could, without difficulty, detect the lurking, but terrible alarm.

"Well, gentlemen," I said, "time presses, I still trust I am your captain!"

"O! Fleming, Fleming," exclaimed the cook, with a broken voice and most piteous aspect, and dropping my title, which hitherto had been scrupulously observed, "How can you go on so! It is quite dreadful!"

There was an assenting murmur.

"I am sure," continued the artiste, whom I always knew was the greatest coward of the set, "I am sure I never thought it would come to this. I thought it was only a frolic. I have got led on, I am sure I do not know how. But you have such a way! What will our fathers think? Robbers! How horrible! And then suppose we are shot! O, Lord! what will our mothers say! And after all we are only a parcel of boys, and did it out of fun. O! what shall I do?"

The grave looks with which this comic ebullition was received, proved that the sentiments, however undignified in their delivery, were congenial to the band. The orator was emboldened by not being laughed at for the first time in his life, and proceeded—

"I am sure I think we had better give ourselves up, and then our families might get us through. We can tell the truth. We can say we only did it for fun, and can give up the money, and as much more as they like. I do not think they would hang us. Do you? Oh!"

"The-devil take the hindmost," said the young Count Bornholm, rising, "I am off. It will go hard if they arrest me, because I am out sporting with my gun, and if they do, I will give them my name, and then I should like to see them stop me."

"That will be best," all eagerly exclaimed, and rose. "Let us all disperse, each alone with his gun."

"Let us put out the fire," said the cook; "they may see the light."

"What, without windows?" said Bornholm.

"O! these police see every thing. What shall I do with the kettles? We shall all get detected. To think it should come to this! Shot! perhaps hung! Oh!"

"Throw every thing down the well," said Pahlen, "money and all."

Now I knew it was over. I had waited to hear Pahlen's voice, and I now saw it was all up. I was not sorry. I felt the inextricable difficulties in which we were involved, and what annoyed me most was, that I had hitherto seen no mode of closing my part with dignity.

"Gentlemen," I said, "as long as you are still within these walls, I am still your captain. You desert me, but I will not disgrace you. Fly then, fly to your schools and homes, to your affectionate parents and your dutiful tutors. I should have known with whom I leagued myself. I at least am not a boy, and although now a leader without followers, I will still, for the honour of my race, and of the world in which we breathe, I will still believe that I may find trustier bosoms, and pursue a more eminent career."

Ulric de Brahe rushed forward and placed himself by my side,—“Fleming,” he said, “I will never desert you!”

I pressed his hand with the warmth it deserved, but the feeling of solitude had come over me. I wished to be alone. “No, Ulric,” I replied, “we must part. I will tie no one to my broken fortunes. And my friends all, let us not part in bitterness. Excuse me if, in a moment of irritation, I said aught that was unkind to those I love, depreciating to those whose conduct I have ever had cause to admire. Some splendid hours we have passed together, some brief moments of gay revel, and glorious daring, and sublime peril. We must part. I will believe that our destiny, and not our will, separates us. My good sword,” I exclaimed, and I drew it from my scabbard, “in future you shall belong to the bravest of the brave,” and kissing it I presented it to Pahlen. “And now one brimming cup to the past. Pledge me all, and, in spite of every danger, with a merry face.”

Each man quaffed the goblet till it was dry, and performed the supernaculum, and then I walked to a distant part of the hall, whispering, as I passed Pahlen, “See that every thing necessary is done.”

The castle well was the general receptacle for all our goods and plunder. In a few minutes the old hall presented almost the same appearance as on our arrival. The fire was extinguished. Every thing disappeared. By the light of a solitary torch, each man took his rifle, and his knapsack, and his cloak, and then we were about to disperse. I shook hands with each. Ulric de Brahe lingered behind, and once more whispered his earnest desire to accompany me. But I forbade him, and he quitted me rather irritated.

I was alone. In a few minutes, when I believed that all had gone forth, I came out. Ere I departed, I stopped before the old castle, and gazed upon it in the gray moonlight. The mighty pines rose tall and black into the dark blue air. All was silent. The beauty and the stillness blended with my tumultuous emotions, and in a moment I dashed into poetry. Forgetting the imminent danger in which my presence in this spot, even my voice, might involve me, I poured forth my passionate farewell to the wild scene of my wilder life. I found a fierce solace in this expression of my heart. I discovered a substitute for the excitement of action in the excitement of thought. Deprived of my castle and my followers, I fled to my ideal world for refuge. There I found them—a forest far wilder and more extensive, a castle far more picturesque and awful, a band infinitely more courageous and more true. My imagination supported me under my overwhelming mortification. Crowds of characters, and incidents, and passionate scenes, clustered to my brain. Again I acted, again I gave the prompt decision, again I supplied the never-failing expedient, again we revelled, fought, and plundered.

It was midnight, when wrapping himself in his cloak, and making a bed of fern, the late Lord of Jonsterna betook himself to his solitary slumber beneath the wide canopy of heaven.

VI.

I rose with the sun, and the first thought that occurred to me was to write a tragedy. The castle in the forest, the Protean Pahlen, the tender-hearted Ulric, the craven cook, who was to be the traitor to

betray the all-interesting and marvellous hero, myself—here was material. What soliloquies, what action, what variety of character! I threw away my cloak, it wearied me, and walked on, waving my arm, and spouting a scene, I longed for the moment that I could deliver to an imperishable scroll these vivid creations of my fancy. I determined to make my way to the nearest town, and record these strong conceptions, ere the fire of my feelings died away. I was suddenly challenged by the advanced guard of a party of soldiers. They had orders to stop all travellers, and bring them to their commanding officer. I accordingly repaired to their chief.

I had no fear as to the result. I should affect to be a travelling student, and in case of any difficulty, I had determined to confide to the officer my name. But this was unnecessary. I went through my examination with such a confident air that nothing was suspected, and I was permitted to proceed. This was the groundwork for a new incident, and in the third act I instantly introduced a visit in disguise to the camp of the enemy.

I refreshed myself at a farmhouse, where I found some soldiers billeted. I was amused with being the subject of their conversation, and felt my importance. As I thought, however, it was but prudent to extricate myself from the forest without any unnecessary loss of time, I took my way towards its skirts, and continued advancing in that direction for several days, until I found myself in a country with which I was unacquainted. I had now gained the open country. Emerging from the straggling woodland one afternoon, about an hour before sunset, I found myself in a highly cultivated and beautiful land. A small, but finely formed lake spread before me, covered with wild fowl. On its opposite side rose a gentle acclivity, richly wooded, and crowned by a magnificent castle. The declining sun shed a beautiful warm light over the proud building, and its park, and gardens, and the surrounding land, which was covered with orchards, and small fields of tall golden grain.

The contrast of all this civilization and beauty with the recent scene of my savage existence, was very striking. I leaned in thought upon my rifle, and it occurred to me that also, in my dark work, although indeed its characteristic was the terrible, there too should be something sunny, and fresh, and fair. For if in nature, and in life, man finds these changes so delightful, so also should it be in the ideal and the poetic. And the thought of a heroine came into my mind. And while my heart was softened by the remembrance of woman, and the long repressed waters of my passionate affections came gushing through the stern rocks that had so long beat them away, a fanciful and sparkling equipage appeared advancing at a rapid pace to the castle. A light and brilliant carriage, drawn by four beautiful gray horses, and the chasseur in a hussar dress, and the caracoling outriders, announced a personage of distinction. They advanced, the road ran by my feet. As they approached, I perceived that there was only a lady in the carriage. I could not distinguish much, but my heart was prophetic of her charms. The carriage was within five yards of me. Never had I beheld so beautiful and sumptuous a creature. A strange feeling came over me, the carriage and the riders suddenly stopped, and its mistress, starting from her seat, exclaimed almost shouted, “Contarini! surely Contarini!”

VII.

I rushed forward, I seized her, extended hand, the voice called back the sweetness of the past, my memory struggled through the mist of many years—"Christiana!"

I had seen her once or twice since the golden age of our early loves, but not of late. I had heard too, that she had married, and heard it with a pang. Her husband, Count Norberg, I now learned, was the lord of the castle before us. I gave a hurried explanation of my presence—a walking tour, a sporting excursion, any thing did, while I held her sweet hand, and gazed upon her sparkling face.

I gave my gun and knapsack to an attendant, and jumped into the carriage. So many questions uttered in so kind a voice, I never felt happier. Our drive lasted only a few minutes, yet it was long enough for Christiana to tell me, a thousand times, how rejoiced she was to meet me, and how determined that I should be her guest.

We dashed through the castle gates. We alighted. I led her through the hall, up the lofty staircase, and into a suit of saloons. No one was there. She ran with me up stairs, would herself point out to me my room, and was wild with glee. "I have not time to talk now, Contarini. We dine in an hour. I will dress as fast as I can, and then we shall meet in the drawing-room."

I was alone, I threw myself into a chair, and uttered a deep sigh. It even surprised me, for I felt at this moment very happy. The servant entered with my limited wardrobe. I tried to make myself look as much like a man of the world, and as little like a bandit as possible; but I was certainly more picturesque than splendid. When I had dressed, I forgot to descend, and leaned over the mantel-piece, gazing on the empty stove. The remembrance of my boyhood overpowered me. I thought of the garden in which we had first met, of her visit to me in the dark, to solace my despair; I asked myself why, in her presence, every thing seemed beautiful, and I felt happy?

Some one tapped at the door. "Are you ready?" said the voice of voices. I opened the door, and taking her hand, we exchanged looks of joyful love, and descended together.

We entered the saloon; she led me up to a middle-aged but graceful personage; she introduced me to her husband, as the oldest and dearest of her friends. There were several other gentlemen in the room, who had come to enjoy the chase with their host, but no ladies. We dined at a round table, and I was seated by Christiana. The conversation ran almost entirely on the robbers, of whom I heard the most romantic and ridiculous accounts. I asked the countess how she should like to be the wife of a bandit chief?

"I hardly know what I should do," she answered playfully, "were I to meet with some of those interesting ruffians of whom we occasionally read; but I fear in this age of reality, these sentimental heroes would be difficult to discover."

"Yes, I have no doubt," said a young nobleman opposite, "that if we could detect this very captain, of whom we have daily heard such interesting details, we should find him to be nothing better than a decayed innkeeper, or a broken subaltern at the best."

"You think so?" I replied. "In this age we are as prone to disbelieve in the extraordinary, as

we were once eager to credit it. I differ with you about the subject of our present discussion, nor do I believe him to be by any means a common character."

My remark attracted general observation. I spoke in a confident, but slow and serious tone. I wished to impress on Christiana that I was no longer a child.

"But may I ask on what grounds you have formed your opinion?" said the count.

"Principally upon my own observation," I replied.

"Your own observation!" exclaimed my host. "What! have you seen him?"

"Yes."

They would have thought me joking had I not looked so grave, but my serious air ill accorded with their smiles.

"I was with him in the forest," I continued, "and had considerable conversation with him. I even accompanied him to his launt, and witnessed his assembled band."

"Are you serious!" all exclaimed. The countess was visibly interested.

"But were you not very much frightened?" she inquired.

"Why should I be frightened?" I answered; "a solitary student offered but poor prey. He would have passed me unnoticed, had I not sought his acquaintance, and he was a sufficiently good judge of human nature speedily to discover that I was not likely to betray him."

"And what sort of a man is he?" asked the young noble. "Is he young?"

"Very."

"Well! I think this is the most extraordinary incident that ever happened!" observed the count.

"It is most interesting," added the countess.

"Whatever may be his rank or appearance, it is all up with him by this time," remarked an old gentleman.

"I doubt it," I replied, mild, but firm.

"Doubt it! I tell you what, if you were a little older, and knew this forest as well as I do, you would see that his escape is impossible. Never were such arrangements. There is not a square foot of ground that will not be scoured, and stations left on every cross-road. I was with the commanding officer only yesterday. He cannot escape."

"He cannot escape," echoed a hitherto silent guest, who was a great sportsman. "I will bet any sum he is taken before the week is over."

"If it would not shock our fair hostess, Count Prater," I rejoined, "rest assured you should forfeit your stake."

My host and his guests exchanged looks, as if to ask each other who was this very young man who talked with such coolness on such very extraordinary subjects. But they were not cognizant of the secret cause of this exhibition. I wished to introduce myself as a man to the countess. I wished her to associate my name with something of a more exalted nature than our nursery romance. I did not, indeed, desire that she should conceive that I was less sensible to her influence, but I was determined that she should feel her influence was exercised over no ordinary being. I felt that my bold move had already in part succeeded. I more than once caught her eye, and read the blended feelings of

astonishment and interest with which she listened to me.

"Well! perhaps he may be taken in a week," said the betting Count Prater; "it would be annoying to lose my wager by an hour."

"Say a fortnight, then," said the young nobleman.

"A fortnight, a year, an age, what you please," observed.

"You will bet, then, that he will not be taken?" asked Count Prater, eagerly.

"I will bet that the expedition retires in despair," I replied.

"Well! what shall it be?" asked the count, feeling he had an excellent bet, and yet fearful from my youthful appearance, our host might deem it but delicate to insure its being a light one.

"O! what you please," I replied; "I seldom bet, but when I do, I care not how high the stake may be."

"Five, or fifty, or, if you please, five hundred dollars?" suggested the count.

"Five thousand, if you like."

"We are very moderate men here, baron," said our host with a smile, "you university heroes frighten us."

"Well, then," I exclaimed, pointing to the countess's left arm, "you see this ruby bracelet? the loser shall supply its fellow."

"Bravo!" said the young nobleman, and Prater was forced to consent.

A great many questions were now asked about the robbers, as to the nature and situation of their haunt, their numbers, their conduct. To all these queries I replied with as much detail as was safe, but with the air of one who was resolved not in any way to compromise the wild outlaws who had recognised his claim to be considered a man of honour.

In the evening, the count and his friends sat down to cards, and I walked up and down the saloon in conversation with Christiana. I found her manner to me greatly changed since the morning. She was evidently more constrained. Evidently she felt that, in her previous burst of cordiality, she had forgotten that time might have changed me more than it had her. I spoke to her little of home. I did not indulge in the details of domestic tattle. I surprised her by the wild and gloomy tone in which I mentioned myself and my fortunes. I mingled with my reckless prospect of the future, the bitterest sarcasms on my present lot, and when I almost alarmed her by my malignant misanthropy, I darted into a train of gay nonsense, or tender reminiscences, and piqued her by the easy and rapid mode in which my temper seemed to shift from morbid sensibility to callous mockery.

VIII.

I RETIRED to my room, I wrote a letter to my servant at the university, directing him to repair to Norberg Castle with my horses and wardrobe. The fire blazed brightly, the pen was fresh and brisk, the idea rushed into my head in a moment, and I commenced my tragedy. I had already composed the first scene in my head. The plot was simple, and had been finally arranged while walking up and down the room with the countess. A bandit chief falls in love with the wife of a rich noble, the governor of the province, which is the scene of his ra-

vages. I sat up nearly all night in fervid composition. I wrote with greater facility than before, because my experience of life was so much increased that I had no difficulty in making my characters think and act. There was indeed little art in my creation, but there was much vitality.

I rose very late, and found the chase had long ago called forth my fellow-guests. I could always find amusement in musing over my next scene, and I sauntered forth, almost unconscious of what I did. I found Christiana in a very fanciful flower-garden. She was bending down, tending a favourite plant. My heart beat, my spirit seemed lighter, she heard my step, she raised her smiling face, and gave me a flower.

"Ah! does not this remind you," I said, "of a spot of early days? I should grieve if you had forgotten the scene of our first acquaintance."

"The dear garden-house," exclaimed Christiana, with an arch smile. "Never shall I forget it. O! Contarini, what a little boy you were then!"

We wandered about together till the noon had long passed, talking of old times, and then we entered the castle for rest. She was as gay as a young creature in spring, but I was grave though not gloomy. I listened to her musical voice. I watched the thousand ebullitions of her beaming grace. I could not talk. I could only assent to her cheerful observations, and repose in peaceful silence, full of tranquil joy. The morning died away, the hunters returned, we reassembled again to talk over the day's exploits, and speculate on the result of my bet with Count Prater.

No tidings were heard of the robbers; nearly every observation of yesterday was repeated. It was a fine specimen of rural conversation. They ate keenly, they drank freely, and I rejoiced when they were fairly seated again at their card-table, and I was once more with Christiana.

I was delighted when she quitted the harp, and seated herself at the piano. I care little for a melodious voice, as it gives me no ideas, but instrumental music is a true source of inspiration, and as Christiana executed the magnificent overture of a great German master, I moulded my feelings of the morning into a scene, and when I again found myself in my room, I recorded it with facility, or only with a degree of difficulty with which it was exhilarating to contend.

At the end of three days my servant arrived, and gave me the first information that myself and my recent companions were expelled, for which I cared as little as for their gold medal.

Three weeks flew away, distinguished by no particular incident, except the loss of his gage by Count Prater, and my manifold care that he should redeem it. The robbers could not in any manner be traced, although Jonsterna afforded some indications. The wonder increased, and was universal, and my exploits afforded a subject for a pamphlet, the cheapness of whose price the publisher earnestly impressed upon us could only be justified by its extensive circulation.

Three weeks had flown away, three sweet weeks, and flown away in the almost constant presence of Christiana, or in scarcely less delightful composition. My tragedy was finished. I resolved to return home, I longed to bring my reputation to the test, yet I lingered about Christiana.

I lingered about her as the young bird about the first sunny fruit his inexperienced love dare not

touch. I was ever with her, and each day grew more silent. I joined her exhausted by composition. In her presence I sought refreshing solace, renewed inspiration. I spoke little, for one feeling alone occupied my being, and even of that I was not cognizant, for its nature to me was indefinite and indistinct, although its power was constant and irresistible. But I avenged myself for this strange silence when I was once more alone, and my fervid page teemed with the imaginary passion, of whose reality my unpractised nature was not yet convinced.

One evening, as we were walking together in the saloon, and she was expressing her wish that I would remain, and her wonder as to the necessity of my returning, which I described as so imperative, suddenly and in the most unpremeditated manner, I made her the confidant of my literary secret. I was charmed with the temper in which she received it, the deep and serious interest which she expressed in my success. "Do you know," she added, "Contarini, you will think it very odd, but I have always believed you were intended for a poet."

My sparkling eye, sparkling with hope and affection, thanked her for her sympathy, and it was agreed that on the morrow I should read to her my production.

I was very nervous when I commenced. This was the first time that my composition had been submitted to a human being, and now this submission was to take place in the presence of the author, through the medium of his voice. As I proceeded, I grew rather more assured. The interest which Christiana really found, or affected to find, encouraged me. If I hesitated, she said, "beautiful!" whenever I paused, she exclaimed, "interesting!" My voice grew firmer, the interest which I myself took banished my false shame. I grew excited, my modulated voice impressed my sentiments, and my action sometimes explained them. The robber scene was considered wonderful, and full of life and nature. Christiana marvelled how I could have invented such extraordinary things and characters. At length I came to my heroine. Her beauty was described in an elaborate, and far too poetic passage. It was a perfect fac-simile of the countess. It was ridiculous. She herself felt it, and looking up, smiled with a faint blush.

I had now advanced into the very heart of the play, and the scenes of sentiment had commenced. I had long since lost my irresolution. The encouragement of Christiana, and the delight which I really felt in my writing, made me more than bold. I really acted before her. She was susceptible. All know how very easy it is for a very indifferent drama, if well performed, to soften even the callous. Her eyes were suffused with tears, my emotion was also visible. I felt like a man brought out of a dungeon, and groping his way in the light. How could I have been so blind when all was so evident? It was not until I had recited to Christiana my fictitious passion, that I had become conscious of my real feelings. I had been ignorant all this time that I had been long fatally in love with her. I threw away my manuscript, and seizing her hand, "O Christiana!" I exclaimed, "what mockery is it thus to veil truth! Before you is the leader of the band of whom you have heard so much. He adores you."

She started, I cannot describe the beautiful consternation of her countenance.

"Contarini," she exclaimed, "are you mad! what can you mean?"

"Mean!" I poured forth, "is it doubtful? Yes! I repeat, I am the leader of that band whose exploits have so recently alarmed you. Cannot you now comprehend the story of my visiting their haunt? Was it probable, was it possible, that I should have been permitted to gain their secret and to retire? The robbers were youth like myself, weary of the dull monotony of our false and wretched life. We have yielded to overwhelming force, but we have baffled all pursuit. For myself, I quit forever the country I abhor. Ere a year has passed, I shall roam a pirate on the far waves of the Ægean. One tie only binds me to this rigid clime. In my life I have loved only one being. I look upon her. Yes! yes! it is you, Christiana. On the very brink of my exile, destiny has brought us once more together. O! let us never part! Be mine,—be mine! Share with me my glory, my liberty, and my love!"

I poured forth this rhapsody with impassionate haste. The countess stared with blank astonishment. She appeared even alarmed. Suddenly she sprang up and ran out of the room.

IX.

I WAS enraged, and I was confused. I do not know whether I felt more shame or more irritation. My vanity impelled me to remain some time with the hope she would return. She did not, and seizing my tragedy, I rushed into the park. I met my servant exercising a horse. I sent him back to the castle alone, jumped on my steed, and in a few minutes was galloping along the high road to the metropolis.

It was about one hundred miles distant. When I arrived home I found that my father and the baroness were in the country. I was not sorry to be alone, as I really had returned without any object, and had not, in any degree, prepared myself to meet my father. After some consideration I enclosed my tragedy to a most eminent publisher, and I sent it him from a quarter whither he could gain no clew as to its source. I pressed him for a reply without unnecessary loss of time, and he, unlike these gentry, who really think themselves far more important personages than those by whose wits they live, was punctual. In the course of a week he returned me my manuscript, with his compliments, and an extract from the letter of his principal critic, in which my effusion was described as a laboured exaggeration of the most unnatural features of the German school. The day I received this my father arrived.

He was alone, and had merely come up to town to transact business. He was surprised to see me, but said nothing of my expulsion, although I felt confident he must be aware of it. We dined together alone. He talked to me at dinner of indifferent subjects, of alterations at his castle, and the state of Europe. As I wished to conciliate him, I affected to take great interest in this latter topic, and I thought he seemed pleased with the earnest readiness with which I interfered in the discussion. After dinner he remarked, very quietly filling his glass, "Had you communicated with me, Contarini, I could perhaps have saved you the disgrace of expulsion."

I was quite taken by surprise, and looked very

confused. At last I said, "I fear, sir, I have occasioned you too often great mortification, but I sometimes cannot refrain from believing that I may yet make a return to you for all your goodness."

"Every thing depends upon yourself, Contarini. You have elected to be your own master. You must take the consequences of your courage, or your rashness. What are your plans? I do not know whether you mean to honour me with your confidence as a friend. I do not even aspire to the authority of a father."

"O! pray, sir, do not say so. I place myself entirely at your disposal. I desire nothing more ardently than to act under your command. I assure you that you will find me a very different personage than you imagine. I am impressed with a most earnest and determined resolution to become a practical man. You must not judge of me by my boyish career. The very feelings that made me revolt at the discipline of schools, will ensure my subordination in the world. I took no interest in their petty pursuits, and their minute legislation interfered with my more extended views."

"What views?" asked my father, with a smile.

I was somewhat puzzled, but I answered, "I wish, sir, to influence men."

"But before you influence others, you must learn to influence yourself. Now those who would judge, perhaps imperfectly, of your temperament, Contarini, would suppose that its characteristic was a nature so headstrong and imprudent that it could not fail of involving its possessor in many dangerous, and sometimes even in very ridiculous positions."

I was silent, with my eyes fixed on the ground.

"I think you have sufficient talents for all that I could reasonably desire, Contarini," continued my father; "I think you have talents indeed for any thing; I mean, that a rational being can desire to attain; but you sadly lack judgment. I think that you are the most imprudent person with whom I ever was acquainted. You have a great enemy, Contarini, a great enemy in yourself. You have a great enemy in your imagination. I think if you could control your imagination, you might be a great man.

"It is a fatal gift, Contarini; for when possessed in its highest quality and strength, what has it ever done for its votaries! What were all those great poets of whom we now talk so much, what were they in their lifetime? The most miserable of their species. Depressed, doubtful, obscure, or involved in petty quarrels and petty precautions, often unappreciated, utterly un influential, beggars, flatterers of men unworthy even of their recognition—what a train of disgusting incidents, what a record of degrading circumstances is the life of a great poet? A man of great energies aspires that they should be felt in his lifetime, that his existence should be rendered more intensely vital by the constant consciousness of his multiplied and multiplying power. Is posthumous fame a substitute for all this? Viewed in every light and under every feeling, it is alike a mockery. Nay, even try the greatest by this test, and what is the result? Would you sooner have been Homer or Julius Cæsar, Shakspeare or Napoleon? No one doubts. Moralists may cloud truth with every possible adumbration of cant, but the nature of our being gives the lie to all their assertions. We are active beings,

and our sympathy, above all other sympathies is with great action.

"Remember, Contarini, that all this time I am taking for granted that you may be a Homer. Let us now recollect that it is perhaps the most improvable incident that can occur. The high poetic talent,—as if to prove that a poet is only, at the best, a wild, although a beautiful error of nature,—the high poetic talent is the rarest in creation. What you have felt is what I have felt myself, is what all men have felt; it is the consequence of our native and inviolate susceptibility. As you advance in life, and become more callous, more acquainted with man, and with yourself, you will find it, even daily, decrease. Mix in society, and I will answer that you lose your poetic feeling; for in you, as in the great majority, it is not a creative faculty originating in a peculiar organization, but simply the consequence of a nervous susceptibility that is common to all."

I suspected very much, that my father had stumbled on the unhappy romance of the "Wild Hunter of Rodenstein," which I had left lying about my drawers, but I said nothing. He proceeded.

"The time has now arrived which may be considered a crisis in your life. You have, although very young, resolved that society should consider you a man. No preparatory situation can now veil your indiscretions. A youth at the university may commit outrages with impunity, which will affix a lasting prejudice on a person of the same age, who has quitted the university. I must ask you again, what are your plans?"

"I have none, sir, except your wishes. I feel acutely the truth of all you have observed. I assure you I am as completely and radically cured of any predisposition that I confess I once conceived I possessed for literary invention, as even you could desire. I will own to you that my ambition is very great. I do not think that I should find life tolerable unless I were in an eminent position, and conscious that I deserved it. Fame, although not posthumous fame, is, I feel, necessary to my felicity. In a word, I wish to devote myself to affairs—I attend only your commands."

"If it meet your wishes, I will appoint you my private secretary. The post, particularly when confirmed by the confidence which must subsist between individuals connected as we are, is the best school for public affairs. It will prepare you for any office."

"I can conceive nothing more delightful. You could not have fixed upon an appointment more congenial to my feelings. To be your constant companion, in the slightest degree to alleviate the burden of your labours, to be considered worthy of your confidence—this is all that I could desire. I only fear that my ignorance of routine may at first inconvenience you, but trust me, dear father, that if devotion, and the constant exertion of any talents I may possess can aid you, they will not be wanting. Indeed, indeed, sir, you never shall repent your goodness."

This same evening I consigned my tragedy to the flames.

X.

I devoted myself to my new pursuits with as much fervour as I had done to the study of Greek.

The former secretary initiated me in the mysteries of routine business. My father, although he made no remark, was evidently pleased at the facility and quickness with which I attained this formal, but necessary information. Vattel and Martens were my private studies. I was greatly interested with my novel labours. Foreign policy opened a dazzling vista of splendid incident. It was enchanting to be acquainted with the secrets of European cabinets, and to control or influence their fortunes. A year passed with more satisfaction than any period of my former life. I had become of essential service to my father. My talent for composition found full exercise, and afforded him great aid in drawing up state papers and manifestoes, despatches and decrees. We were always together. I shared his entire confidence. He instructed me in the characters of the public men who surrounded us, and of those who were more distant. I was astonished at the scene of intrigue that opened on me. I found that in some, even of his colleagues, I was only to perceive secret enemies, and in others but necessary tools and tolerated encumbrances. I delighted in the danger, the management, the negotiation, the suspense, the difficult gratification of his high ambition.

Intent as he was to make me a great statesman, he was scarcely less anxious that I should become a finished man of the world. He constantly impressed upon me that society was a politician's great tool, and the paramount necessity of cultivating its good graces. He afforded me an ample allowance. He encouraged me in a lavish expenditure. Above all, he was ever ready to dilate upon the character of women, and while he astonished me by the tone of depreciation in which he habitually spoke of them, he would even magnify their influence, and the necessity of securing it.

I modelled my character upon that of my father. I imbibed his deep worldliness. With my usual impetuosity, I even exaggerated it. I recognised self-interest as the spring of all action. I received it as a truth, that no man was to be trusted, and no woman to be loved. I gloried in secretly believing myself the most callous of men, and that nothing could tempt me to compromise my absorbing selfishness. I laid it down as a principle, that all considerations must yield to the gratification of my ambition. The arduous and assiduous with which I fulfilled my duties and prosecuted my studies, had rendered me, at the end of two years, a very skilful politician. My great fault, as a man of affairs, was, that I was too fond of patronising charlatans, and too ready to give every adventurer credit for great talents. The moment a man started a new idea, my active fancy conjured up all the great results, and conceived that his was equally prophetic. But here my father's severe judgment and sharp experience always interfered for my benefit, and my cure was assisted by hearing a few of my black swans cackle, instead of chant. As a member of society, I was entirely exempt from the unskilful affectation of my boyhood. I was assured, arrogant, and bitter, but easy, and not ungraceful. The men trembled at my sarcasms, and the women repeated with wonderment my fantastic rallery. My position in life, and the exaggerated halo with which, in my case, as in all others, the talents of eminent youth were injudiciously invested, made me courted by all, especially by the daughters of Eve. I was sometimes nearly the victim of hackneyed

experience—sometimes I trifled with affections, which my parental instructions taught me never to respect. On the whole, I considered myself as one of the most important personages in the country, possessing the greatest talents, the profoundest knowledge of men and affairs, and the most perfect acquaintance with society. When I look back upon myself at this period, I have difficulty in conceiving a more unamiable character.

XI.

IN the third year of my political life, the prime minister suddenly died. Here was a catastrophe! Who was to be his successor? Here was a fruitful theme for speculation and intrigue. Public opinion pointed to my father, who indeed, if qualification for the post were only considered, had no competitor; but Baron Fleming was looked upon by his brother nobles with a jealous eye, and although not unwilling to profit by his labours, they were chary of permitting them too uncontrolled a scope. He was talked of as a new man: he was treated as scarcely national. The state was not to be placed at the disposal of an adventurer. He was not one of themselves. It was a fatal precedent, that the veins of the prime minister should be filled with any other blood but that of their ancient order. Even many of his colleagues did not affect to conceal their hostility to his appointment, and the Count de Moltke, who was supposed to possess every quality that should adorn the character of a first minister, was openly announced as the certain successor to the vacant office. The Count de Moltke was a frivolous old courtier, who had gained his little experience in long service in the household, and, even were he appointed, could only anticipate the practicability of carrying on affairs by implicit confidence in his rival. The Count de Moltke was a tool.

Skilful as my father was in controlling and veiling his emotion, the occasion was too powerful even for his firmness. For the first time in his life he sought a confidant, and, firm in the affection of a son, he confessed to me, with an agitation which was alone sufficient to express his meaning, how entirely he had staked his felicity on this cast. He could not refrain from bitterly dilating on the state of society, in which secret influence, and the prejudices of a bigoted class, should for a moment permit one, who had devoted all the resources of a high intellect to the welfare of his country, to be placed in momentary competition, still more in permanent inferiority with such an inflexible nonentity as the Count de Moltke.

Every feeling in my nature prompted me to energy. I counselled my father to the most active exertions, but although subtle, he was too cautious, and where he was himself concerned, even timorous. I had no compunction, and no fear. I would scruple at no means which could ensure our end. The feeling of society, was in general, in our favour. Even among the highest class, the women were usually on the side of my father. Baroness Engel, who was the evening star that beamed unrivalled in all our assemblies, and who fancied herself a little Dutchess de Longueville, delighted in a political intrigue. I affected to make her our confidante. We resolved together that the only mode was to render our rival ridiculous. I wrote an anonymous pamphlet in favour of the appointment

of the Count de Moltke. It took in everybody, until in the last page they read my panegyric of his cream cheeses. It was in vain that the Count de Moltke, and all his friends, protested that his excellency had never made a cream cheese in the whole course of his life. The story was too probable not to be true. He was just the old fool who would make a cream cheese. I secured the channel of our principal journals. Each morning teemed with a diatribe against backstairs influence, the prejudices of a nobility who were behind their age, and indignant histories of the maladministration of court favourites. The evening, by way of change, brought only an epigram, sometimes a song. The fashion took: all the youth were on our side. One day, in imitation of the *Tre Giuli*, we published a whole volume of epigrams, all on cream cheeses. The baroness was moreover an inimitable caricaturist. The shops were filled with infinite scenes, in which a ludicrous old fribble, such as we might fancy a French marquis before the Revolution, was ever committing something irresistibly ludicrous. In addition to all this, I hired ballad singers, who were always chanting in the public walks, and even under the windows of the palace, the achievements of the unrivalled manufacturer of cream cheeses.

In the mean time my father was not idle. He had discovered that the Count de Bragnaes, one of the most influential nobles in the country, and the great supporter of De Moltke, was ambitious of becoming Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and that De Moltke had hesitated in pledging himself to this arrangement, as he could not perceive how affairs could be carried on if my father was entirely dismissed. My father opened a secret negotiation with De Bragnaes, and shook before his eyes the glittering seals he coveted. De Bragnaes was a dolt, but my father required only tools, and felt himself capable of fulfilling the duties of the whole ministry. This great secret was not concealed from me. I opposed the arrangement, not only because De Bragnaes was absolutely insufficient, but because I wished to introduce into the cabinet Baron Engel.

The post of chief minister had now been three weeks vacant, and the delay was accounted for by the illness of the sovereign, who was nevertheless in perfect health. All this excitement took place at the very season we were all assembled in the capital for the purposes of society. My father was everywhere, and each night visible. I contrasted the smiling indifference of his public appearance with the agonies of ambition, which it was my doom alone to witness.

I was alone with my father in his cabinet when a royal messenger summoned him to the presence. The king was at a palace about ten miles from the city. It did not in any way follow from the invitation that my father was successful: all that we felt assured of was, that the crisis had arrived. We exchanged looks, but not words. Intense as was suspense, business prevented me from attending my father, and waiting in the royal antechamber to hear the great result. He departed.

I had to receive an important deputation, the discussion of whose wishes employed the whole morning. It was with extreme difficulty that I could command my attention. Never in my life had I felt so nervous. Each moment a messenger entered, I believed that he was the important one. No

carriage dashed into the court-yard that did not to my fancy bear my father. At last the deputation retired, and then came private interviews and urgent correspondence.

It was twilight. The servant had lit one burner of the lamp, when the door opened, and my father stood before me. I could scarcely refrain from crying out. I pushed out the astonished waiting-man, and locked the door.

My father looked grave, serious, I thought a little depressed. "All is over," thought I, and in an instant I began speculating on the future, and had created much, when my father's voice called me back to the present scene.

"His majesty, Contarini," said my father in a dry, formal manner, as if he were speaking to one who had never witnessed his weakness—"His majesty has been graciously pleased to appoint me to the supreme office of president of his council; and as a further mark of his entire confidence and full approbation of my past services, he has thought fit to advance me to the dignity of count."

Was this frigid form that stood unmoved before me the being whom, but four-and-twenty hours ago, I had watched trembling with his high passions? Was this curt, unimpassioned tone, the voice in which he should have notified the crowning glory of his fortunes to one who had so struggled in their behalf? I could scarcely speak. I hardly congratulated him.

"And your late post, sir?" I at length inquired.

"The seals of this office will be held by the Baron de Bragnaes."

I shrugged my shoulders in silence.

"The king is not less aware than myself that his excellency can bring but a slight portion of intellectual strength to the new cabinet; that he is one indeed about to be placed in a position, to discharge the duties of which he is incapable; but his majesty as well as myself, has unbounded confidence in the perfect knowledge, the energetic assiduity, and the distinguished talents of the individual who will fulfil the duties of under-secretary. He will be the virtual head of this great department. Allow me to be the first to congratulate Count Contarini Fleming on his new dignity, and his entrance into the service of his sovereign."

I rushed forward, I seized his hand. "My dear father," I said, "I am quite overwhelmed. I dreamed not of this. I never thought of myself, I thought only of you."

He pressed my hand, but did not lose his composure. "We dine together to-day alone," he said, "I must now see De Bragnaes. At dinner I will tell you all. Nothing will be announced till to-morrow. Your friend, Engel, is not forgotten."

He quitted the chamber. The moment he disappeared I could no longer refrain from glancing in the mirror. Never had I marked so victorious a visage. An unnatural splendour sparkled in my eye, my lip was impressed with energy, my nostril dilated with triumph. I stood before the tall mirror, and planted my foot, and waved my arm. So much more impressive is reality than imagination! Often, in reverie, had I been an Alberoni, a Ripperda, a Richelieu; but never had I felt, when moulding the destinies of the wide globe, a title of the triumphant exultation which was afforded by the consciousness of the simple fact that I was an under-secretary of state.

XII.

I HAD achieved by this time what is called a great reputation. I do not know that there was any one more talked of, and more considered in the country, than myself. I was my father's only confidant, and secretly his only counsellor. I managed De Bragnæs admirably, and always suggested to him the opinion, which I at the same time requested. He was a mere cipher. As for the Count de Moltke, he was very rich, with an only daughter, and my father had already hinted at, what I had even turned in my own mind, a union with the wealthy, although not very pleasing, offspring of the maker of cream cheeses.

At this moment, in the zenith of my popularity and power, the Norbergs returned to the capital. I had never seen them since the mad morning which, with all my boasted callousness, I ever blushed to remember, for the count had, immediately after my departure, been appointed to a very important, although distant government. Nor had I ever heard of them. I never wished to. I drove their memory from my mind; but Christiana, who had many correspondents, and among them the baroness, had, of course, heard much of me.

Our family was the first they called upon, and, in spite of the mortifying awkwardness of the meeting, it was impossible to avoid it, and therefore I determined to pay my respects to them immediately. I was careful to call when I knew I could not be admitted, and the first interview finally took place at our own house. Christiana received me with the greatest kindness, although with increased reserve, which might be accounted for by the time that had elapsed since we last met, and the alteration that had since taken place both in my age and station. In all probability, she looked upon my present career as a sufficient guaranty that my head was cleared of the wild fancies of my impetuous boyhood, and rejoicing in this accomplishment, and anticipating our future and agreeable acquaintance, she might fairly congratulate herself on the excellent judgment which had prompted her to pass over in silence my unpardonable indiscretion.

Her manner put me so completely at my case that, in a moment after my salute, I wondered I could have been so foolish as to have brooded over it. The countess was unaltered, except that she looked perhaps more beautiful. She was a rare creation that time loved to spare. That sweet, and blooming, and radiant face, and that tall, and shapely, and beaming form—not a single bad passion had ever marred their light and grace, all the freshness of an innocent heart had embalmed their perennial loveliness.

The party seemed dull. I, who was usually a great talker, could not speak. I dared not attempt to be alone with Christiana. I watched her only at a distance, and indicated my absorbing mood to others only by my eurt and discouraging answers. When all was over, I retired to my own rooms exceedingly gloomy and dispirited.

I was in these days but a wild beast, who thought himself a civilized and human being. I was profoundly ignorant of all that is true and excellent. An unnatural system, like some grand violence of nature, had transformed the teeming and beneficent ocean of my mind into a sandy and arid desert. I had not then discovered even a faint adumbration of the philosophy of our existence. Blessed by

nature with a heart that is the very shrine of sensibility, my infamous education had succeeded in rendering me the most selfish of my species.

But nature, as the philosophic Winter impressed upon me, is stronger than education, and the presence of this woman, this sudden appearance, amid my corrupt, and heartless, and artificial life, of so much innocence, and so much love, and so much simplicity, they fell upon my callous heart like the first rains upon a Syrian soil, and the refreshed earth responded to the kindly influence by an instant recurrence to its nature.

I recoiled with disgust from the thought of my present life; I flew back with rapture to my old aspirations. And the beautiful, for which I had so often and so early sighed, and the love that I felt indispensable to my panting frame, and the deep sympathy for all creation that seemed my being, and all the dazzling and extending glory that had hovered, like a halo, round my youthful visions—they returned—they returned in their might and their splendour, and when I remembered what I was, I buried my face in my hands and wept.

I retired to my bed, but I could not sleep. I saw no hope, yet I was not miserable. Christiana could never be mine. I did not wish her to be. I could not contemplate such an incident. I had prided myself on my profligacy, but this night avenged my innate purity. I threw off my factitious passions. It was the innocence of Christiana that exercised over me a spell so potent. Her unsophisticated heart awoke in me a passion for the natural and the pure. She was not made to be the heroine of a hackneyed adventure. To me she was not an individual, but a personification of Nature. I gazed upon her only as I would upon a beautiful landscape, with an admiring sympathy which ennobles my feelings, invigorates my intellect, and calls forth the latent poetry of my being.

The thought darted into my mind in a moment. I cannot tell how it came. It seemed inspiration, but I responded to it with an eager, and even fierce sympathy. Said I that the thought darted into my mind? Let me recall the weak phrase, let me rather say, that a form rose before me in the depth of the dull night, and that form was myself. That form was myself, yet also another. I beheld a youth who, like me, had stifled the breathing forms of his young creation; who, like me, in the cold wilderness of the world, looked back with a mournful glance at the bright gates of the sweet garden of fancy he had forfeited. I felt the deep and agonizing struggle of his genius and his fate; and my prophetic mind, bursting through all the thousand fetters that had been forged so cunningly to bind it in its cell, the inspiration of my nature, that beneficent demon who will not desert those who struggle to be wise and good—tore back the curtain of the future, and I beheld, seated on a glorious throne on a proud Acropolis, one to whom a surrounding and enthusiastic people offered a laurel crown. I laboured to catch the fleeting features and the changing countenance of him who sat upon the throne. Was it the strange youth, or was it indeed myself?

I jumped out of bed. I endeavoured to be calm. I asked myself, soberly, whether I had indeed seen a vision, or whether it were but the invisible phantasm of an ecstatic reverie? I looked round me; there was nothing. The moonbeam was stationary on the wall. I opened the window and looked out

upon the vast, and cold, and silent street. The bitterness of the night cooled me. The pulsations of my throbbing head subsided. I regained my bed, and instantly sank into a sweet sleep.

The aunt of the Countess Fleming had died, and left to my stepdane the old garden-house, which is not perhaps forgotten. As I had always continued on the best possible terms with the countess, and, indeed, was in all points quite her standard of perfection, she had, with great courtesy, permitted me to make her recently-acquired mansion my habitation, when important business occasionally made me desire for its transaction a spot less subject to constant interruption than my office and my home.

To the garden-house I repaired the next morning at a very early hour. I was so eager that I ordered, as I dismounted, my rapid breakfast, and in a few minutes, this being despatched, I locked myself up in my room, giving orders not to be disturbed, except by a message from my father.

I took up a pen. I held it in the light. I thought to myself what will be its doom, but I said nothing. I began writing some hours before noon, nor did I ever cease. My thoughts, my passion, the rush of my invention, were too quick for my pen. Page followed page; as a sheet was finished I threw it on the floor; I was amazed at the rapid and prolific production, yet I could not stop to wonder. In half a dozen hours I sank back utterly exhausted, with an aching frame. I rang the bell, ordered some refreshment, and walked about the room. The wine invigorated me, and warmed up my sinking fancy, which however required little fuel. I set to again, and it was midnight before I retired to my bed.

The next day I again rose early, and, with a bottle of wine at my side, for I was determined not to be disturbed, I dashed at it again. I was not less successful. This day I finished my first volume.

The third morning I had less inclination to write. I read over and corrected what I had composed. This warmed up my fancy, and in the afternoon I executed several chapters of my second volume.

Each day, although I had not in the least lost my desire of writing, I wrote slower. It was necessary for me each day to read my work from the beginning, before I felt the existence of the characters sufficiently real to invent their actions. Nevertheless, on the morning of the seventh day, the second and last volume was finished.

My book was a rapid sketch of the development of the poetic character. My hero was a youth whose mind was ever combating with his situation. Gifted with a highly poetic temperament, it was the office of his education to counteract all its ennobling tendencies. I traced the first indication of his predisposition, the growing consciousness of his powers, his reveries, his loneliness, his doubts, his moody misery, his ignorance of his art, his failures, his despair. I painted his agonizing and ineffectual efforts to exist like those around him. I poured forth my own passion, when I described the fervour of his love.

All this was serious enough, and the most singular thing is that all this time, it never struck me that I was delineating my own character. But now comes the curious part. In depicting the scenes of society in which my hero was forced to move, I

suddenly dashed, not only into the most slashing satire, but even into malignant personality. All the bitterness of my heart, occasioned by my wretched existence among their false circles, found its full vent. Never was any thing so imprudent. Everybody figured, and all parties and opinions alike suffered. The same hand that immortalized the cream cheeses of poor Count de Moltke, now avenged his wrongs.

For the work itself, it was altogether a most crude performance, teeming with innumerable faults. It was entirely deficient in art. The principal character, although forcibly conceived, for it was founded on truth, was not sufficiently developed. Of course the others were much less so. The incidents were unnatural, the serious characters exaggerations, the comic ones caricatures; the wit was too often flippant, the philosophy too often forced; yet the vigour was remarkable, the license of an uncurbed imagination not without its charms, and, on the whole, there breathed a freshness which is rarely found, and which, perhaps, with all my art and knowledge, I may never again afford: and indeed when I recall the magnificent enthusiasm, the glorious heat, with which this little work was written, I am convinced that, with all its errors, the spark of true creation animated its fiery page.

Such is the history of "Manstein," a work which exercised a strange influence on my destiny.

XIII.

I PERSONALLY intrusted my novel to the same bookseller to whom I had anonymously submitted my tragedy. He required no persuasion to have the honour of introducing it to the world, and had he hesitated, I would myself have willingly undertaken the charge, for I was resolved to undergo the ordeal. I swore him to the closest secrecy, and, as mystery is part of the craft, I had confidence that his interest would prompt him to maintain his honour.

All now being finished, I suddenly and naturally resumed my obvious and usual character. The pouring forth had relieved my mind, and the strong feelings that prompted it having subsided, I felt a little of the lassitude that succeeds exertion. That reaction, to which ardent and inexperienced minds are subject, now also occurred. I lost my confidence in my effusion. It seemed impossible that any thing I had written could succeed, and I felt that nothing but decided success could justify a person in my position to be an author. I had determined to recall the rash deposit, but a mixture of false shame and lingering hope that I might yet be happily mistaken, dissuaded me. I resolved to think no more of it. It was an inconsiderate venture, but secrecy would preserve me from public shame, and as for my private mortification, I should at least derive from failure a beneficial conviction of my literary incompetency, and increased energy to follow up the path which fortune seemed to destine for my pursuit. Official circumstances occurred also at this moment, which imperatively demanded all my attention, and which indeed interested my feelings in no ordinary degree.

The throne of my royal master had been guaranteed to him by those famous treaties which, at the breaking up of that brilliant vision, the French empire, had been vainly considered by the great European powers as ensuring the permanent settle-

ment of Europe. A change of dynasty had placed the king in a delicate position, but by his sage councils and discreet conduct the last burst of the revolutionary storm passed over without striking his diadem. One of the most distinguished instances of the ministerial dexterity of my father was the discovery of a latent inclination in certain of our powerful allies, to favour the interests of the abdicated dynasty, and ultimately to dispute the succession, which, at the moment, distracted by the multiplicity of important and engrossing interests, they deemed themselves too hastily to have recognised. In this conjuncture, an appeal to arms on our part was idle, and all to which we could trust in bringing about a satisfactory adjustment of this paramount question, was diplomatic ingenuity. For more than three years, secret, but active negotiations had been on foot to attain our end, and circumstances had now occurred which induced us to believe that, by certain combinations, the result might be realized.

I took a very great interest in these negotiations, and was the only person out of the cabinet to whom they were confided. The situation of the prince royal, himself a very accomplished personage, but whose unjust unpopularity offered no obstacle to the views of his enemies, extremely commanded my sympathy: the secrecy, importance, and refined difficulty of the transactions called forth all the play of my invention. Although an affair which, according to etiquette, should have found its place in the Foreign Office, my father, on his promotion, did not think it fitting to transfer a business of so delicate a nature to another functionary, and he contrived to correspond upon it with foreign courts in his character of first minister. As his secretary, I had been privy to all the details, and I continued therefore to assist him in his subsequent proceedings.

My father and myself materially differed as to the course expedient to be pursued. He flattered himself that every thing might be brought about by negotiation, in which he was indeed unrivalled, and he often expatiated to me on the evident impossibility of the king having recourse to any other measures. For myself, when I remembered the time that had already passed without in any way advancing our desires, and believed, which I did most firmly, that the conduct of the great continental powers in this comparatively unimportant affair was only an indication of their resolution to promote the system on which they had based all the European relations—I myself could not refrain from expressing a wish to adopt a very different and far more earnest conduct.

In this state of affairs I was one day desired by my father to attend him at a secret conference with the ambassadors of the great powers. My father flattered himself that he might this day obtain his long-desired end, and so interested was the monarch in the progress, as well as the result, of our consultations, that he resolved to be present himself, although incognito.

The scene of the conference was the same palace whither my father had been summoned to receive the notification of his appointment as first minister.

I can well recall the feelings with which, on the morning of the conference, I repaired to the palace with my father. We were muffled up in our pelisses, for the air was very sharp, but the sun was not without influence, and shone with great bril-

liancy. There are times when I am influenced by a species of what I may term happy audacity, for it is a mixture of recklessness and self-confidence which has a very felicitous effect upon the animal spirits. At these moments, I never calculate consequences, yet every thing seems to go right. I feel in good fortune—the ludicrous side of every thing occurs to me,—I think of nothing but grotesque images,—I astonish people by bursting into laughter, apparently without a cause. Whatever is submitted to me I turn into ridicule. I shrug my shoulders and speak epigrams.

I was in one of these moods to-day. My father could not comprehend me. He was very serious, but instead of sympathizing with all his grave hopes and dull fears, I did nothing but ridicule their excellencies, whom we were going to meet, and perform to him an imaginary conference, in which he also figured.

We arrived at the palace. I became a little sobered. My father went to the king. I entered a large Gothic hall, where the conference was to take place. It was a fine room, hung with trophies, and principally lighted by a large Gothic window. At the farther end, near the fire, and partitioned off by a large Indian screen, was a round table, covered with green cloth, and surrounded by seats. The Austrian minister arrived. I walked up and down the hall with him for some minutes, ridiculing diplomacy. He was one of those persons who believe you have a direct object in every thing you say, and my contradictory opinions upon all subjects were to him a fruitful source of puzzled meditation. He thought I was one whose words ought to be marked, and I believe that my nonsense has often occasioned him a sleepless night. The other ministers soon assembled, and in a few minutes, a small door opened at the top of the hall, and the king and my father appeared. We bowed, and took our seats, I, being secretary, seated myself at the desk, to take notes for the drawing up of the protocols.

We believed that the original idea of considering the great treaties as only a guaranty to the individual, and not to his successors, originated at Vienna. Indeed, it was the early acquaintance of my father with the Austrian minister that first assisted him in ascertaining this intention. We believed that the Russian cabinet had heartily entered into this new reading, that Prussia supported it only in deference to the court of St. Petersburg, and that France was scarcely reconciled to the proposed derangement by the impression that it naturally assisted those principles of government by a recurrence to which the cabinet of Versailles then began to be convinced they could alone maintain themselves.

Such had been our usual view of the state of opinion with respect to this question. It had been the object of my father to induce the French court to join with that of St. James's in a strong demonstration in favour of the present system, and to indicate, in the event of that demonstration being fruitless, the possibility of their entering with the king into a tripartite party treaty, framed in pursuance of the spirit of the invalidated one. He trusted that to-day this demonstration would be made.

We entered into business. The object of our opponents was to deny that the tendency of certain acts, of which we complained, was inimical to the present dynasty, but to refrain from proving their

sincerity, by assenting to a new guaranty, on the plea that it was unnecessary, since the treaties must express all that was intended. Hours were wasted in multiplied discussions as to the meaning of particular clauses in particular treaties, and as to precedents to justify particular acts. Hours were wasted, for we did not advance. At length my father recurred to the spirit, rather than the letter of the affair, and in urging the necessity for the peace of Europe and other high causes, that this affair should be settled without delay, he gave an excellent opportunity for the friends he had anticipated to come forward. They spoke, but indeed it was very vague and unsatisfactory. I marked the lip of the Austrian minister curl as if in derision, and the Russian arranged his papers as if all now were finished.

I knew my father well enough by this time to be convinced that, in spite of his apparently unaltered mien, he was bitterly disappointed and annoyed. The king looked gloomy. There was a perfect silence. It was so awkward that the Austrian minister inquired of me the date of a particular treaty, merely to break the dead pause. I did not immediately answer him.

The whole morning my fancy had been busied with the most grotesque images. I had never before a moment impressed with the gravity of the proceedings. The presence of the king alone prevented me from constant raillery. When I recollected the exact nature of the business on which we were assembled, and then called to mind the characters who took part in the discussion, I could scarcely refrain from laughter. "Voltaire would soon settle this," I thought, "and send Messieurs the Austrian, and the Russian, and the Prussian, with their mustachios, and bussar jackets, and furs, to their own country. What business have they to interfere with ours?" I was strongly impressed with the tyrannical injustice and wicked folly of the whole transaction. The great diplomatists appeared to me so many wild beasts ready to devour our innocent lamb of a sovereign, parleying only from jealousy who should first attack him.

The Austrian minister repeated his question as to the treaty. "It matters not," I replied; "let us now proceed to business." He looked a little surprised. "Gentlemen," I continued, "you must be quite aware, that this is the last conference his majesty can permit us to hold upon a subject which ought never to have been discussed. The case is very simple, and demands but little consideration. If the guaranty we justly require be not granted, his majesty must have recourse to a popular appeal. We have no fear about the result. We are prepared for it. His majesty will acquire a new, and, if possible, a stronger title to his crown, and see what you will occasion by your squeamishness to authenticate the right of a sovereign, who, although not the offspring of a dynasty, acquired his throne not by the voice of the people, and has been constantly recognised by all your courts; you will be the direct cause of a most decided democratic demonstration in the election of a king by the people alone. For us, the result has no terrors. Your excellencies are the best judges whether your royal masters possess any territories in our vicinity which may be inoculated with our dangerous example."

I was astounded by my audacity. Not till I had

ceased speaking had I been aware of what I had dared to do. Once I shot a rapid glance at my father. His eyes were fixed on the ground, and I thought a little pale. As I withdrew my glance, I caught the king's fiery eye, but its expression did not discourage me.

It is difficult to convey an idea of the success of my boldness. It could not enter the imagination of the diplomatists that any one could dare to speak, and particularly under such circumstances, without instructions and without authority. They looked upon me only as the mouthpiece of the royal intentions. They were alarmed at our great, and unwonted, and unexpected resolution, at the extreme danger and invisible results of our purposes. The English and French ministers, who watched every turn, made a vehement representation in our favour, and the conference broke up with an expression of irresolution and surprise in the countenances of our antagonists, quite unusual with them; and which promised a speedy attainment of the satisfactory arrangement which shortly afterwards took place.

The conference broke up, my father retired with the king, and desired me to wait for him in the hall. I was alone. I was excited. I felt the triumph of success. I felt that I had done a great action. I felt all my energies. I walked up and down the hall in a frenzy of ambition, and I thirsted for action. There seemed to me no achievement of which I was not capable, and of which I was not ambitious. In imagination I shook thrones and founded empires. I felt myself a being born to breathe in an atmosphere of revolution.

My father came not. Time wore away, and the day died. It was one of those stern sublime sunsets, which is almost the only appearance in the north in which nature enchanted me. I stood at the window gazing at the burnished masses that, for a moment, were suspended, in their fleeting and capricious beauty, on the far horizon. I turned aside and looked on the rich trees suffused with the crimson light, and ever and anon irradiated by the dying shoots of a golden ray. The deer were stealing home to their bowers, and I watched them till their golden and glancing forms gradually lost their lustre in the declining twilight. The glory had now departed, and all grew dim. A solitary star alone was shining in the gray sky, a bright and solitary star.

And as I gazed upon the sunset, and the star, and the dim beauties of the coming eve, my mind grew calm. And all the bravery of my late reverie passed away. And I felt indeed a disgust for all the worldliness on which I had been lately pondering. And there arose in my mind a desire to create things beautiful as that golden sun, and that glittering star.

I heard my name. The hall was now darkened. In the distance stood my father. I joined him. He placed his arm affectionately in mine, and said to me, "My son, you will be prime minister of * * * *"; perhaps something greater."

XIV.

As we drove home, every thing seemed changed since the morning. My father was in high spirits, for him, even elated; I, on the contrary, was silent and thoughtful. This evening there was a ball at the palace, which, although little inclined, I felt obliged to attend.

I arrived late; the king was surrounded by a brilliant circle, and conversing with his usual felicitous affability. I would have withdrawn when I had made my obeisance, but his majesty advanced a step, and immediately addressed me. He conversed with me for some time. Few men possess a more captivating address than this sovereign. It was difficult at all times not to feel charmed, and now I was conscious that this mark of his favour recognised no ordinary claims to his confidence. I was the object of admiring envy. That night there were few in those saloons, crowded with the flower of the land, who did not covet my position. I alone was insensible to it. A vision of high mountains and deep blue lakes mingled with all the artificial splendour that dazzled around. I longed to roam amid the solitude of nature, and disburthen a mind teeming with creative sympathy.

I drew near a group which the pretty Baroness Engel was addressing with more than her usual animation. When she caught my eye, she beckoned me to join her, and said, "O! Count Contarini, have you read Manstein?"

"Manstein," I said, in a careless tone, "what is it?"

"O! you must get it directly. The oddest book that ever was written. We are all in it, we are all in it."

"I hope not."

"O, yes! all of us, all of us. I have not had time to make out the characters, I read it so quickly. My man only sent it to me this morning. I must get a key. Now you, who are so clever, make me one."

"I will look at it, if you really recommend me."

"You must look at it. It is the oddest book that was ever written. Immensely clever, I assure you, immensely clever. I cannot exactly make it out."

"That is certainly much in its favour. The obscure, as you know, is a principal ingredient of the sublime."

"How odd you are! But really, now, Count Contarini, get Manstein. Every one must read it. As for your illustrious principal, Baron de Bragnaes—he is really hit off to the life."

"Indeed!" I said, with concealed consternation.

"O! no one can mistake it. I thought I should have died with laughing. But we are all there. I am sure I know the author."

"Who is it? who is it?" eagerly inquired the group.

"I do not know, mind," observed the baroness.

"It is only conjecture, merely a conjecture. But I always find out everybody."

"O! that you do," said the group.

"Yes, I find them out by the style."

"How clever you are!" exclaimed the group, "but who is it?"

"O, I shall not betray him. Only I am quite convinced I know who it is."

"Pray, pray, tell us," entreated the group.

"You need not look around, Matilda, he is not here. A friend of yours, Contarini. I thought that young Moskovsky was in a great hurry to run off to St. Petersburg. And he has left us a legacy. We are all in it, I assure you," she exclaimed, to the one nearest, in an under, but decisive tone.

I breathed again. "Young Moskovsky! 'To be sure it is,'" I observed, with an air of thoughtful conviction.

"To be sure it is. Without reading a line, I have no doubt of it. I suspected that he meditated something. I must get Manstein directly, if it be by young Moskovsky. Any thing that young Moskovsky writes must be worth reading. What an excellent letter he writes! You are my oracle, Baroness Engel; I have no doubt of your discrimination; but I suspect that a certain correspondence with a brilliant young Muscovite has assisted you in your discovery."

"Be contented," rejoined the baroness, with a smile of affected mystery and pique, "that there is one who can enlighten you, and be not curious as to the source. Ah! there is Countess Norberg—how well she looks to-night!"

I walked away to salute Christiana. As I moved through the elegant crowd, my nervous ear constantly caught half phrases, which often made me linger. "Very satirical—very odd—very personal—very odd, indeed—what can it all be about? Do you know? No, I do not—do you? Baroness Engel—all in it—must get it—very witty—very flippant. Who can it be? Young Moskovsky. Read it at once without stopping—never read any thing so odd—ran off to St. Petersburg—always thought him very clever. Who can the Duke of Twaddle mean? Ah! to be sure—I wonder it did not occur to me."

I joined Christiana. I waltzed with her. I was on the point, once or twice, of asking her if she had read "Manstein," but did not dare. After the dance we walked away. Mademoiselle de Moltke, who, although young, was not charming, but very intellectual, and who affected to think me a great genius, because I had pasquinaded her father, stopped us.

"My dear countess, how do you do? You look most delightfully to-night. Count Contarini, have you read Manstein? You never read any thing! How can you say so! but you always say such things. You must read Manstein. Everybody is reading it. It is full of imagination, and very personal—very personal, indeed. Baroness Engel says we are all in it. You are there. You are Horace de Beaufort, who thinks every thing and everybody a bore—exactly like you, count, exactly—what I have always said of you. Adieu! mind you get Manstein, and then come and talk it over with me. Now do, that's a good creature!" And this talkative Titania tripped away.

"You are wearied, Christiana, and these rooms are insufferably hot. You had better sit down."

We seated ourselves in a retired part of the room. I observed an unusual smile upon the face of Christiana. Suddenly she said, with a slight flush, and not without emotion, "I shall not betray you, Contarini, but I am convinced that you are the author of Manstein."

I was very agitated—I could not immediately speak. I was ever different to Christiana to what I was to other people. I could not feign to her. I could not dissemble. My heart always opened to her, and it seemed to me almost blasphemy to address her in any other language but truth.

"You know me better than all others, Christiana. Indeed, you alone know me. But I would sooner hear that any one was considered the author of Manstein than myself."

"You need not fear that I shall be indiscreet, but rest assured it cannot long be a secret."

"Indeed!" I said: "why not?"

"O! Contarini, it is too like."

"Like whom?"

"Nay! you affect ignorance."

"Upon my honour, Christiana, I do not. Have the kindness to believe that there is at least one person in the world to whom I am not affected. If you mean that Manstein is a picture of myself, I can assure you most solemnly that I never less thought of myself than when I drew it. I thought it was an ideal character."

"It is that very circumstance that occasions the resemblance; for you, Contarini, whatever you may appear in this room, you are an ideal character."

"You have read it?" I asked.

"I have read it," she answered, seriously.

"And you do not admire it? I feel you do not. Nay! conceal nothing from me, Christiana. I can bear truth."

"I admire its genius, Contarini. I wish that I could speak with equal approbation of its judgment. It will, I fear, make you many enemies."

"You astonish me, Christiana. I do not care for enemies. I care for nobody but for you. But why should it make me enemies?"

"I hope I am mistaken. It is very possible I am mistaken. I know not why I talk upon such subjects. It is foolish—it is impertinent; but the interest, the deep interest I have always taken in you, Contarini, occasions this conversation, and must excuse it."

"Dear Christiana, how good, how very good you are!"

"And all these people whom you have ridiculed—surely, Contarini, you have enough already who envy you—surely, Contarini, it was most imprudent!"

"People ridiculed! I never meant to ridicule any person in particular. I wrote with rapidity. I wrote of what I had seen and what I felt. There is nothing but truth in it."

"You are not in a position, Contarini, to speak truth."

"Then I must be in a very miserable position, Christiana."

"You are what you are, Contarini. All must admire you. You are in a very envied, I will hope, a very enviable position."

"Alas! Christiana, I am the most miserable fellow that breathes upon this broad world."

She was silent.

"Dearest Christiana," I continued, "I speak to you as I would speak to no other person. Think not that I am one of those who deem it interesting to be considered unhappy. Such trifling I despise. What I say to you I would not confess to another human being. Among these people my vanity would be injured to be considered miserable. But I am unhappy, really unhappy, most desolately wretched. Envidable position! But an hour since I was meditating how I could extricate myself from it! Alas! Christiana, I cannot ask you for counsel, for I know not what I desire, what I could wish; but I feel—each hour I feel more keenly, and never more keenly than when I am with you, that I was not made for this life, nor this life for me."

"I cannot advise you, Contarini. What—what can I advise? But I am unhappy to find that you are. I grieve, I grieve deeply, that one apparently with all that can make him happy, should still miss felicity. You are yet very young, Contarini, and

I cannot but believe that you will still attain all you desire, and all that you deserve."

"I desire nothing. I know not what I want. All that I know is, that what I possess I abhor."

"Ah! Contarini, beware of your imagination."

XV.

THE storm that had been apprehended by the present affection of Christiana surely burst. I do not conceive that my publisher betrayed me. I believe internal evidence settled the affair. In a fortnight it was acknowledged by all that I was the author of "Manstein," and all were surprised that this authorship could, for a moment, have been a question. I can give no idea of the outcry. Everybody was in a passion—affected to be painfully sensitive of their neighbours' wrongs. The very personality was ludicrously exaggerated. Everybody took a delight in detecting the originals of my portraits. Various keys were handed about, all different, and not content with recognising the very few decided sketches from life there really were, and which were sufficiently obvious, and not very malignant, they mischievously insisted, that not a human shadow glided over my pages which might not be traced to its substance, and protested that the Austrian minister was the model of an old woman.

Those who were ridiculed insisted that the ridicule called in question the very first principles of society. They talked of confidence violated which never had been shared, and faith broken which never had been pledged. Never was so much nonsense talked about nothing since the days of the schoolmen. But nonsense, when earnest, is impressive, and sometimes takes you in. If you are in a hurry, you occasionally mistake it for sense.

All the people who had read "Manstein," and been very much amused with it, began to think they were quite wrong, and that it was a very improper and wicked book, because this was daily reiterated in their ears by half a dozen bores, who had gained an immortality which they did not deserve. Such conduct, it was universally agreed, must not be encouraged. Where would it end? Everybody was alarmed. Men passed me in the street without notice—I received anonymous letters—and even many of my intimates grew cold. As I abhor explanations, I said nothing; and although I was disgusted with the folly of much that I heard, I contradicted nothing, however ridiculously false, and felt confident that, in time, the world would discover that they had been gulled into fighting the battle of a few individuals whom they despised. I found even a savage delight in being an object, for a moment, of public astonishment, and fear, and indignation. But the affair getting at last troublesome, I fought young De Bragnæs with swords in the Deer Park, and having succeeded in pinking him, it was discovered that I was more amiable. For the rest, out of my immediate circle, the work had been from the first decidedly successful.

In all this not very agreeable affair, I was delighted by the conduct of Christiana. Although she seriously disapproved of what was really objectionable in "Manstein," and although she was of so modest and quiet a temper, that she unwillingly exercised that influence in society to which her rank, and fortune, and rare accomplishments entitled her, she suddenly became my most active

and violent partisan, ridiculed the pretended wrongs and mock propriety that echoed around her, and declaring that the author of "Manstein" had only been bold enough to print that which all repeated, rallied them on their hypocrisy. Baroness Engel also was faithful, although a little jealous of the zeal of Christiana, and between them they laughed down the cabal, and so entirely turned the public feeling, that in less than a month it was universally agreed that "Manstein" was a most delightful book, and the satire, as they daintily phrased it, "perfectly allowable."

Amid all this tumult my father was silent. From no look, from no expression of his, could I gain a hint either of his approval or his disapprobation. I could not ascertain even if he had seen the book. The Countess Fleming of course read it immediately, and had not the slightest conception of what it was about. When she heard it was by me, she read it again, and was still more puzzled, but told me she was delighted. When the uproar took place, instead of repeating, which she often did, all the opinions she had caught, she became quite silent, and the volumes disappeared from her table. The storm blew over, and no bolt had shivered me, and the volumes crept forth from their mysterious retirement.

About two months after the publication of "Manstein," appeared a new number of the great critical journal of the north of Europe. One of the works reviewed was my notorious production. I tore open the leaves with a blended feeling of desire and fear, which I can yet remember. I felt prepared for the worst. I felt that such grave censors, however impossible it was to deny the decided genius of the work, and however eager they might be to hail the advent of an original mind,—I felt that it was but reasonable and just that they should disapprove of the temper of the less elevated portions, and somewhat dispute the moral tendency of the more exalted.

With what horror, with what blank despair, with what supreme, appalling astonishment, did I find myself, for the first time in my life, a subject of the most reckless, the most malignant, and the most adroit ridicule. I was scarified—I was scalped. They scarcely condescended to notice my dreadful satire except to remark, in passing, by-the-by, I appeared to be as ill-tempered as I was imbecile. But all my eloquence, and all my fancy, and all the strong expression of my secret feelings—these ushers of the court of Apollo fairly laughed me off Parnassus, and held me up to public scorn, as exhibiting the most lamentable instance of mingled pretension and weakness, and the most ludicrous specimen of literary delusion that it had ever been their unhappy office to castigate, and, as they hoped, to cure.

The criticism fell from my hand. A film floated over my vision, my knees trembled. I felt that sickness of heart that we experience in our first serious scrape. I was ridiculous. It was time to die.

What did it signify? What was authorship to me? What did I care for their flimsy fame,—I, who yet not of age, was an important functionary of the state, and who might look to its highest confidence and honours. It was really too ludicrous. I tried to laugh. I did smile very bitterly. The insolence of these fellows! Why! if I could

not write, surely I was not a fool. I had done something. Nobody thought me a fool. On the contrary, everybody thought me a rather extraordinary person. What would they think now? I felt a quail.

I buried my face in my hands. I summoned my thoughts to their last struggle. I penetrated into my very soul—and I felt the conviction, that literary creation was necessary to my existence, and that for it I was formed. And all the beautiful and dazzling forms that had figured in my youthful visions rose up before me, crowned monarchs, and radiant heroes, and women brighter than day, but their looks were mournful, and they extended their arms with deprecating anguish, as if to entreat me not to desert them. And in the magnificence of my emotions, and the beauty of my visions, the worldly sarcasms that had lately so shaken me, seemed something of another and a lower existence, and I marvelled that, for a moment, this thin, transient cloud could have shadowed the sunshine of my soul. And I arose, and lifted up my arm to heaven, and waved it like a banner, and I swore by the nature that I adored, that in spite of all opposition I would be an author, ay! the greatest of authors, and that far climes and distant ages should respond to the magic of my sympathetic page.

The agony was past. I mused in calmness over the plans that I should pursue. I determined to ride down to my father's castle, and there mature them in solitude. Haunt of my early boyhood, fragrant bower of Egeria, sweet spot where I first scented the bud of my spring-like fancy, willingly would I linger in thy green retreats, no more to be wandered over by one who now feels that he was ungrateful to thy beauty!

Now that I had resolved, at all costs, to quit my country, and to rescue myself from the fatal society in which I was placed, my impartial intelligence, no longer swayed by the conscious impossibility of emancipation, keenly examined and ascertained the precise nature and condition of my character. I perceived myself a being educated in systematic prejudice. I observed that I was the slave of custom, and never viewed any incident in relation to man in general, but only with reference to the particular and limited class of society of which I was a member. I recognised myself as selfish and affected. I was entirely ignorant of the principles of genuine morality, and I deeply felt that there was a total want of nature in every thing connected with me. I had been educated without any regard to my particular, or to my general nature; I had nothing to assist me in my knowledge of myself, and nothing to guide me in my conduct to others. The consequence of my unphilosophical education was my utter wretchedness.

I determined to re-educate myself. Conceiving myself a poet, I resolved to pursue a course which should develop and perfect my poetic power; and never forgetting that I was a man, I was equally earnest in a study of human nature to discover a code of laws which should regulate my intercourse with my fellow-creatures. For both these sublime purposes, it was necessary that I should form a comprehensive acquaintance with nature in all its varieties and conditions; and I resolved therefore to travel. I intended to detail all these feelings to my father, to conceal nothing from him, and re-

quest his approbation and assistance. In the event of his opposition, I should depart without his sanction, for to depart I was resolved.

I remained a week at the castle, musing over these projects, and entirely neglecting my duties, in the fulfilment of which, ever since the publication of "Manstein," I had been very remiss. Suddenly, I received a summons from my father to repair to him without a moment's delay.

I hurried up to town, and hastened to his office. He was not there, but expecting me at home. I found him busied with his private secretary, and apparently very much engaged. He dismissed his secretary immediately, and then said, "Contarini, they are rather troublesome in Norway. I leave town instantly for Bergen with the king. I regret it, because we shall not see each other for some little time. His majesty has had the goodness, Contarini, to appoint you secretary of legation at the court of London. Your appointment takes place at once, but I have obtained you leave of absence for a year. You will spend this attached to the legation at Paris. I wish you to be well acquainted with the French people before you join their neighbours. In France and England you will see two great practical nations. It will do you good. I am sorry that I am so deeply engaged now. My *chasseur*, Lausanne, will travel with you. He is the best travelling servant in the world. He served me when I was your age. He is one of the few people in whom I have unlimited confidence. He is not only clever, but he is judicious. You will write to me as often as you can. Strelamb," and here he rang the bell, "Strelamb has prepared all necessary letters and bills for you." Here the functionary entered: "Mr. Strelamb," said my father, "while you explain those papers to Count Contarini, I will write to the Duke of Montfort."

I did not listen to the private secretary, I was so astonished. My father, in two minutes, had finished his letter. "This may be useful to you, Contarini. It is to an old friend, and a powerful man. I would not lose time about your departure, Contarini. Mr. Strelamb, is there no answer from Baron Engel?"

"My lord, the carriage waits," announced a servant.

"I must go. Adieu! Contarini. Write when you arrive at Paris. Mr. Strelamb, see Baron Engel to-night, and send me off a courier with his answer. Adieu! Contarini."

He extended me his hand. I touched it very slightly. I never spoke. I was thunderstruck.

Suddenly I started up and rang the bell. "Send me Lausanne!" I told the servant.

Lausanne appeared. Had my astonishment not been excited by a greater cause, I might have felt considerable surprise at my father delegating to me his confidential domestic. Lausanne was a Swiss, about my father's age, with a frame of iron, and all the virtues of his mountains. He was, I believe, the only person in whom my father placed implicit trust. But I thought not of this then. "Lausanne, I understand you are now in my service."

He bowed.

"I have no doubt I shall find cause to confirm the confidence which you have enjoyed in our house for more than twenty years. Is every thing ready for my departure?"

"I had no idea that your excellency had any immediate intention to depart."

"I should like to be off to-night, good Lausanne, Ay! this very hour. When can I go?"

"Your excellency's wardrobe must be prepared. Your excellency has not given Carl any directions."

"None. I do not mean to take him. I shall travel only with you."

"Your excellency's wardrobe—"

"May be sufficiently prepared in an hour, and Paris must supply the rest. In a word, Lausanne, can I leave this place by daybreak to-morrow? Think only of what is necessary. Show some of your old energy."

"Your excellency may rest assured," said Lausanne, after some reflection, "that every thing will be prepared by that time."

"It is well. Is the countess at home?"

"The Countess quitted town yesterday on a visit to the Countess de Norberg."

"The Countess de Norberg! I should have seen her too. Go, Lausanne, and be punctual. Carl will give you the keys. The Countess de Norberg, Christiana!—Yes! I should have seen her. Ah! It is as well. I have no friends, and my adieus are brief, let them not be bitter. Farewell to the father that has no feeling, and thou, too, Scandinavia, stern soil in which I have too long lingered—think of me hereafter as of some exotic bird, who for a moment lost its way in your cold heaven, but now has regained its course, and wings its flight to a more brilliant earth and a brighter sky!"

PART THE THIRD.

I.

On the eighteenth day of August, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six, I praise the Almighty Giver of all goodness, that, standing upon the height of Mount Jura, I beheld the whole range of the High Alps, with Mont Blanc in the centre, without a cloud: a mighty spectacle rarely beheld, for, on otherwise cloudless days, these sublime elevations are usually veiled.

I accepted this majestic vision as a good omen. It seemed that nature received me in her fullest charms. I was for some time so entranced that I did not observe the spreading and shining scene that opened far beneath me. The mountains, in ranges, gradually diminishing, terminated in isolated masses, whose enormous forms, in deep shade, beautifully contrasted with the glittering glaciers of the higher peaks, and rose out of a plain covered with fair towns and bright chateaux, embosomed in woods of chestnut, and vines festooning in orchards and corn-fields. Through the centre of the plain, a deep blue lake wound its way, which, viewed from the height of Jura, seemed like a purple girdle carelessly thrown upon some imperial robe.

I had remained in Paris only a few days, and, without offering any explanation to our minister, or even signifying my intention to Lausanne, had quitted that city with the determination of reaching Venice without delay. Now that it is probable I may never again cross the mountains, I often regret that I neglected this opportunity of becoming more acquainted with the French people. My head was

then full of fantasies, and I looked upon the French as an anti-poetical nation; but I have since often regretted that I neglected this opportunity of becoming acquainted with a race who exercise so powerful an influence over civilization.

I had thought of Switzerland only as of a rude barrier between me and the fair object of my desires. The impression that this extraordinary country made upon me was perhaps increased by my previous thoughts having so little brooded over its idea. It was in Switzerland that I first felt how constantly to contemplate sublime creation develops the poetic power. It was here that I first began to study nature. Those forests of black gigantic pines rising out of the deep snows; those tall white cataracts leaping like headstrong youth into the world, and dashing from their precipices as if allured by the beautiful delusion of their own rainbow mist; those mighty clouds sailing beneath my feet, or clinging to the bosoms of the dark green mountains, or boiling up like a spell from the invisible and unfathomable depths; the fell avalanche, fleet as a spirit of evil, terrific when its sound suddenly breaks upon the almighty silence, scarcely less terrible when we gaze upon its crumbling and pallid frame, varied only by the presence of one or two blasted firs; the head of a mountain loosening from its brother peak, rooting up, in the roar of its rapid rush, a whole forest of pines, and covering the earth for miles with elephantine masses; the supernatural extent of landscape that opens to us new worlds; the strong eagles, and the strange wild birds that suddenly cross you in your path, and stare, and shrieking fly—and all the soft sights of joy and loveliness that mingle with these sublime and savage spectacles, the rich pastures, and the numerous flocks, and the golden bees, and the wild flowers, and the carved and painted cottages, and the simple manners and the primeval grace—wherever I moved, I was in turn appalled or enchanted, but whatever I beheld, new images ever sprang up in my mind, and new feelings ever crowded on my fancy.

There is something magical in the mountain air.

My heart is light, my spirits cheerful, every thing is exhilarating. I am in every respect a different being to what I am in lowlands. I cannot even think, I dissolve into a delicious reverie, in which every thing occurs to me without effort. Whatever passes before me gives birth in my mind to a new character, a new image, a new train of fancies. I sing, I shout, I compose aloud, but without premeditation, without any attempt to guide my imagination by my reason. How often, after journeying along the wild mule-track, how often, on a sunny day, have I suddenly thrown myself upon the turf, revelled in my existence, and then as hastily jumped up and raised the wild birds with a wilder scream. I think that these involuntary bursts must have been occasioned by the unconscious influence of extreme health. As for myself, when I succeed in faintly recalling the rapture which I have experienced in these solitary rambles, and muse over the flood of fancy which then seemed to pour itself over my whole being, and gush out of every feeling and every object, I contrast with mortification those warm and pregnant hours with this cold record of my maturer age.

I remember that when I first attempted to write, I had a great desire to indulge in simile, and that I never could succeed in gratifying my wish. This

inability, more than any other circumstance, convinced me that I was not a poet. Even in "Manstein," which was written in a storm, and without any reflection, there are, I believe, few images, and those probably are all copied from books. That which surprised and gratified me most, when roving about Switzerland, was the sudden development which took place of the faculty of illustrating my thoughts and feelings. Every object that crossed me in some way associated itself with my moral emotions. Not a mountain, or lake, or river, not a tree, or flower, or bird, that did not blend with some thought, or fancy, or passion, and become the lively personification of conceptions that lie sleeping in abstraction.

It is singular that, with all this, I never felt any desire to write. I never thought of writing. I never thought of the future, or of man, or fame. I was content to exist. I began from this moment to suspect, what I have since learned firmly to believe, that the sense of existence is the greatest happiness, and that deprived of every worldly advantage, which is supposed so necessary to our felicity, life, provided a man be not immured in a dungeon, must nevertheless be inexpressibly delightful. If, in striking the balance of sensation, misery were found to predominate, no human being would permit himself to exist; but however vast may be the wretchedness occasioned to us by the accidents of life, the certain sum of happiness, which is always supplied by our admirably contrived being, ever supports us under the burden. Those who are sufficiently interested with my biography to proceed with it, will find, as they advance, that this is a subject on which I am qualified to offer an opinion.

I returned from these glowing rambles to my head-quarters, which was usually Geneva. I returned like the bees laden with treasure. I mused over all the beautiful images that had occurred to me, and all the new characters that had risen in my mind, and all the observations of nature which hereafter would perhaps permit me to delineate what was beautiful. For the moment that I mingled again with men I wished to influence them. But I had no immediate or definite intention of appealing to their sympathies. Each hour I was more conscious of the long apprenticeship that was necessary in the cunning craft for which, I conceived, I possessed a predisposition. I thought of "Manstein" as of a picture painted by a madman in the dark, and when I remembered that crude performance, and gazed upon the beauty, and the harmony, and the fitting parts of the great creations around me, my cheek has often burned even in solitude.

In these moments rather of humility than despondence, I would fly for consolation to the blue waters of that beautiful lake, whose shores have ever been the favourite haunt of genius, the fair and gentle Leman.

Nor is there indeed in nature a sight more lovely than to watch at decline of day the last embrace of the sun lingering on the rosy glaciers of the White Mountain. Soon, too soon the great luminary dies, the warm peaks subside into purple, and then die into a ghostly white; but soon, ah! not too soon, the moon springs up from behind a mountain, flings over the lake a stream of light, and the sharp glaciers glitter like silver.

I have often passed the whole night upon these enchanted waters, contemplating their beautiful variety; and, indeed, if any thing can console one for the absence of the moon and stars, it would be

to watch the lightning, on a dark night, on this superb lake. It is incessant, and sometimes in four or five different places at the same time. In the morning, Lemn loses its ultramarine tint, and is covered with the shadows of mountains and cha-teaux.

In mountain valleys it is very beautiful to watch the effect of the rising and setting of the sun. The high peaks are first illumined, the soft yellow light then tips the lower elevations, and the bright golden showers soon bathe the whole valley, except a dark streak at the bottom, which is often not visited by sunlight. The effect of sunset is perhaps still more lovely. The highest peaks are those which the sun loves most. One by one, the mountains, relatively to their elevations, steal into darkness, and the rosy tint is often suffused over the peaks and glaciers of Mont Blanc, while the whole world below is enveloped in the darkest twilight.

What is it that makes me long to dwell upon these scenes, which, with all their loveliness, I have never again visited? Is it indeed the memory of their extreme beauty, or of the happy hours they afforded me, or is it because I am approaching a period of my life which I sometimes feel I shall never have courage to delineate?

II.

THE thunder roared, the flashing lightning revealed only one universal mist, the wind tore up the pines by their roots, and flung them down into the valley, the rain descended in inundating gusts.

When once I had resolved to quit Geneva, my desire to reach Venice returned upon me in all its original force. I had travelled to the foot of the Simplon without a moment's delay, and now I had the mortification to be detained there in a wretched mountain village, intersected by a torrent whose roar was deafening, and with large white clouds sailing about the streets.

The storm had lasted three days; no one had ever heard of such a storm at this time of the year; it was quite impossible to pass; it was quite impossible to say when it would end, or what would happen. The poor people only hoped that no evil was impending over the village of Brigg. As for myself, when, day after day, I awoke only to find the thunder more awful, the lightning more vivid, and the mist more gloomy, I began to believe that my two angels were combatting on the height of Simplon, and that some supernatural, and perhaps beneficent power, would willingly prevent me from entering Italy.

I retired to bed, I flung my cloak upon a chair opposite a blazing wood-fire, and I soon fell asleep. I dreamed that I was in the vast hall of a palace, and that it was full of reverend and bearded men in rich dresses. They were seated at a council table, upon which their eyes were fixed, and I, who had recently entered, stood aside. And suddenly their president raised his head, and observed me, and beckoned to me with much dignity. And I advanced to him, and he extended to me his hand, and said, with a gracious smile, "*You have been long expected.*"

The council broke up, the members dispersed, and by his desire, I followed the president. And we entered another chamber, which was smaller, but covered with pictures, and on one side of the door was a portrait of Julius Cæsar, and on the

other one of myself. And my guide turned his head, and pointing to the paintings, said, "*You see you have been long expected. There is a great resemblance between you and your uncle.*"

And my companion suddenly disappeared, and being alone, I walked up to a large window, but I could distinguish nothing, except when the lightning revealed the thick gloom. And the thunder rolled over the palace. And I knelt down and prayed, and suddenly the window was irradiated, and the bright form of a female appeared. Her fair hair reached beneath the waist, her countenance was melancholy, yet seraphic. In her hand she held a crucifix. And I said, "O blessed Magdalen, have you at last returned? I have been long wandering in the wilderness, and methought you had forgotten me. And indeed I am about again to go forth, but Heaven frowns upon my pilgrimage." And she smiled and said, "*Sunshine succeeds to storm. You have been long expected.*" And as she spoke, she vanished, and I looked again through the window, and beheld a beautiful city very fair in the sun. Its marble palaces rose on each side of a broad canal, and a multitude of boats skimmed over the blue water. And I knew where I was. And I descended from the palace to the brink of the canal, and my original guide saluted me, and, in his company, I entered a gondola.

A clap of thunder broke over the very house, and woke me. I jumped up in my bed. I stared. I beheld sitting in my room the same venerable personage in whose presence I had, the moment before, found myself. The embers of the fire shot forth a faint and flickering light. I felt that I had been asleep. I felt that I had dreamed. I even remembered where I was. I was not in any way confused. Yet before me was this mysterious companion, gazing upon me with the same gracious dignity with which he had at first beheld me in the palace. I remained sitting up in my bed, staring with starting eyes, and open mouth. Gradually his image became fainter and fainter. His features melted away, his form also soon dissolved, and I discovered only the empty chair and hanging cloak.

I jumped out of bed. The storm still raged. A bell was tolling. Nothing is more awful than a bell tolling in a storm. It was about three hours past midnight. I called Lausanne.

"Lausanne," I said, "I am resolved to cross the mountain by sunrise, come what come may. Offer any rewards, make what promises you please—but I am resolved to cross—even in the teeth of an avalanche." Although I am a person easily managed in little matters, and especially by servants, I spoke in a tone which Lausanne sufficiently knew me to feel was decisive. He was not one of those men who make or imagine difficulties, but, on the contrary, fruitful in discovering expedients, yet he seemed not a little surprised, and slightly hesitated.

"Lausanne," I said, "if you think it too dangerous to venture, I release you from your duty. But cross the mountain, and in two or three hours, I shall, even if I cross it alone."

He quitted the room. I threw a fresh log upon the fire, and repeated to myself, "*I have been long expected.*"

III.

BEFORE six o'clock, all was prepared. Beside the postilions, Lausanne engaged several guides. I think we must have been about six hours ascend

ing, certainly not more, and this does not much exceed the usual course. I had occasion on this, as I have since at many other conjunctures, to observe what an admirable animal is man when thrown upon his own resources in danger. The coolness, the courage, the perseverance, the acuteness, and the kindness with which my companions departed themselves, were as remarkable as they were delightful. As for myself, I could do nothing but lean back in the carriage, and trust to their experience and energy. It was indeed awful. We were almost always enveloped in mist, and if a violent gust, for a moment, dissipated the vapour, it was only to afford a glimpse of the precipices on whose very brink we were making our way. Nothing is more terrific than the near roar of a cataract in the dark. It is horrible. As for myself, I will confess that I was more than once fairly frightened, and when the agitated shouts of my companions indicated the imminence of the impending danger, I felt very much like a man who had raised the devil that he cannot lay.

The storm was only on the lower part of the mountain. As we ascended, it became clearer. The scene was perfect desolation. At length we arrived at a small table-land, surrounded by slight elevations, the whole covered with eternal snows. Cataracts were coursing down these hills in all directions, and the plain was covered with the chaotic forms of crumbled avalanches. The sky was a thick dingy white. My men gave a loud shout of exultation, and welcomed me to the summit of Simplon.

Here I shook hands, and parted with my faithful guides. As I was drinking a glass of brandy, and enveloping myself in my furs, the clouds broke towards Italy, and a beautiful streak of blue sky seemed the harbinger of the Ausonian Heaven. I felt in high spirits, and we dashed down the descent with an ease and rapidity that pleasantly reminded me, by the contrast, of our late labour.

A dashing descent down one of the High Alps is a fine thing. It is very exciting to scamper through one of those sublime tunnels, cut through solid rocks six thousand feet above the ocean,—to whirl along those splendid galleries over precipices whose terminations are invisible,—to gallop through passes, as if you were flying from the companions of the avalanches, which are dissolving at your feet,—to spin over bridges spanning a roaring and rushing torrent, and to dash through narrow gorges backed with eternal snows peeping over the nearer and blacker background.

It was a sudden turn. Never shall I forget it. I called to Lausanne to stop, and notwithstanding the difficulty, they clogged the wheels with stones. It was a sudden turn of the road. It came upon me like a spirit. The quick change of scenery around me had disturbed my mind, and prevented me from dwelling upon the idea. So it came upon me unexpectedly, most, most unexpectedly. Ah! why did I not then die! I was too happy. I stood up to gaze for the first time upon Italy, and the tears stole down my cheek.

Yes! yes! I at length gazed upon those beautiful and glittering plains. Yes! yes! I at length beheld those purple mountains, and drank the balmy breath of that fragrant and liquid air. After such longing, after all the dull misery of my melancholy life, was this great boon indeed accorded me! Why, why did I not then die? I was indeed, indeed too happy!

IV.

I AWOKE. I asked myself, "Am I indeed in Italy?" I could scarcely refrain from shouting with joy. While dressing, I asked many questions of Lausanne, that his answers might assure me of this incredible happiness. When he left the room, I danced about the chamber like a madman.

"Am I indeed in Italy?" My morning's journey was the most satisfactory answer. Although, of late, the business of my life had been only to admire nature, my progress was nevertheless one uninterrupted gaze.

Those azure mountains, those shining lakes, those gardens, and palaces, and statues, those cupolated convents crowning luxuriant wooded hills, and flanked by a single, but most graceful tree, the undulation of shore, the projecting headland, the receding bay, the roadside uninclosed, yet bounded with walnut, and vine, and fig, and acacia, and almond-trees, bending down under their bursting fruit, the wonderful effect of light and shade, the trunks of every tree looking black as ebony, and their thick foliage, from the excessive light, quite thin and transparent in the sunshine, the white sparkling villages, each with a church with a tall thin tower, the large melons trailing over the marble wall,—and, above all, the extended prospect, so striking after the gloom of Alpine passes, and so different in its sunny light from the reflected, unearthly glare of eternal snows,—yes, yes, this indeed was Italy! I could not doubt my felicity, even if I had not marked, with curious admiration, the black eyes and picturesque forms that were flashing and glancing about me in all directions.

Milan, with its poetic opera, and Verona, gay amid the mingling relics of two thousand years, and Vicenza, with its Palladian palaces and gates of triumph, and pensive Padua, with its studious colonnades, I tore myself from their attractions. Their choicest memorials only accelerated my progress, only made me more anxious to gain the chief seat of the wonderful and romantic people, who had planted in all their marketplaces the winged lion of St. Mark, and raised between Roman amphitheatres and feudal castles, their wild and Saracenic piles.

I was upon the Brenta, upon that river over which I had so often mused beneath the rigour of a Scandinavian heaven; the Brenta was before me with all those villas, which in their number, their variety, and their splendour, form the only modern creation that can be placed with the Baie of imperial Rome. I had quitted Padua at a very early hour to reach Venice before sunset. Halfway, the horses jibbed on the sandy road, and the carriage broke a spring. To pass the time while this accident was repairing, Lausanne suggested to me to visit a villa at hand, which was celebrated for the beauty of its architecture and gardens. It was inhabited only by an old domestic, who attended me over the building. The vast suite of chambers, and their splendid, although ancient decorations, were the first evidence I had yet encountered of that domestic magnificence of the Venetians of which I had heard so much. I walked forth into the gardens alone, to rid myself of the garrulous domestic. I proceeded along a majestic terrace, covered with orange trees, at the end of which was a very beautiful chapel. The door was unlocked, and I entered. An immense crucifix of ebony was placed upon the

altar, and partly concealed a picture fixed over the holy table. Yet the picture could not escape me. O! no, it could not escape me; for it was the original of that famous Magdalen that had, so many years before, and in so different a place, produced so great a revolution in my feelings. I remained before it some time, and as I gazed upon it, the history of my life was again acted before me. I quitted the chapel, revolving in my mind this strange coincidence, and crossing the lawn I came to a temple which a fanciful possessor had dedicated to his friends. Over the portal was an inscription. I raised my sight, and read, "*Enter; you have been long expected!*"

I started, I looked around, all was silent. I turned pale; I hesitated to go in. I examined the inscription again. My courage rallied, and I found myself in a small, but elegant banqueting-house, furnished, but apparently long disused. I threw myself into a seat at the head of the table, and full of a rising superstition, I almost expected that some of the venerable personages of my dream would enter to share my feast. They came not; half an hour passed away; I rose, and without premeditation, I wrote upon the wall, "*If I have been long expected, I have at length arrived. Be you also obedient to the call.*"

V.

An hour before sunset, I arrived at Fusini, and beheld, four or five miles out at sea, the towers and cupolas of Venice suffused with a rich golden light, and rising out of the bright blue waters. Not an exclamation escaped me. I felt like a man who has achieved a great object. I was full of calm exultation, but the strange incident of the morning made me serious and pensive.

As our gondolas glided over the great Lagune, the excitement of the spectacle reanimated me. The buildings, that I had so fondly studied in books and pictures, rose up before me. I knew them all; I required no cicerone. One by one, I caught the hooded cupolas of St. Mark, the tall Campanile red in the sun, the Moresco palace of the doges, the deadly Bridge of Sighs, and the dark structure to which it leads. Here my gondola quitted the Lagune, and, turning up a small canal, and passing under a bridge which connected the quays, stopped at the steps of a palace.

I ascended a staircase of marble, I passed through a gallery crowded with statues, I was ushered into spacious apartments, the floors of which were marble, and the hangings satin. The ceilings were painted by Tintoretto and his scholars, and were full of Turkish trophies and triumphs over the Ottomanite. The furniture was of the same rich material as the hangings; and the gilding, although of two hundred years duration, as bright and burnished as the costly equipment of a modern palace. From my balcony of blinds, I looked upon the great Lagune. It was one of those glorious sunsets which render Venice, in spite of her degradation, still famous. The sky and sea vied in the brilliant multiplicity of their blended tints. The tall shadows of her Palladian churches flung themselves over the glowing and transparent wave out of which they sprang. The quays were crowded with joyous groups, and the black gondolas flitted, like sea serpents, over the red and rippling waters.

I hastened to the Place of St. Mark. It was crowded and illuminated. Three gorgeous flags

waved on the mighty staffs which are opposite the church in all the old drawings, and which once bore the standards of Candia, and Cyprus, and the Morea. The coffee-houses were full, and gay parties, seated on chairs in the open air, listened to the music of military bands, while they refreshed themselves with confectionary so rich and fanciful, that it excites the admiration and the wonder of all travellers, but which I have since discovered in Turkey to be oriental. The variety of costume was also great. The dress of the lower orders in Venice is still unchanged: many of the middle classes yet wear the cap and cloak. The Hungarian and the German military, and the bearded Jew, with his black velvet cap and flowing robes, are observed with curiosity. A few days also before my arrival, the Austrian squadron had carried into Venice a Turkish ship and two Greek vessels, who had violated the neutrality. Their crews now mingled with the crowd. I beheld, for the first time, the haughty and turbaned Ottoman, sitting cross-legged on his carpet under a colonnade, sipping his coffee and smoking a long chibouque, and the Greeks, with their small red caps, their high foreheads, and arched eyebrows.

Can this be modern Venice, I thought? Can this be the silent, and gloomy, and decaying city, over whose dishonourable misery I have so often wept! Could it ever have been more enchanting? Are not these indeed still subjects of a doge, and still the bridegrooms of the ocean? Alas! the brilliant scene was as unusual as unexpected, and was accounted for by its being the feast-day of a favourite saint. Nevertheless, I rejoiced at the unaccustomed appearance of the city at my entrance, and still I recall with pleasure the delusive moments, when strolling about the Place of St. Mark the first evening that I was in Venice, I for a moment mingled in a scene that reminded me of her lost light-heartedness, and of that unrivalled gayety that so long captivated polished Europe.

The moon was now in her pride. I wandered once more to the quay, and heard for the first time a serenade. A juggler was conjuring in a circle under the walls of my hotel, and an itinerant opera was performing on the bridge. It is by moonlight that Venice is indeed an enchanted city. The effect of the floods of silver light upon the twinkling fretwork of the Moresco architecture, the perfect absence of all harsh sounds, the never-ceasing music on the waters, produce an effect upon the mind which cannot be experienced in any other city. As I stood gazing upon the broad track of brilliant light that quivered over the Lagune, a gondolier saluted me. I entered his boat, and desired him to row me to the Grand Canal.

The marble palaces of my ancestors rose on each side, like a series of vast and solemn temples. How sublime were their broad fronts bathed in the mystic light, whose softening tints concealed the ravages of time, and made us dream only of their eternity! And could these great creations ever die! I viewed them with a devotion which I cannot believe could have been surpassed in the most patriotic period of the republic. How willingly would I have given my life to have once more filled their mighty halls with the proud retainers of their free and victorious nobles!

As I proceeded along the canal, and retired from the quarter of St. Mark, the sounds of merriment gradually died away. The light string of a gita.

alone twinkled in the distance, and the lamp of a gondola, swiftly shooting by, indicated some gay, perhaps anxious youth, hastening to the rendezvous of festivity and love. The course of the canal bent, and the moon was hid behind a broad, thick arch, which, black, yet sharply defined, spanned the breadth of the water. I beheld the famous Rialto.

Was it possible? was it true? was I not all this time in a reverie gazing upon a drawing in De Winter's studio? Was it not some delicious dream—some delicious dream, from which, perhaps this moment, I was about to be roused to cold, dull life? I struggled not to wake, yet from a nervous desire to move, and put the vision to the test, I ordered the gondolier to row to the side of the canal, jumped out, and hurried to the bridge. Each moment I expected that the arch would tremble and part, and that the surrounding palaces would dissolve into mist, that the lights would be extinguished, and the music cease, and that I should find myself in my old chamber in my father's house.

I hurried along, I was anxious to reach the centre of the bridge before I woke. It seemed like the crowning incident of a dream, which, it is remarkable, never occurs, and which, from the very anxiety it occasions, only succeeds in breaking our magical slumbers.

I stood upon Rialto; I beheld on each side of me, rising out of the waters, which they shadowed with their solemn image, those colossal and gorgeous structures raised from the spoils of the teeming orient, with their pillars of rare marbles, and their costly portals of jasper, and porphyry, and agate; I beheld them ranged in majestic order, and streaming with the liquid moonlight. Within these walls my fathers revelled!

I bowed my head, and covered my face with my hands. I could gaze no more upon that fair, but melancholy vision.

A loud but melodious chorus broke upon the air. I looked up, I marked the tumultuous waving of many torches, and heard the trampling of an approaching multitude. They were at the foot of the bridge. They advanced, they approached. A choir of priests, bearing in triumph the figure of a saint, and followed by a vast crowd carrying lights, and garlands, and banners, and joining in a joyful hymn, swept by me. As they passed, they sang this verse—

“Wave your banners! Sound, sound your voices! for he has come, he has come! Our saint and our lord! He has come, in pride and in glory, to greet with love his Adrian bride.”

It is singular, but these words struck me as applicable to myself. The dream at the foot of the Alps, and the inscription in the garden on the Brenta, and the picture in the chapel, there was a connexion in all these strange incidents which indeed harmonized with my early life and feelings, I fully believed myself the object of an omnipotent destiny, over which I had no control. I delivered myself up, without a struggle, to the eventful course of time. I returned home pensive, yet prepared for a great career, and as the drum of the Hungarian guard sounded, as I entered the Lagune, I could not help fancying that its hurried note was ominous of surprise and consternation. I remembered that when a boy, sauntering with Musæus, I believed that I had a predisposition for conspiracies, and I could not forget that, of all places in the

world, Venice was the one in which I should most desire to find myself a conspirator.

I returned to the hotel, but as I was little inclined to slumber, I remained walking up and down the gallery, which, on my arrival, amid the excitement of so many distracting objects, I had but slightly noticed. I was struck by its size and its magnificence, and as I looked upon the long row of statues gleaming in the white moonlight, I could not refrain from pondering over the melancholy fortunes of the high race who had lost this sumptuous inheritance, commemorating even in its present base uses, their noble exploits, magnificent tastes, and costly habits.

Lausanne entered. I inquired if he knew to what family of the republic this building had originally belonged?

“This was the Palazzo Contarini, sir.”

I was glad that he could not mark my agitation.

“I thought,” I rejoined, after a moment's hesitation, “I thought the Palazzo Contarini was on the Grand Canal.”

“There is a Palazzo Contarini on the Grand Canal, sir, but this is the original palace of the house. When I travelled with my lord, twenty-five years ago, and was at Venice, the Contarini family still maintained both establishments.”

“And now?” I inquired. This was the first time that I had ever held any conversation with Lausanne; for although I was greatly pleased with his talents, and could not be insensible to his ever-watchful care, I had from the first suspected that he was a secret agent of my father, and, although I thought fit to avail myself of his abilities, I had studiously withheld from him my confidence.

“The family of Contarini is, I believe extinct,” replied Lausanne.

“Ah!” Then thinking that something should be said to account for my ignorance of that with which apparently I ought to have been well acquainted, I added in a careless voice. “We have never kept up any intercourse with our Italian connexions, which I do not regret, for I shall not enter into society here.”

The moment that I had uttered this, I felt the weakness of attempting to mystify Lausanne, who probably knew much more of the reasons of this non-intercourse than myself. He was moving away when I called him back with the intention of speaking to him fully upon this subject of my early speculations. I longed to converse with him about my mother, and my father's youth, about every thing that had happened.

“Lausanne,” I said.

He returned. The moon shone brightly upon his imperturbable and inscrutable countenance. I saw only my father's spy. A feeling of false shame prevented me from speaking. I did not like frankly to confess my ignorance upon such delicate subjects to one who would, in all probability, affirm his inability to enlighten me, and I knew enough of him to be convinced that I could not acquire by stratagem that which he would not willingly communicate.

“Lausanne,” I said, “take lights into my room. I am going to bed.”

VI.

ANOTHER sun rose upon Venice, and presented to me the city whose image I had so early acquired. In the heart of a multitude there was stillness. I

looked out from the balcony on the crowded quays of yesterday; one or two idle porters were stretched in sleep on the scorching pavement, and a solitary gondola stole over the gleaming waters. This was all.

It was the Villeggiatura, and the absence of the nobility from the city invested it with an aspect even more deserted than it would otherwise have possessed. I cared not for this. For me indeed, Venice, silent and desolate, owned a greater charm than it could have commanded with all its feeble imitation of the worthless bustle of a modern metropolis. I congratulated myself on the choice season of the year in which I had arrived at this enchanting city. I do not think that I could have endured to have been disturbed by the frivolous sights and sounds of society, before I had formed a full acquaintance with all those marvels of art that command our constant admiration, while gliding about the lost capital of the doges, and before I had yielded a free flow to those feelings of poetic melancholy which swell up in the soul as we contemplate this memorable theatre of human action, wherein have been performed so many of man's most famous and most graceful deeds.

If I were to assign the particular quality which conduces to that dreamy and voluptuous existence which men of high imagination experience in Venice, I should describe it as the feeling of abstraction, which is remarkable in that city, and peculiar to it. Venice is the only city which can yield the magical delights of solitude. All is still and silent. No rude sound disturbs your reveries; fancy, therefore is not put to flight. No rude sound distracts your self-consciousness. This renders existence intense. We feel every thing. And we feel thus keenly in a city not only eminently beautiful, not only abounding in wonderful creations of art, but each step of which is hallowed ground, quick with associations, that in their more various nature, their nearer relation to ourselves, and perhaps their more picturesque character, exercise a greater influence over the imagination than the more antique story of Greece and Rome. We feel all this in a city too, which, although her lustre be indeed dimmed, can still count among her daughters maidens fairer than the orient pearls with which her warriors once loved to deck them. Poetry, Tradition, and Love,—these are the graces that have invested with an ever-charming cæstus this aphrodite of cities.

As for myself, ere the year drew to a close, I was so captivated with the life of blended contemplation and pleasure that I led in this charming city, that I entirely forgot my great plan of comprehensive travel, that was to induce such important results, and not conceiving that earth could yield me a spot where time could flow on in a more beautiful and tranquil measure, more exempt from worldly anxiety, and more free from vulgar thoughts, I determined to become a Venetian resident. So I quitted the house of my fathers, which its proprietor would not give up to me, and in which, under its present fortune, I could not bear to live, converted Lausanne into a major-domo, and engaged a palace on the Grand Canal.

VII.

THERE is in Venice a very ancient church situate in an obscure quarter of the city, whither I was in

the habit of often resorting. It is full of the tombs of Contarini. Two doges under their fretwork canopies, with their hands crossed over their breasts, and their heads covered with their caps of state, and reposing on pillows, lie on each side of the altar. On the platform before the church, as you ascend the steps from your gondola, is a colossal statue of a Contarini, who defeated the Genoese. It is a small church, built and endowed by the family. To this day there they sing masses for their souls.

One sunshiny afternoon I entered this church, and repaired as was my custom to the altar, which, with its tombs, was partially screened from the body of the building, being lighted by the large window in front, which considerably overtopped the screen. They were singing a mass in the nave, and I placed myself at the extreme side of the altar in the shade of one of the tombs, and gazing upon the other. The sun was nearly setting, the opposite tomb was bathed with the soft, warm light which streamed in from the window. I remained watching the placid and heroic countenance of the old doge, the sunlight playing on it, till it seemed to smile. The melodious voices of the choir, praying for Contarini, came flowing along the roof with so much sentiment and sweetness, that I was soon wrapped in self-oblivion, and although my eye was apparently fixed upon the tomb, my mind wandered in delightful abstraction.

A temporary cessation of the music called me to myself. I looked round, and to my surprise beheld a female figure kneeling before the altar. At this moment, the music recommenced. She evidently did not observe me. She threw over her shoulders the black veil with which her face had hitherto been covered. Her eyes were fixed upon the ground; her hands raised, and pressed together in prayer. I had never beheld so beautiful a creature. She was very young, her countenance perfectly fair, but without colour, or tinted only with the transient flush of devotion. Her features were very delicate, yet sharply defined. I could mark her long eyelashes touching her cheek; and her dark hair, parted on her white brow, fell on each side of her face in tresses of uncommon length and lustre. Altogether she was what I had sometimes fancied as the ideal of a Venetian beauty. As I watched her, her invocation ceased, and she raised her large dark eyes with an expression of melancholy that I never shall forget.

And as I gazed upon her, instead of feeling agitated and excited, a heaviness crept over my frame, and a drowsiness stole over my senses. Enraptured by her presence, anxiously desirous to ascertain who she might be, I felt to my consternation, each moment more difficulty in moving, even in seeing. The tombs, the altar, the kneeling suppliant, moved confusedly together, and mingled into mist, and sinking back on the tomb which supported me, I fell, as I supposed, into a deep slumber.

I dreamed that a long line of Venetian nobles, two by two, passed before me, and, as they passed, they saluted me, and the two doges were there, and as they went by, they smiled and waved their bonnets. And suddenly there appeared my father alone, and he was dressed in a northern dress, the hunting dress I wore in the forest of Jonsterna, and he stopped and looked upon me with great severity, and I withdrew my eye, for I could not bear his glance, and when I looked up again he was not

there, but the lady of the altar. She stood before me clinging to a large crucifix, a large crucifix of ebony, the same that I had beheld in the chapel in the gardens on the Brenta. The tears hung quivering on her agitated countenance. I would have rushed forward to console her, but I woke.

I woke, I looked around, I remembered every thing. She was not there. It was twilight, and the tombs were barely perceptible. All was silent, I stepped forth from the altar into the body of the church. A single acolyte was folding up the surplices and placing them in a trunk. I inquired if he had seen any lady go out. He had seen nothing. He stared at my puzzled look, which was the look of a man roused from a very vivid dream. I went forth; one of my gondoliers was lying on the steps: I asked him also if he had seen any lady go out. He assured me that no person had come forth except the priests. Was there any other way? They believed not. I endeavoured to re-enter the church to examine, but it was locked.

VIII.

If ever the science of metaphysics ceases to be a frivolous assemblage of unmeaning phrases, and we attempt to acquire that knowledge of our nature which is doubtless open to us by the assistance of facts instead of words; if ever, in short, the philosophy of the human mind be based on demonstration instead of dogma, the strange incident just related, will perhaps not be considered the wild delusion of a crack-brained visionary. For myself, I have no doubt that the effect produced upon me by the lady in the church was a magnetic influence, and that the slumber which, at the moment, occasioned me so much annoyance, and so much astonishment, was nothing less than a luminous trance.

I knew nothing of these high matters then, and I returned to my palace in a state of absolute confusion. It was so reasonable to believe that I had fallen asleep, and that the whole was a dream. Every thing was thus most satisfactorily accounted for. Nevertheless I could not overcome my strong conviction, that the slumber which I could not deny, was only a secondary incident, and that I had positively, really, absolutely beheld kneeling before the altar that identical and transcendent form, that in my dream or vision I had marked clinging to the cross.

I examined the gondoliers on my return home. I elicited nothing. I examined myself the whole evening. I resolved that I had absolutely seen her. I attended at the church the next day; nothing occurred. I spoke to the priests. I engaged one to keep a constant observation. Nothing ever transpired.

The Villeggiatura was over, the great families returned, the carnival commenced. Venice was full and gay. There were assemblies every evening. The news that a young foreign nobleman had come to reside at Venice, of course, quickly spread. My establishment, my quality, and, above all, my name, ensured me a hospitable reception, although I knew not a single individual, and, of course, had not a single letter. I did not encourage their attentions. I went nowhere, except to the opera, which opened with the carnival. I have a passion for instrumental music, but I admire little the human voice, which appears to me, with all our ex-

ertions, a poor instrument. Sense and sentiment too are always sacrificed to dexterity and caprice. A grand orchestra fills my mind with ideas,—I forget every thing in the stream of invention. A prima donna is very ravishing, but while I listen, I am a mere man of the world, or hardly sufficiently well-bred to conceal my weariness.

The effect of music upon the faculty of invention is a subject on which I have long curiously observed, and deeply meditated. It is a finer prelude to creation than to execution. It is well to meditate upon a subject under the influence of music, but to execute, we should be alone, and supported only by our essential and internal strength. Were I writing, music would produce the same effect upon me as wine. I should, for a moment, feel an unnatural energy and fire, but, in a few minutes, I should discover that I shadowed forth only phantoms, my power of expression would die away, and my pen would fall upon the insipid and lifeless page. The greatest advantage that a writer can derive from music is, that it teaches most exquisitely the art of development. It is in remarking the varying recurrence of a great composer to the same theme, that a poet may learn how to dwell upon the phasis of a passion, how to exhibit a mood of mind under all its alternations, and gradually to pour forth the full tide of feeling.

The last week of the carnival arrived, in which they attempted to compress all the frolic which should be diffused over the rest of the forty days, which, it must be confessed, are dull enough. At Venice, the beauty and the wildness of the carnival still lingered. St. Mark's Place was crowded with masks. It was even more humorous to observe these grotesque forms in repose than in action; to watch a monster with a nose a foot long, and asses' ears, eating an ice, or a mysterious being with a face like a dolphin, refreshing herself with a fan as huge as a parasol. The houses were covered with carpets and tapestry, every place was illuminated, and everybody pelted with sweetmeats and sugarplums. No one ever seemed to go to bed; the water was covered with gondolas, and everybody strummed a guitar.

During the last nights of the carnival, it is the practice to convert the opera-house into a ball-room, and on these occasions, the highest orders are masked. The scene is indeed very gay and amusing. In some boxes, a standing supper is always ready, at which all guests are welcome. But masked you must be. It is even strict etiquette on these occasions for ladies to ramble about the theatre unattended, and the great diversion of course is the extreme piquancy of the incognito conversations, since, in a limited circle, in which few are unknown to each other, it is, of course, not difficult to impregnate this slight parley with a sufficient quantity of Venetian salt.

I went to one of these balls, as I thought something amusing might occur. I went in a domino, and was careful not to enter my box, lest I should be discovered. As I was sauntering along one of the rooms near the stage, a female mask saluted me.

"We did not expect you," she said.

"I only came to meet you," I replied.

"You are more gallant than we supposed you to be."

"The world is seldom charitable," I said

"They say you are in love."

"You are the last person to consider that wonderful."

"Really quite chivalric. Why! they said you were quite a wild man."

"But you, signora, have tamed me."

"But do you know they say you are in love?"

"Well! doubtless with a charming person."

"O! yes, a very charming person. Do you know they say you are Count Narcissus, and in love with yourself?"

"Do they indeed! They seem to say vastly agreeable things, I think. Very witty, upon my honour."

"O! very witty, no doubt of that, and you should be a judge of wit, you know, because you are a poet."

"You seem to know me well."

"I think I do. You are the young gentleman, are you not, who has quarrelled with his papa?"

"That is a very vague description."

"I can give you some further details."

"O! pray spare me, and yourself."

"Do you know I have written your character?"

"Indeed! It is doubtless as accurate as most others."

"O! it is founded upon the best authorities. There is only one part imperfect. I wish to give an account of your works. Will you give me a list?"

"I must have an equivalent, and something more interesting than my own character."

"Meet me to-night at the Countess Malbrizzi's."

"I cannot, I do not know her."

"Do not you know, that in carnival time, a mask may enter any house? After the ball, all will be there. Will you meet me? I am now engaged."

This seemed the opening of an adventure which youth is not inclined to shun. I assented, and the mask glided away, leaving me in great confusion and amazement at her evident familiarity with my history.

IX.

I ARRIVED at the steps of the Malbrizzi palace amid a crowd of gondolas. I ascended without any announcement into the saloons, which were full of guests. I found, to my great annoyance, that I was the only mask present. I felt that I had been fairly taken in. I perceived that I was an object of universal attention. I had a great inclination to make a precipitate retreat. But on reflection, I determined to take a rapid survey before my departure, and then retire with dignity. Leaning against a pillar, I flattered myself I appeared quite at my ease.

A lady, whom I had already conjectured to be the mistress of the mansion, advanced and addressed me. Time had not yet flown away with her charms.

"Signor Mask," she said, "ever welcome, and doubly welcome, if a friend."

"I fear I have no title to admission within these walls, except the privilege of the season."

"I should have thought otherwise," said the lady. "if you be one for whom many have inquired."

"You must mistake me for another. It is not probable that any one would inquire after me."

"Shall I tell you your name?"

"Some one has pretended to give me that unnecessary information already to-night."

"Well! I will not betray you, but I am silent in the hope that you will, ere midnight, reward me for my discretion by rendering it unnecessary. We trust that the ice of the north will melt beneath our Venetian sun. You understand me?" So saying, she glided away.

I could not doubt that this lady was the Countess Malbrizzi, and that she was the female mask who had addressed me in the opera-house. She evidently knew me. I had not long to seek for the source whence she attained this knowledge. The son of the Austrian minister at our court, and who had himself been attached to the legation, passed by me. His uncle was Governor of Venice. Every thing was explained.

I moved away, intending to retire. A group, in the room I entered, attracted my attention. Several men were standing round a lady apparently entreating her, with the usual compliments and gesticulations, to play upon the guitar. Her face was concealed from me; one of her suite turned aside, and notwithstanding the difference of her rich dress, I instantly recognised the kneeling lady of the church. I was extremely agitated. I felt the inexplicable sensation that I had experienced on the tomb. I was fearful that it might end in as mortifying a catastrophe. I struggled against the feeling, and struggled successfully. As I thus wrestled with my mind, I could not refrain from gazing intently upon the cause of my emotion. I felt an overwhelming desire to ascertain who she might be. I could not take my eyes from her. She impressed me with so deep an interest, that I entirely forgot that any other human beings were present. It was fortunate that I was masked. My fixed stare must have excited great curiosity.

As I stood thus gazing upon her, and as each moment her image seemed more vividly impressed upon my brain, a chain round her neck snapped in twain, and a diamond cross suspended to it fell to the ground. The surrounding cavaliers were instantly busied in seeking for the fallen jewel. I beheld, for the first time, her tall and complete figure. Our eyes met.

To my astonishment, she suddenly grew pale, she ceased conversing, she trembled, and sank into a chair. A gentleman extended to her the cross, she received it, her colour returned, a smile played upon her features, and she rose from her seat.

The countess passed me. I saluted her. "I now wish you to tell me," I said, "not my own name, but the name of another person. Will you be kind?"

"Speak."

"That lady," I said, pointing to the group, "I have a very great wish to know who that lady may be."

"Indeed!" said the countess, "I have a great wish also that your curiosity should be gratified. That is Signora Alceste Contarini."

"Contarini!" I exclaimed, "how wonderful! I mean to say, how singular! that is, I did not know—"

"That there were any other Contarinis but your excellency, I suppose."

"It is idle to wear this disguise," I said, taking off my mask, and letting my domino slip to the ground. "I have ever heard that it was impossible

to escape the penetration of the Countess Malbrizzi."

"My penetration has not been much exercised to-night, count; but I assure you I feel gratified to have been the means of inducing you to enter a society, of which the Baroness Fleming was once the brightest ornament. Your mother was my friend."

"You have, indeed, the strongest claim then to the respect of her son. But this young lady—"

"Is your cousin, an orphan, and the last of the Contarinis. You should become acquainted. Permit me to introduce you." I accompanied her. "Alceste, my love," continued the countess, "those should not be unknown to each other whom nature has intended to be friends. Your cousin, Count Contarini Fleming, claims your acquaintance."

"I have not so many relations that I know not how to value them," said Alceste, as she extended me her hand. The surrounding gentlemen moved away. We were alone. "I arrived so unexpectedly at Venice, that I owe to a chance my introduction to one whose acquaintance I should have claimed in a more formal manner."

"You are merely, then, a passing visitor? We heard it was your intention to become a resident."

"I have become one. It has been too difficult for me to gain this long-desired haven, again to quit it without a very strong cause. But when I departed from my country, it was for the understood purpose of making a very different course. My father is not so violent a Venetian as myself, and, for aught I know, conceives me now in France or England. In short, I have played truant, but I hope you will pardon me."

"To love Venice is with me so great a virtue," she replied, with a smile, "that, I fear, instead of feeling all the impropriety of your conduct, I sympathize too much with this violation of duty."

"Of course you could not know my father. You may have heard of him. It has always been to me a source of deep regret that he did not maintain his connexion with my mother's family. I inherit something even more Venetian than her name. But the past is too painful for my father to love to recall it. My mother, you know—"

"I am an orphan, and can feel all your misfortune. I think our house is doomed."

"I cannot think so when I see you." She faintly smiled, but her features settled again into an expression of deep melancholy, that reminded me of her countenance in the church.

"I think," I observed, "this is not the first time I have had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Indeed! I am not aware of our having before met."

"I may be wrong. I dare say you will think me very strange. But I cannot believe it was a dream, though certainly I was—but really it is too ridiculous. You know the church where are the tombs of our family?"

"Yes!" Her voice was low, but quick. I fancied she was not quite at ease.

"Well! I cannot help believing that we were once together before that altar."

"Indeed! I have returned to Venice a week. I have not visited the church since we came back."

"O! this must have been a month ago. It certainly is very strange; I suppose it must have been a dream; I have sometimes odd dreams, and yet—it is in consequence of that supposed meeting in

the church that I recognised you this evening, and immediately sought an introduction."

"I know the church well. To me—I may say to us," she added, with a gentle inclination of the head, "it is, of course, a spot very interesting."

"I am entirely Venetian. I have no thought for any other country. This is not a new sentiment excited by the genius of the place. It was as strong amid the forests and snows of the north, as strong, I may truly say, when a child, as at this moment, when I would peril my life and fortunes in her service."

"You are indeed enthusiastic. Alas! enthusiasm is little considered here. We are, at least, still light-hearted, but what cause we have for gayety, the smilers perhaps know. It is my misfortune not to be one of them. And yet resignation is all that is left us, and—"

"And what?" I asked, for she hesitated.

"Nothing," she replied, "nothing. I believe I was going to add, it is better to forget."

"Never! The recollection of the past is still glory. I would sooner be a Contarini amid our falling palaces, than the mightiest noble of the most flourishing of modern empires."

"What will your father say to such romanee?"

"I have no father. I have no friend, no relative in the world, except yourself. I have disclaimed my parentage, my country, my allotted career, and all their rights, and honours, and privileges, and fame, and fortune. I have, at least, sacrificed all these for Venice; for, trifling as the circumstances may be, I can assure you this, merely to find myself a visitant of that enchanting city, I have thrown to the winds all the duties and connexions of my past existence."

"But why bind your lot to the fallen and the irredeemable? I have no choice but to die where I was born, and no wish to quit a country from which spring all my associations; but you—you have a real country, full of real interests to engage your affections and exercise your duties. In the north you are a man—your career may be active, intelligent and useful; but the life of a Venetian is a dream, and you must pass your days like a ghost gliding about a city fading in a vision."

"It is this very character that interests me. I have no sympathy with reality. What vanity is all the empty bustle of common life! It brings to me no gratification; on the contrary, most degrading annoyance. It develops all the lowering attributes of my nature. In the world, I am never happy but in solitude; and in solitude so beautiful and so peculiar as Venice, my days are indeed a dream, but a dream of long delight. I gaze upon the beautiful, and my mind responds to the inspiration, for my thoughts are as lovely as my visions."

"Your imagination supports you. It is a choice gift. I feel too keenly my reality."

"At least, I cannot imagine that you should either feel, or give rise to, any other feelings but those that are enchanting."

"Nay! a truce to compliments. Let me hear something worthier from you."

"Indeed," I said, seriously, "I was not thinking of compliments, nor am I in a mood for such frivolities. Yet I wish not to conceal, that in meeting you this evening, I have experienced the most gratifying incident of my life."

"I am happy to have met you—if, indeed, it is possible to be happy about any thing."

"Dear Alceste—may I call you Alceste?—why should so fair a brow be clouded?"

"It is not unusually gloomy—my heaven is never serene. But, see! the rooms are nearly empty, and I am waited for."

"But we shall soon meet again?"

"I shall be here to-morrow. I reside with my maternal uncle, Count Delfini. I go out but little, but to-morrow I shall certainly be here."

"I shall not exist until we again meet. I entreat you, fail not."

"O! I shall certainly be here; and, in the mean time, you know," she added, with a smile, "you can dream."

"Farewell, dear Alceste! you cannot imagine how it grieves me to part."

"Adieu!—shall I say Contarini?"

X.

To say that I was in love, that I was in love at first sight—these are weak, worldly phrases to describe the profound and absorbing passion that filled my whole being. There was a mystical fulfilment in our meeting, the consciousness of which mingled with my adoration, and rendered it quite supernatural. This was the Adrian bride that I had come to greet. This was the great and worthy object of so many strange desires, and bewildering dreams, and dark coincidences. I returned to my palace—I threw myself into a chair, and sat for hours in mute abstraction. At last, the broad light of morning broke into the chamber—I looked up, glanced round at the ghastly chandeliers, thought of the coming eve, and retired.

In the evening I hurried to the opera. I did not see Alceste. I entered the box of the countess. A young man rose as I entered, and retired. "You see," I said, "your magic has in a moment converted me into a man of the world."

"I am not the enchantress," said the countess, "although I willingly believe you are enchanted."

"What an agreeable assembly you introduced me to last night!"

"I hope that I shall find you a constant guest."

"I fear that you will find me too faithful a votary. I little imagined, in the morning, that I could lay claim to relationship with so interesting a person as your charming young friend."

"Alceste is a great favourite of mine."

"She is not here, I believe, to-night?"

"I think not—Count Delfini's box is opposite, and empty."

"Count Delfini is, I believe, some connexion—"

"Her uncle. They will be soon, as you are perhaps aware, nearer connected."

"Indeed!" I said.

"You know that Alceste is betrothed to his son, Count Grimani. By-the-by, he quitted the box as you entered. You know him?"

I sank back in my chair—I turned pale.

"Do you admire this opera?" I inquired.

"It is a pretty imitation."

"Very pretty."

"We shall soon change it."

"Very soon."

"They have an excellent opera at St. Petersburg, I understand. You have been there?"

"Yes—no—I understand very excellent. This house is very hot." I rose up, bowed, and abruptly departed.

I instantly quitted the theatre, covered myself up in my cloak, threw myself down in my gondola, and groaned. In a few minutes I arrived home, I was quite unexpected. I ran up stairs. Lausanne was about to light the candles. I sent him away. I was alone in the large, dark chamber, which seemed only more vast and gloomy for the bright moon.

"Thank God!" I exclaimed, "I am alone. Why do I not die! Betrothed! It is false; she cannot be another's. She is mine; she is my Adrian bride. Destiny has delivered her to me. Why did I pass the Alps! Heaven frowned upon the passage. Yet I was expected. I was long expected. Poh! she is mine. I would cut her out from the heart of a legion. Is she happy? Her heaven is never serene." Mark that. I will be the luminary to dispel these clouds. Betrothed! Infamous jargon! She belongs to me. Why did I not stab him! Is there ne'er a bravo in Venice that will do the job! Betrothed! What a word! what an infamous, what a ridiculous word! She is mine, and she is betrothed to another. Most assuredly, if she be only to be attained by the destruction of the city, she shall be mine. A host of Delfinis shall not balk me.

"Now this is no common affair. It shall be done, and it shall be done quickly. I cannot doubt she loves me. It is as necessary that she should love me, as that I should adore her. We are bound together by Fate. We belong to each other: 'I have been long expected.'

"Ah! were these words a warning or a prophecy? Have I arrived too late! Let it be settled at once, this very evening. Suspense is madness. She is mine, most assuredly she is mine. I will not admit for a moment that she is not mine. That idea cannot exist in my thoughts. It is the end of the world, it is doomsday for me. Most assuredly, she is my Adrian bride, my *bride*, not my *betrothed* merely, but my *bride*.

"Let me be calm. I am calm. I never was calmer in my life. Nothing shall ruffle, nothing shall discompose me. I will have my rights. This difficulty will make our future lives more sweet. We shall smile at it in each other's arms. Grimani Delfini! If there be blood in that name, it shall flow. Sooner than another should possess her, she should herself be sacrificed. A solemn sacrifice, a sweet and solemn sacrifice, consecrated by my own doom! I would lead her to the altar like Iphigenia. I—

"O! inscrutable, inexorable destiny, which must be fulfilled! Doom that mortals must endure, and cannot direct—lo! I kneel down before thee, and I pray!—Let it end, let it end, let it end at once! This suspense is insanity. Is she not mine! Didst thou not whisper it in the solitude of the north, didst thou not confirm it amid the thunder of the Alps, didst thou not reanimate my drooping courage, even amid this fair city I so much love, this land of long and frequent promise! And shall it not be! Do I exist, do I breathe, and think, and dare—am I a man, and a man of strong passions and deep thoughts—and shall I, like a vile beggar upon my knees, crave the rich heritage that is my own right! If she be not mine, there is no longer Venice, no longer human existence, no longer a beautiful and everlasting world. Let it all cease; let the whole globe crack and shiver; let all nations and all human hopes expire at once; let chaos come again, if this girl be not my bride!"

I determined to go to the Malbrizzi palace. My spirit rose as I ascended the stairs. I felt confident she was there. Her form was the first that occurred to me as I entered the saloon. Several persons were around her, among them Grimani Delfini. I did not care. I had none of the jealousy of petty loves. She was unhappy, that was sufficient; and if there were no other way of disentangling the mesh, I had a sword that should cut this Gordian knot in his best blood. I saluted her. She presented me to her cousin. I smiled upon one who, at all events, should be my victim.

"I hope that we shall make Venice agreeable to you, count," said Grimani.

"There is no doubt," I replied.

We conversed for some time on indifferent subjects. My manner was elated. I entered into the sparkling contest of conversation with success. The presence of Alceste was my inspiration. I would not quit her side, and in time, we were once more alone.

"You are ever gay," she remarked.

"My face is most joyful when my heart is most gloomy. Happiness is tranquil. Why were you not at the opera?"

"I go out very little."

"I went there only to meet you. I detest these assemblies. You are always surrounded by a crowd of moths. Will you dance?"

"I have just refused Grimani."

"I am glad of it. I abhor dancing. I only asked you to monopolize your company."

"And what have you been doing to-day? Have you seen all our spectacles?"

"I have just risen. I did not go to bed last night. I sat up musing over our strange meeting."

"Was it so strange?"

"It was stranger than you imagine."

"You are mysterious."

"Every thing is mysterious, although I have been always taught the reverse."

"I believe, too," she remarked, with a pensive air and in a serious tone, "that the courses of this world are not so obvious as we imagine."

"The more I look upon you, the more I am convinced that yesterday was not our first meeting. We have been long acquainted."

"In dreams?"

"What you please. Dreams, visions, prophecies, I believe in them all. You have often appeared to me, and I have often heard of you."

"Dreams are doubtless very singular."

"They come from heaven. I could tell you stories of dreams that would indeed surprise you."

"Tell me."

"When I was about to pass the Alps,—but really it is too serious a narrative for such a place. Do you know the villa of the temple on the Brenta?"

"Assuredly, for it is my own."

"Your own! Then you are indeed mine."

"What can you mean?"

"The temple, the temple—"

"And did you write upon the wall?"

"Who else! Who else! But why I wrote—that I would tell you."

"Let us walk to these rooms. There is a terrace, where we shall be less disturbed."

"And where we have been long expected."

"Ah!"

XI.

"It is wonderful, most wonderful!" and she leaned down and plucked a flower.

"I wish I were that flower," I said.

"It resembles me more than you, Contarini," and she threw it away.

"I see no resemblance."

"It is lost."

I picked it up and placed it in my bosom.

"It is found," I replied, "and cherished."

"We are melancholy," said Alceste, "and yet we are not happy. Your philosophy—is it quite correct?"

"I am happy you should resemble me, because I wish it."

"Good wishes do not always bring good fortunes."

"Destiny bears to us our lot, and destiny is perhaps our own will."

"Alas! my will is brighter than my doom!"

"Both should be beautiful, and shall—"

"O talk not of the future. Come, Contarini, come, come, away."

XII.

SHALL I endeavour to recall the soft transport which this night suffused itself over my being? I existed only for one object; one idea only was impressed upon my brain. The next day passed in a delicious listlessness and utter oblivion of all cares and duties. In the evening, I rose from the couch on which I had the whole day reclined musing on a single thought, and flew to ascertain whether that wizard Imagination had deceived me, whether she were, indeed, so wondrous fair and sweet, and that this earth could indeed be graced by such surpassing loveliness.

She was not there. I felt her absence as the greatest misfortune that had ever fallen upon me. I could not anticipate existing four-and-twenty hours without her presence. I lingered in expectation of her arrival. I could hear nothing of her. Each moment I fancied she must appear. It seemed impossible that so bitter a doom awaited me, as that I should not gaze this night upon her beauty. She did not come. I remained to the last, silent and anxious, and returned home to a sleepless bed.

The next morning I called at the Delfini palace, to which I had received an invitation. Morning was an unusual time to call, but for this I did not care. I saw the old count and countess, and her ladyship's cavalier, who was the most frivolous and ancient Adonis I had ever witnessed. I talked with them all, all of them with the greatest good humour, in the hope that Alceste would at length appear. She did not. I ventured to inquire after her. I feared she might be unwell. She was quite well, but engaged with her confessor. I fell into one of my silent rages, kicked the old lady's poodle, snubbed the cavalier, and stalked away.

In the evening, I was careful to be at the Malbrizzi palace. The Delfini were there, but not Alceste. I was already full of suspicions, and had been brooding the whole morning over a conspiracy. "Alceste is not here," I observed to the countess, "is she unwell?"

"Not at all. I saw her this morning. She was quite well.—I suppose Count Grimani is jealous"

"Hah!" thought I, "has it already come to that?"

Let us begin, then. I feel very desperate. This affair must be settled. Fed by her constant presence and her smiles, the flame of my passion could for a time burn with a calm and steady blaze—but I am getting mad again. I shall die if this state of things last another day. I have half a mind to invite him to the terrace, and settle it at once. Let me see, cannot I do more?"

I mused a moment, quitted the saloon, called the gondola, and told them to row me to the Delfini palace.

We glided beneath that ancient pile. All was dark, save one opened window, whence proceeded the voice of one singing. I knew that voice. I motioned to the gondoliers to rest upon their oars.

"'Tis the Signora Contarini," whispered Tita, who was acquainted with the family.

We floated silently beneath her window. Again she sang.

I marked a rose bedewed with tears, a white and virgin rose; and I said, "O! rose, why do you weep, you are too beautiful for sorrow!" And she answered, "Lady, mourn not for me, for my grief comes from Heaven."

She was silent. I motioned to Tita, who, like many of the gondoliers, was gifted with a fine voice, to answer. He immediately sang a verse from one of the favourite ballads of his city. While he sang, I perceived her shadow, and presently I observed her in the middle of the apartment. I plucked from my breast a flower, which I had borne for her to the Malbrizzi palace, and cutting off a lock of my hair, I tied it round the rose, and threw it into the chamber.

It fell upon the table. She picked it up, she stared at it for some moments, she smiled, she pressed it to her lips.

I could restrain myself no longer. I pushed the gondola alongside the palace, clambered up the balcony, and entered the room.

She started, she nearly shrieked, but restrained herself.

"You are surprised, Alceste, perhaps you are displeased. They are endeavouring to separate us; I cannot live without you."

She clasped her hands, and looked up to heaven with a glance of anguish.

"Yes! Alceste," I exclaimed, advancing, "let me express what my manner has never attempted to conceal; let me express to you my absolute adoration. I love you, my Alceste, I love you with a passion as powerful as it is pure, a passion which I cannot control, a passion which ought not to be controlled."

She spoke not, she turned away her head and deprecated my advances with her extended arms.

"Alceste, I know all. I know the empty, the impious ceremony that has doomed you to be the bride of a being whom you must abhor. My Alceste is not happy. She herself told me her heaven was not serene—the heaven in whose light I would forever lie."

I advanced, I stole her hand, I pressed it to my lips. Her face was hidden in her arm, and that reclined upon a pillar.

There was for a moment silence. Suddenly she withdrew her hand, and said, in a low, but distinct voice, "Contarini, this must end."

"End! Alceste, I adore you. You—you dare not say you do not love me. Our will is not our own. Destiny has linked us together, and Heaven

has interposed to consecrate our vows. And shall a form, a dull, infamous form, stand between our ardent and hallowed loves!"

"It is not that, Contarini, it is not that, though that were much. No, Contarini, I am not yours."

"Not mine, Alceste! not mine! Look upon me. Think who I am, and dare to say you are not mine. Am I not Contarini Fleming? Are not you my Adrian bride? Heaven has delivered you to me."

"Alas! alas! Heaven keeps me from you."

"Alceste, you see kneeling before you one who is indeed nothing, if fame be what some deem. I am young, Alceste, the shadow of my mind has not yet fallen over the earth. Yet there is that within me,—and at this moment I prophesy,—there is that within me which may yet mould the mind and fortunes of my race—and of this heart, capable of these things, the fountains are open, Alceste, and they flow for you. Disdain them not, Alceste; pass them not by with carelessness. In the desert of your life, they will refresh you—yes, yes, they can indeed become to you a source of all felicity.

"I love you with a love worthy of your being; I love you as none but men like me can love. Blend not the thought of my passion with the commonplace affections of the world. Is it nothing to be the divinity of that breathing shrine of inspiration, my teeming mind? O! Alceste, you know not the world to which I can lead you, the fair and glorious garden in which we may wander forever!"

"I am lost!" she exclaimed, "but I am yours."

I caught her in my arms; yea! I caught her in my arms, that dark-eyed daughter of the land I loved. I sealed her sweet lips with passionate kisses. Her head rested on my breast; and I dried with embraces her fast-flowing tears.

XIII.

I HAD quitted Alceste so abruptly that I had made no arrangements for our future meeting. Nor indeed for some time could I think of any thing but my present and overflowing joy. So passionately was I entranced with all that had happened, so deeply did I muse over all that had been said and done, so sweetly did her voice linger in my ear, and so clearly did her fond form move before my vision, that hours elapsed before I felt again the craving of again beholding her. I doubted not that I should find her at the Malbrizzi palace. I was disappointed, but my disappointment was not bitter like the preceding eve. I felt secure in our secret loves, and I soon quitted the assembly again to glide under her window. All was dark. I waited, Tita again sang. No light appeared, no sound stirred.

I resolved to call at the palace, to which I had received the usual general invitation. The family were out, and at the Pisani palace. I returned to Madame Malbrizzi's. I looked about for my young Austrian acquaintance. I observed him, I fell into conversation. I inquired if he knew Count Pisani, and on his answering in the affirmative, I requested him to accompany me there. We soon arrived at the Pisani palace. I met the Delfini, but no Alceste. I spoke to the countess. I listened to several stories about her lap-dog; I even anticipated her ancient cavalier in picking up her glove. I ven-

tured to inquire after Alceste. They believed she was not quite well. I quitted the palace, and repaired again to the magical window. Darkness and silence alone greeted me. I returned home, more gloomy than anxious.

In the morning, Lausanne brought me a letter. I broke the seal with a trembling hand and with a faint blush. I guessed the writer. The words seemed traced by love. I read.

"I renounce our vows, I retract my sacred pledge, I deliver to the winds our fatal love.

"Pity me, Contarini, hate me, despise me, but forget me.

"Why do I write? Why do I weep? I am nothing, O! I am nothing. I am blotted out of this fair creation, and the world that should bring me so many joys, brings me only despair.

"Do not hate me, Contarini, do not hate me. Do not hate one who adores you. Yes! adore—for even at this dread moment, when I renounce your love, let me pour forth my adoration.

"Am I insensible? am I unworthy of the felicity, that for an instant we thought might be mine? O! Contarini, no one is worthy of you, and yet I fondly believe my devotion might compensate for my imperfectness.

"To be the faithful companion of his life, to be the partner of his joy and sorrow, to sympathize with his glory, and to solace his grief—I ask no more, I ask no more thou Heaven! Wilt thou not smile upon me! Wilt thou, for whom I sacrifice so much, wilt thou not pity me!

"All is silent. There is no sign. No heavenly messenger tells me I may be happy. Alas! alas! I ask too much, I ask too much. It is too great a prize. I feel it, I believe it. My unworthiness is great, but I am its victim.

"Contarini, let this console you. I am unworthy of you. Heaven has declared I am unworthy of you. Were I worthy of you, Heaven would not be cruel. O! Contarini, let this console you. You are destined for higher joys. Think not of me, Contarini, think not of me, and I—I will be silent.

"Silent! and where? O! world, that I now feel that I could love, beautiful, beautiful world—thou art not for me, thou art not for me, and Heaven, Heaven, to whom I offer so much, surely, surely, in this agony it will support me.

"I must write, although my pen refuse to inscribe my woe; I must write, although my fast-flowing tears bathe out the record of my misery. O! my God! for one moment uphold me. Let the future at least purchase me one moment of present calm! Let me spare, at least, him! Let me at least, in this last act of my love, testify my devotion by concealing my despair.

"You must know all, Contarini, you must know all. You must know all, that you may not hate me. Think me not light, think me not capricious. It is my constancy that is fatal, it is my duty that is my death.

"You love our country, Contarini, you love our Italy. Fatal, fatal Italy! O! Contarini, fly, fly away from us. Cross again those Alps that Heaven frowned upon you as you passed. Unhappy country! I am the victim of thy usages, who was born to breathe amid thy beauty. You know the customs of this land. The convent is our school—it leads to the cloister, that is too often

our doom. I was educated at a Tuscan convent. I purchased my release from it, like many of my friends, and the price was my happiness, which I knew not then how to prize. The day that I quitted the convent, I was the betrothed bride of Grimani Delfini. I was not then terrified by that, the memory of which now makes me shudder. It is a common, though an unhallowed incident.

"I entered that world of which I had thought so much. My mind developed with my increased sphere of knowledge. Let me be brief. I soon could not contemplate without horror the idea of being the bride of a man I could not love. There was no refuge. I postponed, by a thousand excuses, our union. I had recourse to a thousand expedients to dissolve it. Vain struggling of a slave! In my frenzy, the very day that you entered Italy, I returned to Florence on the excuse of visiting a friend, and secretly devoted myself to the cloister. The abbess, allured by the prospect of attaining my property for her institution, became my confidant, and I returned to Venice only to make in secret the necessary preparations for quitting it for ever.

"The Delfinis were on the Brenta. I repaired one day to the villa which you visited, and which, though uninhabited, became, from having been the favourite residence of my father, a frequent object of my visits. As I walked along the terrace, I perceived for a moment and at a distance, a stranger crossing the lawn. I retired into the chapel, where I remained more than an hour. I quitted the chapel and walked to the temple. I was attracted by some writing on the wall. I read it, and although I could ascribe to it no definite meaning, I could not help musing over it. I sat down in a chair at the head of the table. Whether I were tired by the walk, or overpowered by the heat, I know not, but an unaccustomed drowsiness crept over my limbs, and I fell asleep. I not only fell asleep, but, O! Contarini, I dreamed, and my dream was wonderful and strange.

"I found myself alone in the cloisters of a convent, and I heard afar the solemn chant of an advancing procession. It became louder and louder, and soon I perceived the nuns advancing, with the abbess at their head. And the abbess came forward to claim me, and to my horror, her countenance was that of Grimani Delfini. And I struggled to extricate myself from her grasp, and suddenly the stranger of the morning rushed in and caught me in his arms, and the cloister melted away, and I found myself in a beautiful country, and I woke.

"The sun had set. I returned home, pensive and wayward. Never had I thought of my unhappy situation with more unhappiness. And each night the figure of the stranger appeared to me in my dreams, and each day I procrastinated my return to Florence. And in the agitation which these strange dreams produced, I determined to go and pray at the tombs of my fathers. I quitted the villa Delfini with a single female attendant, and returned to it the same day. I entered the church through a private door from the adjoining building, which was a house of charity founded by our family.

"You know the rest, Contarini, you know the rest. We met. The stranger of my dreams stood before me. My heart before that meeting—already yours, and when you whispered to me—
you too—

"Wo! wo! why are we not happy! You said that Heaven had brought us together. Alas! Contarini, Heaven, Heaven has parted us. I avoided you, Contarini, I flew from the spell which each instant grew stronger. You sought me. I yielded. Yes! I yielded, but long vigils shall atone for that fatal word.

"Go, Contarini, go forth in glory and in pride. I will pray for you. I will ever think of you, I will ever think of my best, my only beloved. All the prosperity human imagination can devise, and heavenly love can grant, hover over you! You will be happy, you must be happy. For my sake you will be happy—and I—I am alone, but I am alone with my Redeemer,

"ERE you have received this, I shall have crossed the Apennines—pursuit is hopeless; and my Contarini will, I am sure, respect my vow."

It was read. My spirit was never more hushed in my life—I was quite calm. She might be in a convent, and it might be necessary to burn the convent down, and both of us might probably perish in the flames. But what was death to the threatened desolation? I sent for Lausanne. "Lausanne," I said, "I have a very high opinion of your talents and energy. I have hitherto refrained from putting them to the test, for particular reasons. A circumstance has occurred in which I require not only their greatest exertion, but devotion and fidelity. If you accomplish my wish, you are no longer my servant, you are my friend for life. If you fail, it matters little, for I shall not survive. But if you betray me, Lausanne—" and I looked through his very soul.

"The consequences may be fatal to me. I understand you. When I entered your service, you are under a mistake if you consider my fidelity restricted."

"It is well; I place implicit trust in you. Signora Contarini has quitted Venice suddenly. Her present abode is a secret. She informs me that she has departed for Tuscany, and is by this time in a convent. This may be to mislead me, or to gain time—I wish to ascertain it."

"There will be no difficulty, my lord," said Lausanne, with a smile. "There are no secrets in Venice to the rich."

"It is well. I shall remain in this room until I hear from you. I care not how much is expended. Away; and for God's sake, Lausanne, bring me good news."

XIV.

I WALKED up and down the room without stopping. Not an idea crossed my mind. In two hours Lausanne returned.

"Well, well?" I exclaimed.

"There is, I think, little doubt that the signora departed for the villa Delfini. She may now have quitted it. I sent Tita to the palace, as he is acquainted with the household. This is all he could elicit."

"The gondola, the gondola. Rest you here, Lausanne, and let me know when I return what ships are about to leave the port. Tell the banker I shall want money—a considerable sum; two thousand sequins; and let the bills be ready for my signature. And, Lausanne," I added in a low tone, "I may require a priest. Have your eye upon some fellow who will run over the ceremony without asking

questions. If I be any time absent, say I have gone to Trieste."

My gondoliers skimmed along. We were soon at Fusina. I shook my purse to the postillion. The horses were ready in an instant. I took Tita with me, as he knew the servants. We dashed off at a rate which is seldom achieved on those dull, sandy roads. We hurried on for three or four hours. I told Tita to have his eye for any of the Delfini household. As we were passing the gate of the villa of the temple, he turned round on the box and said, "By the blood of the holy Baptist, your excellency, there is the little Maria, Signora Alceste's attendant. She just now entered that side door. I knew her by the rose-coloured ribands which I gave her last carnival."

"Did she see us?"

"I think not, for the baggage would have smiled."

"Drive back a hundred yards."

It was sunset. I got out of the carriage, and stole into the gardens of the villa unperceived. I could see no lights in the building. From this I inferred that Alceste was perhaps only paying a farewell visit to her father's house. I ran along the terrace, I observed no one. I gained the chapel. I instinctively trod very lightly. I glanced in at the window. I perceived a form kneeling before the altar. There was a single candle. The kneeling figure leaned back with clasped hands. The light fell upon the countenance. I beheld the face of Alceste Contarini.

I opened the door gently, but it roused her. I entered.

"I come," I said, "to claim my bride."

She screamed, she jumped upon the altar, and clung to the great ebony cross. It was the same figure, and the same attitude, that I beheld in my vision in the church.

"Alceste," I said, "you are mine. There is no power in heaven or earth, there is no infernal influence that can prevent you from being mine. You are as much part of me as this arm with which I now embrace you." I tore her from the cross, I carried her fainting form out of the chapel.

The moon had risen. I rested on a bank, and watched with blended passion and anxiety her closed eyes. She was motionless, and her white arms drooped down apparently without life. She breathed, yes! she breathed. That large eye opened, and darkened into light. She gazed around with an air of vacancy. A smile, a faint, sweet smile played upon her face. She slightly stretched her beautiful frame, as if again to feel her existence, and moved her beautiful arms, as if to try whether she yet retained power over her limbs. Again she smiled, and exclaiming "Contarini!" threw them round my neck.

"O! my Alceste, my long-promised Alceste, you are indeed mine."

"I am yours, Contarini. Do with me what you like."

XV.

WE WALKED to the temple, in order that she might compose herself before her journey. I sat down in the same chair, but not alone. Alceste was in my arms. Happiness is indeed tranquil, for our joy was full, and we were silent. At length I whispered to her that we must go. She rose, and we were about to leave the temple, when she would go back and kiss my inscription.

She remembered the maid, whom I had forgotten. I sent Tita to tell his friend that a carriage had arrived from Madame Malbrizzi's for his mistress, who was obliged suddenly to return, and that she was to remain behind. I wrapped Alceste in my cloak and placed her in my arms in the carriage, and then returned to Venice.

The gondola glided swiftly to my palace. I carried Alceste out, and bore her in my arms to her apartment. She entreated that I would not, for a moment, quit her. I was obliged therefore to receive Lausanne's report at the door. There was no vessel immediately about to depart, but a ship had quitted the port that morning for Candia, and was still beating about in the offing. He had himself seen the captain, who was content to take passengers, provided they would come out to him. This suited my plans. Lausanne had induced the captain to lie-to till the morning. A priest, he told me, was waiting.

I broke to Alceste, lying exhausted upon the sofa, the necessity of our instant departure, and our instant union. She said it was well; that she should never be at ease till she had quitted Venice, and that she was ready. I postponed our marriage until the night, and insisted upon her taking some refreshment, but she could not eat. I gave directions to Lausanne to prepare for our instant departure. I resolved to take Tita with me, with whom I was well pleased.

I was anxious about the marriage, because, although I believed it invalid in a Catholic country without a dispensation, it would, as I conceived, hold good in Protestant law. I was careful of the honour of the Contarinis, and at this moment, was not unmindful of the long line of northern ancestry, which I did not wish my child to disgrace.

The ingenuity of Lausanne was always remarkable at conjunctures like the present. The magic of his character was his patience. This made him quicker and readier, and more successful than all other men. He prepared every thing, and anticipated wants of which we could not think.

Two hours before midnight, I was united, by the forms of the Catholic church, to Alceste Contarini, the head of the most illustrious house in Europe, and the heiress of a fortune, which, in spite of its decay, was not unworthy of her birth. Two servants were the only witnesses of an act, to fulfil which she imagined herself to peril her eternal welfare, and which exercised a more certain and injurious influence over her worldly fortunes and reputation.

At daybreak, Lausanne roused me, saying that the wind was favourable, and we must be off. He had already despatched Tita to the ship with all our baggage. I rose, wrote to my banker, informing him that I should be absent some time, and requesting him to manage every thing for my credit, and then I kissed my still sleeping wife. The morning light fell upon her soft face. A slight flush melted away as I gazed upon her, and she opened her eyes and smiled. Never had she looked more beautiful. I would have given half my fortune to have been permitted to remain at Venice in tranquillity and peace.

But doubly sweet is the love that is gained by danger, and guarded by secrecy. All was prepared. We stepped, perhaps for the last time, into a gondola. The gray sea was before us, we soon reached the ship, Tita and the captain were standing at

the ladder-head. The moment that we embarked the sails were set, and a dashing breeze bore us along out of the gulf. Long ere noon, that Venice, with its towers and cupolas, which I had forfeited so much to visit, and all those pleasant palaces wherein I could have lived forever, had faded into the blue horizon.

XVI.

THE ship was an imperial merchant brig. The wife of the captain was on board, a great convenience for Alceste, who was without female attendance, and with the exception of some clothes the provident Lausanne had obtained from Tita's sister, without a wardrobe. But these are light hardships for love, and the wind was favourable, and the vessel fleet. We were excellent sailors, and bore the voyage without inconvenience, and the novelty of the scene, and the beauty of the sea amused and interested us.

I imbibed from this voyage a taste for a sea life, which future wanderings on the waters have only confirmed. I never find the sea monotonous. The variations of weather, the ingenious tactics, the rich sunsets, the huge, strange fish, the casual meetings, and the original and racy character of mariners, and perhaps also the frequent sight of land, which offers itself in the Mediterranean, afford me constant amusement. I do not think that there is in the world a kinder-hearted and more courteous person than a common sailor. As for their attentions to Alceste they were even delicate, and I am sure, that although a passionate lover, I might have taken many a hint from their vigilant solicitude. Whenever she was present their boisterous mirth was instantly repressed. She never walked the deck that a ready hand was not quick in clearing her path of any impediments, and ere I could even discover she was weary, their watchful eyes anticipated her wants, and they proffered her a rude but welcome seat. Ah! what a charming voyage was this, when my only occupation was to look upon an ever-smiling face, and to be assured a thousand times each hour, that I was the cause of all this happiness.

Lausanne called me one morning on deck. Our port was in sight. I ran up; I beheld the highlands of Candia—a rich, wild group of lofty blue mountains, and in the centre, the snowy peak of Mount Ida. As we approached, the plain, extending from the base of the mountains to the coast, became perceptible, and soon a town and harbour.

We were surrounded by boats full of beings in bright and strange costumes. A new world, a new language, a new religion, were before us. Our deck was covered with bearded and turbaned men. We stared at each other in all this picturesque confusion, but Lausanne, and especially Tita, who spoke Greek, and knew Candia well, saved us from all anxiety. We landed, and, thanks to being in a Turkish province, there was no difficulty about passports, with which we were unprovided, and a few sequins saved the captain from explaining why his passengers were not included in his ship's papers. We landed, and were lodged in the house of a Greek, who officiated as a European vice-consul.

The late extraordinary incidents of our lives had followed each other with such rapidity, that when we woke in the morning, we could scarcely believe

that it was not at all a dream. We looked round our chamber with its strange furniture, and stared at the divans, and small, high windows, shadowed with painted glass, and smiled. Our room was darkened, but, at the end, opened an arch bright in the sun. Beautiful strange plants quivered in the light. The perfume of orange-trees filled our chamber, and the bees were clustering in the scarlet flowers of the pomegranate. Amid the pleasing distraction of these sweet sounds and scents we distinguished the fall of a fountain.

We stole forward to the arch like a prince and princess just disenchanted in a fairy tale. We stepped into a court paved with marble, and full of rare shrubs. The fountain was in the centre. Around it were delicate mats of Barbary, and small bright Persian carpets; and crouching on a scarlet cushion was a white gazelle.

I stepped out, and found our kind host, who spoke Italian. I sent his lovely daughter, Alexina, whose cheeks were like a cleft of pomegranate, to my wife. As for myself, by Lausanne's advice, I took a Turkish bath, which is the most delightful thing in the world, and when I was reduced to a jelly, I repaired to our host's divan, where his wife, and three other daughters, all equally beautiful, and dressed in long flowing robes of different coloured velvets richly embroidered, and caps of the same material, with tassels of gold, and covered with pearls, came forward. One gave me a pipe seven feet long, another fed me with sweetmeats, a third pressed her hand to her heart, as she presented me coffee in a small cup of porcelain, resting in a filagree frame, and a child, who sparkled like a fairy, bent her knee, as she proffered me a vase of sherbet. I felt like a pasha, and the good father translated my compliments.

I thought that Alceste would never appear, and I sent Lausanne to her door fifty times. At length she came, and in a Greek dress, which they had insisted upon her wearing. I thought we should have both expired with laughing. We agreed that we were perfectly happy.

This was all very delightful, but it was necessary to arrange our plans. I consulted Lausanne. I wished to engage a residence in a retired part of the island. We spoke to our host. He had a country house, which would exactly suit us, and desired a tenant. I sent Lausanne immediately to examine it. It was only fifteen miles away. His report was most satisfactory, and I, at once, closed with the consul's offer.

The house was a long, low building, in the eastern style, with plenty of rooms. It was situated on a very gentle, green hill, the last undulation of a chain of Mount Ida, and was perfectly embowered with gardens, and plantations of olive and orange. It was about two miles from the sea, which appeared before us in a wild and rocky bay. A peasant, who cultivated the gardens, with his wife and children, two daughters just breaking into womanhood, and a young son, were offered to us as servants. Nothing could be more convenient. Behold us at length at rest!

XVII.

I HAVE arrived at a period of my life which, although it afforded me the highest happiness that was ever the lot of man, of which the recollection is now my never-ceasing solace, and to enjoy the

memory of which is alone worth existence, cannot prove very interesting to those who have been sufficiently engaged by my history to follow me to my retirement in ancient Crete.

My life was now monotonous, for my life was only love.

I know not the palling of passion, of which some write. I have loved only once, and the recollection of the being to whom I was devoted, fills me at this moment with as much rapture, as when her virgin charms were first yielded to my embrace. I cannot comprehend the sneers of witty rakes, at what they call constancy. If beings are united by any other consideration but love, constancy is of course impossible, and I think, unnecessary. To a man who is in love, the thought of another woman is uninteresting, if not repulsive. Constancy is human nature. Instead of love being the occasion of all the misery of this world, as is sung by fantastic bards, I believe that the misery of this world is occasioned by there not being love enough. This opinion, at any rate, appears more logical. Happiness is only to be found in a recurrence to the principles of human nature, and these will prompt very simple manners. For myself, I believe that permanent union of the sexes should be early encouraged; nor do I conceive that general happiness can ever flourish but in societies where it is the custom for all the males to marry at eighteen. This custom, I am informed, is not unusual in the United States of America, and its consequence is a simplicity of manners, and a purity of conduct, which Europeans cannot comprehend, but to which they must ultimately have recourse. Primeval barbarism, and extreme civilization, must arrive at the same results. Men, under those circumstances, are actuated by their organization; in the first instance, instinctively; in the second, philosophically. At present, we are all in the various gradations of the intermediate state of corruption.

I could have lived with Alceste Contarini in a solitude for ever. I desired nothing more than to enjoy existence with such a companion. I would have communicated to her all my thoughts and feelings. I would have devoted to her solitary ear the poetry of my being. Such a life might not suit others. Others influenced by a passion not less ardent, may find its flame fed by the cares of life, cherished by its duties and its pleasures, and flourishing amid the travail of society. All is an affair of organization. Ours would differ. Among all men, there are some points of similarity and sympathy. There are few alike, there are some perfectly unlike the mass. The various tribes that people this globe in all probability, spring from different animals. Until we know more of ourselves, what use are our systems! For myself, I can conceive nothing more idle or more useless than what is styled moral philosophy. We speculate upon the character of man; we divide and we subdivide; we have our generals, our sages, our statesmen. There is not a modification of mind that is not mapped in our great atlas of intelligence. We cannot be wrong, because we have studied the past, and we are famous for discovering the future when it has taken place. Napoleon is first consuls, and would found a dynasty. There is no doubt of it. Read my character of Cromwell. But what use is the discovery, when the consul is already tearing off his republican robe, and snatching the imperial diadem? And suppose, which has happened, and ma

and will happen again, suppose a being of a different organization to Napoleon or Cromwell placed in the same situation,—a being gifted with a combination of intelligence hitherto unknown, where then is our moral philosophy, our nice study of human nature? How are we to speculate upon results, which are to be produced by unknown causes? What we want is to discover the character of a man at his birth, and found his education upon his nature. The whole system of moral philosophy is a delusion, fit only for the play of sophists in an age of physiological ignorance.

I leave these great speculations for the dreariness of future hours. Alceste calls me to the golden sands, whither it is our wont to take our sunset walk.

A Grecian sunset! The sky is like the neck of a dove, the rocks and waters are bathed with a violet light. Each moment it changes; each moment it shifts into more graceful and more gleaming shadows. And the thin white moon is above all, the thin white moon, followed by a single star—like a lady by a page.

XVIII.

WE had no books, no single source of amusement but our own society, and yet the day always appeared a moment. I did indeed contrive to obtain for Alceste what was called a mandolin, and which, from its appearance, might have been an ancient lyre. But it was quite unnecessary. My tongue never stopped the whole day. I told Alceste every thing. All about my youthful scrapes and fancies, and Muses and my battle, and Winter, and Christiana, and the confounded tragedy, and, of course, Manstein. If I for a moment ceased, she always said "go on." On I went, and told the same stories over again, which she reheard with the same interest. The present was so delightful to me, that I cared little to talk about the past, and always avoided the future. But Alceste would sometimes turn the conversation to what might happen, and as she now promised to heighten our happiness by bringing us a beautiful stranger to share our delightful existence, the future began to interest even me.

I had never written to my father since I arrived at Paris. Every time I drew a bill I expected to find my credit revoked, but it was not so. And I therefore willingly concluded that Lausanne prized him of every thing, and that he thought fit not to interfere. I had never written to my father, because I cannot dissemble, and as my conduct ever since I quitted France had been one continued violation of his commands and wishes, why, correspondence was difficult, and could not prove pleasing. But Alceste would talk about my father, and it was therefore necessary to think of him. She shuddered at the very name of Italy, and willingly looked forward to a settlement in the north. For myself, I was exceedingly happy, and my reminiscences of my fatherland were so far from agreeable, that I was careless as to the future, and although I already began to entertain the possibility of a return, I still wished to pass some considerable time of our youth inviolate by the vulgar cares of life, and under the influence of a glowing sky.

In the mean time we rambled about the mountains on our little, stout Candiotte horses, or amused ourselves in adorning our residence. We made a

new garden. We collected every choice flower, and rare bird, and beautiful animal that we could assemble together. Alceste was wild for a white gazelle ever since we had seen one in the consul's court. They came from a particular part of Arabia, and are rare. Yet one was obtained, and two of its fawn-coloured brethren. I must confess that we found these elegant and poetical companions extremely troublesome and stupid. They are the least sentimental and domestic of all creatures. The most sedulous attention will not attach them to you, and I do not believe they are ever fairly tame. I dislike them, in spite of their liquid eyes and romantic reputation, and infinitely prefer what are now my constant and ever delightful company, some fine, faithful, honest, intelligent, thoroughbred English dogs.

We had now passed nearly eight months in this island. The end of the year was again advancing. O! the happy, the charming evenings, when fearing of my Alceste, that it grew too cool to walk, we sat within the house, and the large lamp was lit, and the faithful Lausanne brought me my pipe, and the confounded gazelle kicked it over, and the grinning Tita handed us our coffee, and my dear, dear Alceste sang me some delicious Venetian melody, and then I left off smoking, and she left off singing, and we were happier and happier every day.

Talk of fame and romance—all the glory and adventure in the world are not worth one single hour of domestic bliss! It sounds like a claptrap, but the solitary splendour with which I am now surrounded, tells me, too earnestly, it is truth.

XIX.

THE hour approached that was to increase my happiness, my incredible happiness. Blessed, infinitely blessed as I was, bountiful Heaven was about to shower upon me a new and fruitful joy. In a few days I was to become a father. We had obtained from the town all necessary attendance: an Italian physician, whose manner gave us confidence, a sage woman of great reputation, were at our house. I had myself been cautious that my treasure should commit no imprudence. We were full of love and hope. My Alceste was not quite well. The physician recommended great quiet. She was taking her siesta, and I stole from her side, because my presence ever excited her, and she could not slumber.

I strolled down to the bay, and mused over the character of a father. My imagination dwelt only upon this idea. I discovered, as my reverie proceeded, the fine relations that must subsist between a parent and a child. Such thoughts had made no impression upon me before. I thought of my own father, and the tears stole down my cheek. I vowed to return to him immediately, and give ourselves up to his happiness. I prayed to Heaven to grant me a man-child. I felt a lively confidence that he would be choicely gifted. I resolved to devote myself entirely to his education. My imagination wandered in dreams of his perfect character, of his high accomplishments, his noble virtues, his exalted fame. I conceived a philosopher who might influence his race, a being to whom the regeneration of his kind was perhaps allotted.

My thoughts had rendered me unconscious of the hour; the sun had set without my observation; the

growing twilight called me to myself. I looked up, I beheld in the distance Alceste. I was surprised, displeased, alarmed. I could not conceive any thing more imprudent than her coming forth in the evening, and in her situation. I ran forward to reprimand her with a kiss, to fold her shawl more closely round her, and bear her in my arms to the house. I ran forward, speaking at the same time. She faintly smiled. I reached her. Lo! she was not there! A moment before, she was on the wide sands. There was no cavern near in which she could have entered. I stood amazed, thunderstruck. I shouted "Alceste."

The shout was answered. I ran back. Another shout; Tita came to me running. His agitated face struck me with awe. He could not speak; he seized my arm and dragged me along. I ran to the house. I did not dare to inquire the cause. Lausanne met me at the threshold. His countenance was despair. I stared like a bewildered man, I rushed to her room. Yet I remember the group leaning round our bed. They moved aside. I saw Alceste. She did not see me. Her eyes were closed, her face pale and changed, her mouth had fallen.

"What," I said, "what is all this? Doctor, doctor, how is she?"

The physician shook his head.

I could not speak. I wrung my hands, more from the inability of thought and speech, than grief, by which I was not influenced.

"Speak, speak!" I at length said, "is she dead?"

"My lord——"

"Speak, speak, speak!"

"It appears to me to be desperate.

"It is impossible! Dead! She cannot be dead. Bleed her, bleed her, sir, before me. Dead! Did you say dead? Nonsense, nonsense! Alceste, Alceste, speak to me. Say you are not dead, only say you are not dead. Bleed her, sir, bleed her."

To humour me, he took up his lancet and opened another vein. A few dull drops oozed out.

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "See! she bleeds! She is not dead. Alceste, Alceste! you are not dead! Lausanne, do something, Lausanne. For God's sake, Lausanne, save her. Do something, Lausanne. My good Lausanne, do something!"

He affected to feel her pulse. I staggered about the room, wringing my hands.

"Is she better?" I inquired.

No one answered.

"Doctor, save her! Tell me she is better, and I give you half—my whole fortune."

The poor physician shook his head. He attempted nothing. I rushed to Lausanne, and seized his arm.

"Lausanne, I can trust you. Tell me the truth. Is it all over?"

"It has too long been over."

"Ah!" I waved my hands, and shrieked, and fell.

XX.

WHEN my self-consciousness was restored, I found myself in another room. I was lying in a divan in the arms of Lausanne. I had forgotten every thing. I called Alceste. Then the remembrance rushed into my brain.

"Is it true," I said, "Lausanne, is it true?"

His silence was an answer. I rose, and walked up and down the room once or twice, and then I

said, in a low voice, "Take me to the body, Lausanne."

I leaned upon his arm and entered the chamber of our joys. Even as I entered, I indulged the wild hope that I should find it unoccupied. I could not believe it. Yes, yes, she was dead!

Tall candles were burning in the room; the walls were hung with solemn drapery. I advanced to the bedside. I took her hand. I motioned to Lausanne to retire. We were alone, alone once more. But how alone? I doubted of every thing. I doubted of my existence. I thought my heart would burst. I wondered why any thing still went on. Why was not all over? I looked round with idiot eyes, and opened mouth. A horrid contortion was chiselled on my face.

Suddenly I seized the corpse in my arms, and fiercely embraced it. I thought I could reanimate it. I felt so much I thought I could reanimate it. I struggled with death. Was she dead? Was she really dead? It had a heavy leaden feel. I let her drop from my arms. She dropped like a lifeless trunk. I looked round with a silly grin.

It was morning time. The flames of the candles looked haggard. There was a Turkish dagger in the closet. I remembered it. I ran to the closet. I cut off her long tresses. I rolled them round my neck. I locked the door. I stole out of the window. I cunningly watched to observe whether I were followed. No one was stirring, or no one suspected me. I scudded away fleetly. I rushed up the hills. I never stopped. For hours I could never have stopped. I have a faint recollection of chasms, and precipices, and falling waters. I leaped every thing. I found myself at length on a peak of Mount Ida.

A wide view of the ocean opened before me. As I gazed upon it, my mind became inflamed,—the power of speech was restored to me,—the poetry of my grief prevailed.

"Fatal ocean! fatal ocean!" I exclaimed,—*"A curse upon thy waves, for thou wafted us to death. Green hills! green valleys! a blight upon thy trees and pastures, for she cannot gaze upon them! And thou, red sun! her blood is upon thy beams. Halt in thy course, red sun! halt! and receive my curse!"*

"Our house has fallen, the glorious house has fallen; and the little ones may now rise. Eagle! fly away and tell my father he is avenged. For lo! Venice has been my doom, and here on this toppling crag, I seal all things, and thus devote Contarini Fleming to the infernal gods."

I sprang forward, I felt myself in the air. My brain spun round, my sight deserted me, I fell.

XXI.

WHEN I can again recall existence, I found myself in my own house. I was reclining on the divan propped up by cushions. My left arm was in a sling: my head bandaged. I looked around me without thought, and then I relapsed into apathy. Lausanne was in the room, and passed before me. I observed him, but did not speak. He brought me refreshment, which I took without notice. The room was darkened. I knew nothing of the course of time, nor did I care or inquire. Sometimes Lausanne quitted the apartment, and then Tita took his place. Sometimes he returned, and changed my bandages and my dress, and I fell asleep. Awake I had no thought, and slumbering I had no dreams.

I remained in this state, as I afterward learned, six weeks. One day I looked up, and seeing Tita, spoke in a faint voice, and asked for Lausanne. He ran immediately for him, and while he was a moment absent, I rose from my couch and tore the curtain from the window. Lausanne entered and came up to me, and would have again led me to my seat, but I bid him "lighten the room."

I desired to walk forth into the air, and leaning on his arm, I came out of the house. It was early morn, and I believe the sense of the fresh air had attracted and revived me. I stood for a moment vacantly gazing upon the distant bay, but I was so faint that I could not stand, and Spiro, the little Greek boy, ran and brought me a carpet and a cushion, and I sat down. I asked for a mirror, which was unwillingly afforded me; but I insisted upon it. I viewed without emotion my emaciated form, and my pallid, sunken visage. My eyes were dead and hollow, my cheek-bones prominent and sharp, my head shaven, and covered with a light turban. Nevertheless, the feeling of the free, sweet air was grateful, and from this moment I commenced gradually to recover.

I never spoke, except to express my wants, but my appetite returned, my strength increased, and each day, with Lausanne's assistance, I walked for a short time in the garden. My arm, which had been broken, resumed its power; my head, which had been severely cut, healed. I ventured to walk only with the aid of a stick. Gradually I extended my course, and, in time, I reached the seaside. There, in a slight recess formed by a small headland, I would sit with my back against a high rock, feel comforted that earth was hidden from my sight, and gaze for hours in vacancy upon the ocean and the sky. At sunset I stole home. I found Lausanne always about, evidently expecting me. When he perceived me returning, he was soon by my side, but by a way that I could not observe him, and, without obtrusion or any appearance of officiousness, led, or rather carried me to my dwelling.

One morning I bent my way to a small green valley, which opened on the other side of our gardens. It had been one of our most favourite haunts. I know not why I resorted to it this morning, for, as yet, her idea had never crossed my mind, any more than her name my lips. I had an indefinite conviction that I was a lost and fallen man. I knew that I had once been happy, that I had once mingled in a glorious existence; but I felt with regard to the past as if it were another system of being, as if I had suddenly fallen from a star, and lighted on a degenerate planet.

I was in our valley, our happy valley. I stood still, and my memory seemed to return. The tears stole down my face. I remembered the cluster of orange trees under which we often sat. I plucked some leaves, and I pressed them to my lips. Yet I was doubtful, uncertain, incredulous. I scarcely knew who I was. Not indeed that I was unable to feel my identity, not indeed that my intelligence was absolutely incapable of fulfilling its office, but there seemed a compact between my body and my mind that existence should proceed without thought.

I descended into the vale. A new object attracted my attention. I approached it without suspicion. A green mount supported a stone, on which was boldly, but not rudely sculptured,

"ALCESTE, COUNTESS CONTARINI FLEMING."

A date recorded her decease.

"It must have been many years ago," was my first impression; "I am Contarini Fleming, and I remember Alceste well, but not in this country, surely not in this country. And yet those orange trees—"

"My wife, my lost, my darling wife, O! why am I alive! I thought that I was dead! I thought that I had flung myself from the mountain-top to join you—and it was all a dream!"

I threw myself upon the tomb, and my tears poured forth in torrents, and I tore up the flowers that flourished upon the turf, and kissed them, and tossed them in the air.

There was a rose, a beautiful white rose, delicate and fragrant; and I gathered it, and it seemed to me like Alceste. And I sat gazing upon this fair flower, and as my vision was fixed upon it, the past grew up before me, and each moment I more clearly comprehended it. The bitterness of my grief overcame me. I threw away the rose, and a moment after, I was sorry to have lost it. I looked for it. It was not at my feet. My desire for the flower increased. I rose from the tomb, I looked around for the lost treasure. My search led me to the other side of the tablet, and I read the record of the death of my still-born son.

XXII.

"WE must leave this place, Lausanne, and at once."

His eye brightened when I spoke.

"I have seen all that you have done, Lausanne, it is well, very well. I owe you much. I would have given much for her hair, more than I can express. But you are not to blame. You had much to do."

He left the room for a moment, and returned,—returned with the long, the beautiful tresses of my beloved.

"O! you have made me so happy. I never thought that I should again know what joy was. How considerate! How very good!"

He broke to me gently that he had found the tresses around my neck. I rubbed my forehead, I summoned my scattered thoughts,—"I remember something," I replied, "but I thought it was a dream. I fancied that in a dream I had quitted the house."

He told me all. He told me that, after three days' search, he had found me among the mountains, hanging to the rough side of the precipice, shattered, stark, and senseless. The bushes had caught my clothes, and prevented a fatal fall.

XXIII.

A SHIP was about to leave the port for Leghorn. And why not go to Leghorn? Anywhere but Venice. Our arrangements were soon made. I determined to assent to the request of his father in taking little Spiro, who was a favourite of Alceste, and had charge of her gazelles. A Greek father is very willing to see his son anywhere but among the Turks. I promised his family not only to charge myself with his future fortunes, but also to remit them an annual allowance through the consul, provided they cherished the tomb of their late mistress, and in a fortnight I was again on board.

The mountains of Candia were long in sight, but I avoided them. Our voyage was very long,

although not unpleasant. We were often becalmed. The air and change of scene benefited me much. I wonderfully resumed my old habits of revery, and as I paced the deck, which I did all day without ceasing, I mused over the past with feelings of greater solace than I ever anticipated could associate with it. I was consoled by the remembrance of our perfect love. I could not recall on either of our parts a single fretful word, a single occasion on which our conduct had afforded either of us an anxious, or even annoying moment. We never had enjoyed those lovers' quarrels which are said to be so sweet. Her sufferings had been intense, but they had been brief. It would have been consolatory to have received her last breath, yet my presence might have occasioned her greater agony. The appearance of her spirit assured me that, at the moment of her departure, her last thought was for me. The conviction of her having enjoyed positive happiness supported me. I was confident that had it been possible to make the decision, she would not have yielded her brief and beautiful career for length of days unilluminated by the presence of him who remained to consecrate her memory by his enduring love—perhaps by his enduring page.

Ah! old feelings returned to me. I perceived that it was impossible to exist without some object, and fame and poetic creation offered themselves to my void heart. I remembered that the high calling to which I was devoted had been silently neglected. I recollected the lofty education and loftier results that travel was to afford, and for which travel was to prepare me. I reminded myself that I had already proved many new passions, become acquainted with many new modifications of feeling, and viewed many new objects. My knowledge of man and nature was very much increased. My mind was full of new thoughts, and crowded with new images.

As I thus mused, that separation of the mere individual from the universal poet, which ever occurred in these high communings, again took place. My own misfortunes seemed but petty incidents to one who could exercise an illimitable power over the passions of his kind. If, amid the common losses of common life, the sympathy of a single friend can bear its balm, could I find no solace, even for my great bereavement, in the love of nations, and the admiration of ages?

Thus reflecting, I suddenly dashed into invention, and in my almost constant walks on deck, I poured forth a crowd of characters, and incidents, and feelings, and images, and moulded them into a coherent, and, as I hoped, a beautiful form. I longed for the moment when I could record them on a scroll more lasting than my memory, and upheld by this great purpose, I entered with a calm, if not cheerful countenance, the famous port of Leghorn.

PART THE FOURTH.

I.

I WAS at length at Florence. The fair city so much vaunted by poets at first greatly disappointed me. I could not reconcile myself to those unfinished churches like barns, and those gloomy

palaces like prisons. The muddy Arno was not poetical, and the sight of the whole place and the appearance of the surrounding hills, in spite of their white villas, seemed to me confined, monotonous, and dull. Yet there is a charm in Florence, which, although difficult precisely to define, is in its influence very great and growing, and I scarcely know a place that I would prefer for a residence. I think it is the character of art, which both from ancient associations, and its present possessions, is forcibly impressed upon this city. It is full of invention. You cannot stroll fifty yards, you cannot enter a church or a palace, without being favourably reminded of the power of human thought. It is a famous memorial of the genius of the Italian middle ages, when the mind of man was in one of its spring-tides, and in which we mark so frequently what at the present day we too much underrate—the influence of individual character.

In Florence, the monuments are not only of great men, but of the greatest. You do not gaze upon the tomb of an author, who is merely a great master of composition, but of one who formed the language. The illustrious astronomer is not the discoverer of a planet, but the revealer of the whole celestial machinery. The artist and the politician are not merely the first sculptors and statesmen of their time, but the inventors of the very art and the very craft in which they excelled.

The study of the fine arts mutually assists each other. In the formation of my style, I have been perhaps more indebted to music and to painting, even than to the great masters of literary composition. The contemplation of the Venetian school had developed in me a latent love of gorgeous eloquence, dazzling incident, brilliant expression, and voluptuous sentiment. These brought their attendant imperfections, exaggeration, effeminacy, the obtrusion of art, the painful want of nature. The severe simplicity of the Tuscan masters chastened my mind. I mused over a great effect produced almost by a single mean. The picture that fixed my attention by a single group illustrating a single passion, was a fine and profitable study. I felt the power of nature delineated by a great master, and how far from necessary to enforce her influence, were the splendid accessories with which my meditated compositions would rather have encumbered than adorned her. I began to think more of the individual than the species, rather of the motives of man, than of his conduct. I endeavoured to make myself as perfect in the dissection of his mind, as the Florentine in the anatomy of his body. Attempting to acquire the excellence of my models, I should probably have imbibed their defects; their stiff, and sombre, and arid manner; their want of variety and grace. The Roman school saved me from this, and taught me that a very chaste or severe conception might be treated in a very glowing or genial style. But after all, I prefer the Spanish to the Italian painters. I know no one to rival Murillo. I know no one who has blended with such felicity the high ideal with the extreme simplicity of nature. Later in life, I found myself in his native city, in that lovely Seville, more lovely from his fine creations than even from the orange bowers that perfume its gates, and the silver stream that winds about its plain.

I well remember the tumult of invention in which I wandered day after day amid the halls and galleries of Florence. Each beautiful face that

flitted before me was a heroine, each passion that breathed upon the canvass was to be transferred to the page. I conceived at one time the plan of writing a series of works in the style of each school. The splendour of Titian, the grace of Raffaele, the twilight tints of that magician, Guercino, alternately threw my mind into moods analogous to their creations. A portrait of Ippolyto de' Medici in the Pitti palace, of whom I knew nothing, haunted me like a ghost, and I could only lay the spectre by resolving in time to delineate the spirit of Italian feudality. The seraphic Baptist in the wilderness recalled the solitude I loved. I would have poured forth a monologue amid the mountains of Judea, had not Endymion caught my enraptured vision, and I could dream only of the bright goddess of his shadowy love.

I thought only of art. I sought the society of artists and collectors. I unconsciously adopted their jargon. I began to discourse of copies, and middle tints, and changes of style. I was in great danger of degenerating into a dilettante. Little objects as well as great, now interested me. I handled a bronze and speculated upon its antiquity. Yet even these slight pursuits exercised a beneficial tendency upon a mind wild, irregular, and undisciplined; nor do I believe that any one can long observe even fine carvings and choice medals, without his taste becoming more susceptible, and delicate, and refined.

My mind was overflowing with the accumulated meditation and experience of two years; an important interval in all lives, passed in mine in constant thought and action, and in a continual struggle with new ideas and novel passions. The desire of composition became irresistible. I recurred to the feelings with which I entered Leghorn, and from which I had been diverted amid the distraction produced by the novelty, the beauty, and the variety of surrounding objects. With these feelings, I quitted the city, and engaged the Villa Caponi, situated on a green and gentle swell of the Apennines, near the tower of Galileo.

II^o

If there were any thing in the world for which I now entertained a sovereign contempt, it was my unfortunate Manstein. My most malignant critic must have yielded to me in the scorn which I lavished on that immature production, and the shame with which I even recollected its existence. No one could be more sensible of its glaring defects, for no one thought more of them, and I was so familiar with its less defective parts, that they had lost all their relish, and appeared to me as weak, and vapid, and silly as the rest. I never labour to delude myself. I never gloss over my faults. I exaggerate them. I can afford to face truth, for I feel capable of improvement. And indeed I have never yet experienced that complacency with which, it is said, some authors regard their offspring, nor do I think that this paternal fondness will ever be my agreeable lot. I am never satisfied. No sooner have I executed some conception, than my mind soars above its creation, and meditates a higher flight in a purer atmosphere. The very exercise of power only teaches me, that it may be wielded for a greater purpose.

I prepared myself for composition in a very different mood to that in which I had poured forth my

feverid erudities in the garden-house. Calm and collected, I constructed characters on philosophical principles, and mused over a chain of action which should develop the system of our existence. All was art. I studied contrasts and grouping, and metaphysical analysis was substituted for anatomical delineation. I was not satisfied that the conduct of my creations should be influenced merely by the general principles of their being. I resolved that they should be the very impersonations of the moods and passions of our mind. One was ill-regulated will; another offered the formation of a moral being; materialism sparkled in the wild gayety and reckless caprice of one voluptuous girl, while spirit was vindicated in the deep devotion of a constant and enthusiastic heroine. Even the lighter temperaments were not forgotten. Frivolity smiled, and shrugged his shoulders before us, and there was even a deep personification of cynic humour.

Had I executed my work in strict unison with my plan, it would doubtless have been a very dull affair. For I did not yet possess sufficient knowledge of human nature to support me in such a creation, nor was I then habituated to those metaphysical speculations, which might have in some degree compensated, by their profundity, for their want of entertainment. But nature avenged herself, and extricated me from my dilemma.

I began to write; my fancy fired, my brain inflamed; breathing forms rose up under my pen, and jostled aside the cold abstractions, whose creation had cost such long musing. In vain I endeavoured to compose without enthusiasm, in vain I endeavoured to delineate only what I had pre-conceived, in vain I struggled to restrain the flow of unbidden invention. All that I had seen and pondered passed before me, from the proud moment that I stood upon Mount Jura to the present ravishing hour that I returned to my long estranged art.

Every tree, every cloud, every star and mountain, every fair lake and flowing river, that had fed my fancy with their sweet suggestions in my rambling hours, now returned and illumined my pages with their brightness and their beauty. My mind teemed with similes. Thought and passion came veiled in metaphoric garb. I was delighted, I was bewildered. The clustering of their beauty seemed an evidence of poetic power: the management of these bright guests was an art of which I was ignorant. I received them all. I found myself often writing only that they might be accommodated.

I gave up to this work many long and unbroken hours. I was determined that it should not suffer from a hurried pen. I often stopped to meditate. It was in writing this book, that I first learned my art. It was a series of experiments. They were at length finished, and my volumes consigned to their fate and northern publisher.

The critics treated me with more courtesy. What seemed to me odd enough then, although no puzzle now, was, that they admired what had been written in haste, and without premeditation and generally disapproved of what had cost me much forethought, and been executed with great care. It was universally declared a most unequal work, and they were right, although they could not detect the causes of the inequality. My perpetual efforts at being imaginative were highly reprobated. Now my efforts had been entirely the other way. In short, I puzzled them, and no one offered a prediction as to my future career. My book, as a whole

was rather unintelligible, but parts were favourites. It was pronounced a remarkable compound of originality and dulness. These critiques, whatever might be their tenor, mattered little to me. A long interval elapsed before they reached Florence, and during that period, I had effectually emancipated myself from the thralldom of criticism.

I have observed, that after writing a book, my mind always makes a great spring. I believe that the act of composition produces the same invigorating effect upon the mind, which some exertion does upon the body. Even the writing of Manstein produced a revolution in my nature, which cannot be traced by any metaphysical analysis. In the course of a few days, I was converted from a hollow-hearted worldling into a noble philosopher. I was indeed ignorant, but I had lost the double ignorance of the Platonists, I was no longer ignorant that I was ignorant. No one could be influenced by a greater desire of knowledge, a greater passion for the beautiful, or a deeper regard for his fellow-creatures. And I well remember when, on the evening that I wrote the last sentence of this more intellectual effort, I walked out upon the terrace with that feeling of satisfaction, which accompanies the idea of a task completed; so far was I from being excited by the hope of having written a great work, that I even meditated its destruction. For, the moment it was terminated, it seemed to me that I had become suddenly acquainted with the long-concealed principles of my art, which, without doubt, had been slenderly practised in this production. My taste, as it were in an instant, became formed, and I felt the conviction, that I could now produce some lasting creation.

I thought no more of criticism. The breath of man has never influenced me much, for I depend more upon myself than upon others. I want no false fame. It would be no delight to me to be considered a prophet, were I conscious of being an impostor. I ever wish to be undeceived; but if I possess the organization of a poet, no one can prevent me from exercising my faculty, any more than he can rob the courser of his fleetness, or the nightingale of her song.

II.

AFTER finishing my work, I read more at Florence than I have at any period of my life. Having formed the principles on which in future I intended to proceed in composition, and considering myself now qualified to decide upon other artists, I determined critically to examine the literary fiction of all countries, to ascertain how far my intentions had been anticipated, and in what degree my predecessors might assist me.

It appears to me that the age of versification has passed. The mode of composition must ever be greatly determined by the manner in which the composition can be made public. In ancient days, the voice was the medium by which we became acquainted with the inventions of a poet. In such a method, where those who listened had no time to pause, and no opportunity to think, it was necessary that every thing should be obvious. The audience who were perplexed would soon become wearied. The spirit of ancient poetry, therefore, is rather material than metaphysical. Superficial, not internal; there is much simplicity and much nature, but little passion and less philosophy. To obviate the

haldness, which is the consequence of a style where the subject and the sentiments are rather intimated than developed, the poem was enriched by music, and enforced by action. Occasionally were added the enchantment of scenery, and the fascination of the dance. But the poet did not depend merely upon these brilliant accessories. He resolved that his thoughts should be expressed in a manner different from other modes of communicating ideas. He caught a suggestion from his sister art, and invented metre. And in this modulation, he introduced a new system of phraseology, which marked him out from the crowd, and which has obtained the title of "poetic diction."

His object in this system of words was to heighten his meaning by strange phrases, and unusual constructions. Inversion was invented to clothe a commonplace with an air of novelty; vague epithets were introduced to prop up a monotonous modulation; were his meaning to be enforced, he shrank from wearisome ratiocination and the agony of precise conceptions, and sought refuge in a bold personification, or a beautiful similitude. The art of poetry was to express natural feelings in unnatural language.

Institutions ever survive their purpose, and customs govern us when their cause is extinct. And this mode of communicating poetic invention still remained, when the advanced civilization of man, in multiplying manuscripts, might have made many suspect that the time had arrived when the poet was to cease to sing, and to learn to write. Had the splendid refinement of imperial Rome not been doomed to such rapid decay, and such mortifying and degrading vicissitudes, I believe that versification would have worn out. Unquestionably that empire, in its multitudinous population, scenery, creeds, and customs, offered the richest materials for emancipated fiction; materials, however, far too vast and various for the limited capacity of metrical celebration.

That beneficent Omnipotence, before which we must bow down, has so ordered it, that imitation should be the mental feature of modern Europe; and has ordained that we should adopt a Syrian religion, a Grecian literature, and a Roman law. At the revival of letters, we behold the portentous spectacle of national poets communicating their inventions in an exotic form. Conscious of the confined nature of their method, yet unable to extricate themselves from its fatal ties, they sought variety in increased artifice of diction, and substituted for the melody of the lyre the barbaric clash of rhyme.

A revolution took place in the mode of communicating thought. Now, at least, it was full time that we should have emancipated ourselves forever from sterile metre. One would have supposed that the poet who could not only write, but even print his inventions, would have felt that it was both useless and unfit that they should be communicated by a process invented when his only medium was simple recitation. One would have supposed that the poet would have rushed with desire to the new world before him, that he would have seized the new means that permitted him to revel in a universe of boundless invention; to combine the highest ideal creation with the infinite delineation of teeming nature; to unravel all the dark mysteries of our bosoms, and all the bright purposes of our being; to become the great instructor and champion of his species; and not only delight their fancy, and charm

their senses, and command their will, but demonstrate their rights, illustrate their necessities, and expound the object of their existence; and all this too in a style charming and changing with its universal theme, now tender, now sportive, now earnest, now profound, now sublime, now pathetic, and substituting for the dull monotony of metre, the most various, and exquisite, and inexhaustible melody.

When I remember the trammels to which the poet has been doomed, and the splendour with which consummate genius has invested them, and when, for a moment, I conceive him bursting asunder his bonds, I fancy I behold the sacred bird snapping the golden chain that binds him to Olympus, and soaring even above Jove!

IV.

I HAD arrived at Florence in a very feeble and shattered state of health, of which, however, as I had never been an habitual invalid, I thought little. My confidence in my energy had never deserted me. Composition, however, although I now wrote with facility, proved a greater effort than I had anticipated. The desire I felt of completing my purpose had successfully sustained me throughout, but, during its progress, I was too often conscious of an occasional, but increasing languor, which perplexed and alarmed me. Perfect as might be my conception of my task, and easy as I ever found its execution when I was excited, I invariably experienced, at the commencement, a feeling of inertness, which was painful and mortifying. As I did not dream of physical inability, I began to apprehend that, however delightful might be the process of meditation, that of execution was less delicious. Sometimes I even for a moment feared that there might be a lurking weakness in my nature, which might prevent me from ever effecting a great performance.

I remember one evening as I was meditating in my chamber, my watch lying upon the table, and the hour nine, I felt, as I fancied, disturbed by the increased sound of that instrument. I moved it to the other side of the table, but the sound increased, and assured that it was not occasioned by the supposed cause, and greatly disturbed, I rang for Lausanne, and mentioned the inconvenience. Lausanne persisted in hearing nothing, but as the sound became even more audible, and as I now believed that some reptile might be in the room, he examined it in all parts. Nothing was perceived; the hum grew louder, and it was not until I jumped up from my seat to assist him in his examination, that I discovered by the increased sound, occasioned by my sudden rise, that the noise was merely in my own ears. The circumstance occasioned me no alarm. It inconvenienced me for the evening. I retired at an earlier hour, passed, as usual, a restless and dreamy night, but fell asleep towards the morning, and rose tolerably fresh.

I can write only in the morning. It is then I execute with facility all that I have planned the ensuing eve. And this day, as usual, I resumed my pen, but it was not obedient. I felt not only languid and indolent, but a sensation of faintness which I had before experienced and disregarded, came over me, and the pen fell from my hand. I rose and walked about the room. My extremities were cold, as of late in the morning I had usually found them. The sun was shining brightly over

the sparkling hills. I felt a great desire to warm myself in his beams. I ordered my horse.

The ride entirely revived me. I fancied that I led perhaps too sedentary a life. I determined, immediately that my book was finished, that I would indulge in more relaxation. I returned home with more appetite than usual, for since my return from Candia, I had almost entirely lost my relish for food, and my power of digestion. In the evening I was again busied in musing over the scene which was to be painted on the coming morn. Suddenly I heard again the strange noise. I looked at my watch. It was exactly nine o'clock. It increased rapidly. From the tick of a watch, it assumed the loud confused moaning of a bell tolling in a storm, like the bell I had heard at the foot of the Alps. It was impossible to think. I walked about the room. It became louder and louder. It seemed to be absolutely deafening. I could compare it to nothing but the continuous roar of a cataract. I sat down, and looked around me in blank despair.

Night brought me no relief. My sleep, ever since the death of Alceste, had been very troubled and broken, and of late, had daily grown less certain, and less refreshing. Often have I lain awake the whole night, and usually have risen exhausted and spiritless. So it was on this morning. Cold, faint, and feeble, the principle of life seemed to wax fainter and fainter. I sent for my faithful companion: "Lausanne," I said, "I begin to think that I am very ill."

Lausanne felt my pulse, and shook his head. "There is no wonder," he replied. "You have scarcely any circulation. You want stimulants. You should drink more wine, and you should give up writing for a time. Shall I send for a physician?"

I had no confidence in medicine. I resolved to exert myself. Lausanne's advice I fancied sounded well. I drank some wine: I felt better; but as I never can write under any inspiration but my own, I resolved to throw aside my pen, and visit Pisa for a fortnight, where I could follow his prescription with the additional advantage of change of scene.

My visit to Pisa benefited me. I returned, and gave the last finish to my work.

V.

ALL the Italian cities are delightful; but an elegant melancholy pervades Pisa that is enchanting. What a marble group is formed by the cathedral, the wonderful Baptistery, the Leaning Tower, and the Campo Santo; and what an indication of the ancient splendour of the republic! I wish that the world consisted of a cluster of small states. There would be much more genius, and, what is of more importance, much more felicity. Federal unions would preserve us from the evil consequences of local jealousy, and might combine in some general legislation of universal benefit. Italy might then revive, and even England may regret that she has lost her heptarchy.

In the Campo Santo you trace the history of art. There too, which has not been observed, you may discover the origin of the Arabesques of Raffaële. The Leaning Tower is a stumbling-block to architectural antiquaries. An ancient fresco in the Campo proves the intention of the artist. All are acquainted with the towers of Bologna; few are aware that in Saragossa the Spaniards

possess a rival of the architectural caprice of the Pisans.

To this agreeable and silent city I again returned, and wandered in meditation and the stillness of its palaces. I consider this the period of my life in which whatever intellectual power I possess became fully developed. All that I can execute hereafter is but the performance of what I then planned, nor would a patriarchal term of life permit me to achieve all that I then meditated. I looked forward to the immediate fulfilment of my long hopes, to the achievement of a work which might last with its language, and the attainment of a great and permanent fame.

I was now meditating over this performance. It is my habit to contrive in my head the complete work, before I have recourse to the pen which is to execute it. I do not think that meditation can be too long, or execution too rapid. It is not merely characters and the general conduct of the story that I thus prepare, but the connexion of every incident, often whole conversations, sometimes even slight phrases. A very tenacious memory, which I have never weakened by having recourse to other modes of reminiscence, supports me in this process, which, however, I should confess is a very painful and exhausting effort.

I revolved this work in my mind for several months without ever having recourse to paper. It was never out of my consciousness. I fell asleep musing over it: in the morning my thoughts clustered immediately upon it, like bees on a bed of unexhausted flowers. In my rides, during my meals, in my conversations on common topics, I was indeed the whole time musing over this creation.

The profound thinker always suspects that he is superficial. Patience is a necessary ingredient of genius. Nothing is more fatal than to be seduced by the first flutter of the imagination into composition. This is the cause of so many weak and unequal works, of so many worthy ideas thrown away, and so many good purposes marred. Yet there is a bound to meditation; there is a moment when further judgment is useless. There is a moment when a heavenly light rises over the dim world you have been so long creating, and bathes it with life and beauty. Accept this omen that your work is good, and revel in the sunshine of composition.

I have sometimes half believed, although the suspicion is mortifying, that there is only a step between his state who deeply indulges in imaginative meditation and insanity. For I well remember that at this period of my life, when I indulged in meditation to a degree which would now be impossible, and I hope unnecessary, that my senses sometimes appeared to be wandering. I cannot describe the peculiar feeling I then experienced, for I have failed in so doing to several eminent surgeons and men of science with whom I have conversed respecting it, and who were curious to become acquainted with its nature. But I think it was, that I was not always assured of my identity, or even existence, for I sometimes found it necessary to shout aloud to be sure that I lived, and I was in the habit very often at night of taking down a volume, and looking into it for my name, to be convinced that I had not been dreaming of myself. At these times there was an incredible acuteness, or intenseness, in my sensations. Every object

seemed animated, and, as it were, acting upon me. The only way that I can devise to express my general feeling is, that I seemed to be sensible of the rapid whirl of the globe.

All this time my health was again giving way, and all my old symptoms gradually returning. I set them at defiance. The nocturnal demon having now come back in all its fulness, I was forced to confine my meditations to the morning, and in the evening I fled for refuge and forgetfulness to the bottle. This gave me temporary relief, but entirely destroyed my remaining power of digestion. In the morning I regularly fainted as I dressed. Still I would not give in, and only postponed the commencement of my work until my return to Florence, which was to occur in a few days.

I rode the journey through the luxuriant Val d'Arno, attended by Tita. Lausanne and Spiro had returned the previous day. It was late in the evening when I arrived at the villa. I thought, as I got off my horse, that the falls of Niagara could not overpower the infernal roaring that I alone heard. I entered, and threw myself on a sofa. It came at last. What it was I knew not. It felt like a rushing of blood into my brain. I moaned, threw out my arm, and wildly caught at the bell. Lausanne entered, and I was lying apparently lifeless.

VI.

DURING the whole course of my life, my brain had been my constant source of consolation. As long as I could work that machine, I was never entirely without an object and a pleasure. I had laughed at physical weaknesses while that remained untouched; and unquestionably I should have sunk under the great calamity of my life, had it not been for the sources of hope and solace which this faithful companion opened to me. Now it was all over: I was little better than an idiot.

Physician followed physician, and surgeon surgeon, without benefit. They all held different opinions, yet none were right. They satirized each other in private interviews, and exchanged compliments in consultations. One told me to be quiet, another to exert myself; one declared that I must be stimulated, another that I must be soothed. I was, in turn, to be ever on horseback, and ever on a sofa. I was bled, blistered, boiled, starved, poisoned, electrified, galvanised, and at the end of a year found myself with exactly the same oppression on my brain, and the additional gratification of remembering that twelve months of existence had worn away without producing a single idea. Such are the inevitable consequences of consulting men who decide by precedents which have no resemblance, and never busy themselves about the idiosyncrasy of their patients.

I had been so overwhelmed by my malady, and so conscious that upon my cure my only chance of happiness depended, that I had submitted myself to all this treatment without a murmur, and religiously observed all their contradictory directions. Being of a sanguine temperament, I believed every assertion, and every week expected to find myself cured. When, however, a considerable period of time had elapsed without any amelioration, I began to rebel against these systems which induced so much exertion and privation, and were productive of no good. I was quite desperate of cure, and each day I felt more keenly, that if I were not cured, I could

not live. I wished therefore to die unmolested. I discharged all my medical attendants, and laid myself down like a sick lion in his lair.

I never went out of the house, and barely out of a single room. I scarcely ever spoke, and only for my wants. I had no acquaintance, and I took care that I should see no one. I observed a strict diet, but fed every day. Although air, and medicine, and exercise were to have been productive of so much benefit to me, I found myself, without their assistance, certainly not worse, and the repose of my present system, if possible, rendered my wretched existence less burthensome.

Lausanne afterwards told me that he supposed I had relapsed into the state in which I fell immediately after my great calamity, but this was not the case. I never lost my mind or memory: I was conscious of every thing, I forgot nothing. But I had lost the desire of exercising them. I sat in moody silence, revolving in revery, without the labour of thought, my past life and feelings.

I had no hopes of recovery. It was not death that terrified me, but the idea that I might live, and for years, in this hopeless and unprofitable condition. When I contrasted my recent lust of fame, and plans of glory, and indomitable will, with my present woful situation of mysterious imbecility, I was appalled with the marvellous contrast, and I believed that I had been stricken by some celestial influence for my pride and wanton self-sufficiency.

VII.

I WAS in this gloomy state, when one morning Lausanne entered my room; I did not notice him, but continued sitting with my eyes fixed on the ground, and my chin upon my breast. At last he said, "My lord, I wish to speak to you."

"Well!"

"There is a stranger at the gate, a gentleman who desires to see you."

"You know I see no one," I replied rather harshly.

"I know it, and have so said. But this gentleman—"

"Good God! Lausanne, is it my father?"

"No. But it is one who may perhaps come from him."

"I will see him."

The door opened, and there entered Winter.

Long years, long and active years had passed since we parted. All had happened since. I thought of my boyhood, and it seemed innocent and happy, compared with the misery of the past and present. Nine years had not much altered my friend, but me—

"I fear, count," said Winter, "that I am abusing the privilege of an old friend in thus insisting upon an entrance, but I heard of your residence in this country and your illness at the same time, and being at Florence I thought you would perhaps pardon me."

"You are one of the few persons whom I am glad to see under all circumstances, even under those in which I now exist."

"I have heard of your distressing state."

"Say my hopeless state. But let us not converse about it. Let us speak of yourself. Let me hope you are as happy as you are celebrated."

"As for that, well enough. But if we are to talk about celebrity, let me claim the honours of

a prophet, and congratulate a poet whom I predicted."

"Alas! dear Winter," I said, with a faint smile, "talk not of that, for I shall die without doing you honour."

"There is no one of my acquaintance who has less chance of dying."

"How so?" I remarked, rather quickly, for when a man really believes he is dying, he does not like to lose the interest which such a situation produces. "If you knew all—"

"I know all—much more, too, than your physician who told me."

"And you believe, then, that I cannot look forward even to death, to terminate this miserable existence?"

"I do not consider it miserable, and therefore I should be sorry if there were any thing to warrant such an anticipation."

"And I can assure you, chevalier," and I spoke very sincerely and solemnly, "that I consider existence, on the terms I now possess it, an intolerable burthen. And nothing but the chance, for I cannot call it hope, of amelioration, prevents me from terminating it."

"If you remember right, you considered existence equally an intolerable burthen when, as a boy, you first experienced feelings which you were unable to express."

"Well! what inference do you draw?"

"That it is not the first time you have quarrelled with nature."

"How so?" I eagerly replied, and I exerted myself to answer him, "is disease nature?"

"Is your state disease?"

"I have no mind."

"You reason."

"My brain is affected."

"You see."

"You believe, then, that I am a hypochondriac?"

"By no means! I believe your feelings are real and peculiar, but it does not therefore follow that they are evil."

"Perhaps," I said, with a dry smile, "you believe them beneficent?"

"I do certainly," he replied.

"In what respect?"

"I believe, that as you would not give nature a holiday, she is giving herself one."

I was silent, and mused. "But this infernal brain?" I replied.

"Is the part of the machinery that you have worked most; and therefore the weakest."

"But how is it to be strengthened?"

"Not by medicine. By following exactly a contrary course to that which enfeebled it."

"For fifteen months an idea has not crossed my brain."

"Well! you are the better for it; and fifteen months more—"

"Alas! what is life! At this age I hoped to be famous."

"Depend upon it, you are in the right road, but rest assured you must go through every trial that is peculiar to men of your organization. There is no avoiding it. It is just as necessary as that life should be the consequence of your structure. To tell you the truth, which is always best, I only came here to please your father. When he wrote to me of your illness, I mentioned to him that 't

must have its course. that there was nothing to be alarmed about, and that it was just as much a part of your necessary education as travel or study. But he wished me to see you, and so I came."

"My poor father! Alas! my conduct to him—"

"Has been just what it ought to be, just what it necessarily must have been, just exactly what my own was to my father. As long as human beings are unphilosophically educated, these incidents will take place."

"Ah! my dear Winter, I am a villain. I have never even written to him."

"Of course you have not. Your father tried to turn you into a politician. Had he not forced you to write so many letters then, you would not have omitted to write to him now. The whole affair is simple as day. Until men are educated with a reference to their organization, there will be no end to domestic fraecas."

"You ever jest, my friend. I have not ventured on a joke for many a long month."

"Which is a pity; for, to tell you the truth, although your last work is of the tender and sublime, and maketh fair eyes weep, I think your forte is comic."

"Do you, indeed?"

"Ah! my dear Contarini, those two little volumes of Manstein—"

"O! mention not the name. Infamous, unadulterated trash!"

"Ah! exactly as I thought of my first picture, which after all has a freshness and a freedom I have never exceeded,—but Manstein, my dear Contarini, it certainly was very impertinent. I read it at Rome. I thought I should have died. All our friends. So very true!"

"Will you stay with me? I feel a good deal better since you have been here, and what you tell me of my father delights me. Pray, pray stay. Well! you are indeed kind. And if I feel very ill, I will keep away."

"O! I should like to see you in one of your fits."

VIII.

"I TAKE a glass of wine," said Winter at dinner.

"My dear friend. I have taken one."

"Take another. Here is your father's health."

"Well, then, here is yours. How is the finest of old men?"

"Flourishing and happy."

"And your mother?"

"Capital!"

"And you have never returned?"

"No! and never will, while there are such places as Rome and Naples."

"Ah! I shall never see them."

"Pooh! the sooner you move about the better."

"My good friend, it is impossible."

"Why so! Do not confound your present condition with the state you were in a year ago. Let me feel your pulse. Capital! You seem to have an excellent appetite. Don't be ashamed to eat. In cases like yours, the art is to ascertain the moment to make exertion. I look upon yours as a case of complete exhaustion. If there be any thing more exhausting than love, it is sorrow, and if there be any thing more exhausting than sorrow, it is poetry. You have tried all three. Your body and your mind both required perfect repose. I per-

ceive that your body has sufficiently rested. Employ it; and in another year you will find your mind equally come round."

"You console me. But where shall I go? Home?"

"By no means. You require beauty and novelty. At present I would not go even to the south of this country. It will remind you too much of the past. Put yourself entirely in a new world. Go to Egypt. It will suit you. I look upon you as an Oriental. If you like, go to South America. Tropical scenery will astonish and cure you. Go to Leghorn, and get into the first ship that is bound for a country with which you are unacquainted."

IX.

WINTER remained with me several days, and before he had quitted Florence I had written to my father. I described to him my forlorn situation, my strong desire to see him, and I stated the advice which did not correspond with my wishes. I asked for his counsel, but said nothing of the great calamity. I was indeed myself extremely unwilling to return home in my present state, but this unwillingness I concealed.

I received an answer from my father by a special courier, an answer the most affectionate. He strongly recommended me to travel for some time, expressed his hope and confidence that I should entirely recover, and that I should return and repay him for all his anxiety. All that he required was, that I should frequently correspond with him. And ever afterward, I religiously respected his request.

A ship was about to sail from Leghorn to Cadiz. Spain appeared an interesting country, and one of which I knew nothing. It is the link between Europe and Africa. To Spain therefore I resolved to repair; and in a few days I again quitted Italy, and once more cast my fortunes on the waters!

PART THE FIFTH.

I.

EUROPE and AFRIC! I have wandered amid the tombs of Troy, and stood by the altar of Medea, yet the poetry of the Hellespont, and the splendour of the Symplegades must yield to the majesty of the Straits of Calpe.

Like some lone Titian, lurid and sublime, his throne the mountains and the clouds his crown, the melancholy Mauritania sits apart, and gazes on the mistress he has lost.

And lo! from out the waves that kiss her feet, and bow before her beauty, she softly rises with a wanton smile. Would she call back her dark-eyed lover, and does the memory of that bright embrace yet dwell within the hallowed sanctuary of her heart?

It was a glorious union. When were maidens fairer and more faithful—when were men more gentle and more brave? When did all that can adorn humanity more brightly flourish, and more sweetly bloom? Alas! for their fair cities, and fine gardens, and fresh fountains! Alas! for their delicate palaces, and glowing bowers of perfumed shade!

Will you fly with me from the dull toil of vulgar life? Will you wander for a moment amid the plains of Granada? Around us are those snowy and purple mountains, which a caliph wept to quit. They surrounded a land still prodigal of fruits, in spite of a Gothic government. You are gazing on the rows of blooming aloes, that are the only enclosures, with their flowery forms high in the warm air; you linger among those groves of Indian fig: you stare with strange delight at the first sight of the sugar-cane. Come away, come away, for on you green and sunny hill, rises the ruby gate of that precious pile whose name is a spell, and whose vision is romance.

Let us enter Alhambra!

See! here is the Court of Myrtles, and I gather you a sprig. Mark how exquisitely every thing is proportioned, mark how slight, and small, and delicate! And now we are in the Court of Columns, the far-famed Court of Columns. Let us enter the chambers that open round this quadrangle. How beautiful are their deeply carved and purple roofs, studded with gold, and the wall entirely covered with the most fanciful fret-work, relieved with that violet tint, which must have been copied from their Andalusian skies. Here you may sit in the coolest shade, reclining on your divan with your beads or pipe, and view the most dazzling sunlight in the court, which assuredly must scorch the flowers, if the faithful lions ever ceased from pouring forth that element which you must travel in Spain or Africa to honour. How many chambers! The Hall of the Ambassadors ever the most sumptuous. How fanciful is its mosaic ceiling of ivory and tortoise-shell, mother-of-pearl and gold! And then the Hall of Justice with its cedar roof, and the Harem, and the baths—all perfect. Not a single roof has yielded, thanks to those elegant horse-shoe arches and those crowds of marble columns, with their oriental capitals. What a scene! Is it beautiful? O! conceive it in the time of the Boabdils—conceive it with all its costly decorations, all the gilding, all the imperial purple, all the violet relief, all the scarlet borders, all the glittering inscriptions and precious mosaics, burnished, bright, and fresh. Conceive it full of still greater ornaments, the living groups with their splendid, and vivid, and picturesque costume, and above all their rich and shining arms, some standing in conversing groups, some smoking in sedate silence, some telling their beads, some squatting round a storer. Then the bustle and the rush, and the coming horsemen, all in motion, and all glancing in the most brilliant sun.

Enough of this! I am alone. Yet there was one being with whom I could have loved to roam in these imaginative halls, and found no solitude in the sole presence of her most sweet society.

Alhambra is a strong illustration of what I have long thought, that however there may be a standard of taste, there is no standard of style. I must place Alhambra with the Parthenon, the Pantheon, the Cathedral of Seville, the Temple of Dendera. They are different combinations of the same principles of taste. Thus we may equally admire Eschylus, Virgil, Calderon and Ferdousi. There never could have been a controversy on such a point, if mankind had not confused the ideas of taste and style. The Saracenic architecture is the most inventive and fanciful, but at the same time the most fitting and delicate that can be conceived. There would be no doubt about

its title to be considered among the finest inventions of man if it were better known. It is only to be found in any degree of European perfection in Spain. Some of the tombs of the Mamlouk sultans in the desert round Cairo, wrongly styled by the French "the tombs of the caliphs," are equal, I think, to Alhambra. When a person sneers at the Saracenic, ask him what he has seen? Perhaps a barbarous, although picturesque building, called the Ducal Palace, at Venice. What should we think of a man, who decided on the architecture of Agrippa by the buildings of Justinian, or judged the age of Pericles by the restoration of Hadrian? Yet he would not commit so great a blunder. There is a Moorish palace, the Alcazar at Seville, a huge mosque at Cordova turned into a cathedral, with partial alteration, Alhambra at Granada, these are the great specimens in Europe, and sufficient for all study. There is a shrine and chapel of a Moorish saint at Cordova, quite untouched, with the blue mosaic and the golden honeycomb roof, as vivid and as brilliant as when the santon was worshipped. In my life have I never seen any work of art more exquisite. The materials are the richest, the ornaments the most costly, and in detail, the most elegant and the most novel, the most fanciful and the most flowing, that I ever contemplated. And yet nothing at the same time can be conceived more just than the proportion of the whole, and more mellowed than the blending of the parts, which indeed Palladio could not excel.

II.

A SPANISH city sparkling in the sun, with its white walls and verdant jalousies, is one of the most cheerful and most brilliant of the works of man. Figaro is in every street, and Rosina in every balcony.

The Moorish remains, the Christian churches, the gay, national dress, a gorgeous priesthood, ever producing, in their dazzling processions and sacred festivals, an effect upon the business of the day, the splendid pictures of a school of which we know nothing, theatres, alamedas, tertullas, bull fights, boleros,—here is matter enough for amusement within the walls, and now let us see how they pass their time out of them.

When I was in the south of Spain the whole of Andalusia was overrun with robbers. These bands, unless irritated by a rash resistance, have of late seldom committed personal violence, but only lay you on the ground and clear out your pockets. If however you have less than an ounce of gold, they shoot you. That is their tariff, which they have announced at all the principal towns, and it must be confessed is a light one. A weak government resolves society into its original elements, and robbery in Spain has become more honourable than war, inasmuch as the robber is paid, and the soldier is in arrear. The traveller must defend himself. Some combine, some compromise, merchants travel in corsarios or caravans well armed, persons of quality take a military escort, who, if cavalry, scamper off the moment they are attacked, and if infantry, remain and participate in the plunder. The government is only anxious about the post, and to secure that pay the brigands black mail.

The country is thinly populated, with few villages or farmhouses, but many towns and cities. It chiefly consists of immense plains of pasture lar-

which, sunburnt in the summer, were a good preparation for the desert and intervening mountainous districts, such as the Sierra Morena, famous in Cervantes, the Sierra Nivada of Granada, and the Sierra da Ronda, a country like the Abruzzi, entirely inhabited by brigands and smugglers, and which I once explored. I must say that the wild beauty of the scenery entirely repaid me for some peril and very great hardship. Returning from this district towards Cadiz, you arrive at Oren, one of the finest mountain passes in the world. Its precipices and cork woods would have afforded inexhaustible studies to Salvator. All this part of the country is full of pictures, and of a peculiar character. I recommend Castellar to an adventurous artist.

I travelled over Andalusia on horseback, and in spite of many warnings, without any escort, or any companions but Lausanne and Tita, and little Spiro, and the muleteers who walk and occasionally increase the burden of a sumpter steed. In general, like all the Spanish peasants, they are tall, finely made fellows, looking extremely martial with their low, round, black velvet hats and coloured sashes, embroidered jackets and brilliant buttons. We took care not to have too much money, and no baggage that we could not stow in our saddle bags. I even followed the advice of an experienced guide, and was as little ostentatious as possible of my arms, for to a Spanish bandit, foreign pistols are sometimes a temptation, instead of a terror. Such prudent humility will not, however, answer in the East, where you cannot be too well, or too magnificently armed.

We were, in general, in our saddles at four o'clock, and stopped, on account of the heat, from ten till five in the evening, and then proceeded for three or four hours more. I have travelled through three successive nights, and seen the sun set and rise, without quitting my saddle, which all men cannot say. It is impossible to conceive any thing more brilliant than an Andalusian summer moon. You lose nothing of the landscape, which is only softened, not obscured, and absolutely the beams are warm. Generally speaking, we contrived to reach, for our night's bivouac, some village, which usually boasts a place called a posada. If this failed, there was sometimes a convent, and were we unfortunate in this expedient, we made pillows of our saddles, and beds of our cloaks. A posada is in fact a khan, and a very bad one. The same room holds the cattle, the kitchen, the family, and boards and mats for travellers to sleep on. Your host affords no provisions, and you must cater as you proceed, and, what is more, cook when you have catered. Yet the posada, in spite of so many causes, is seldom dirty; and for the Spaniards, notwithstanding their reputation, I claim the character of the most cleanly nation in Europe. Nothing is more remarkable than the delicacy of the cover orders. All that frequent whitewash and constant ablution can effect against a generating sun, they employ. You would think that a Spanish woman had no other occupation than to maintain the cleanliness of her chamber. Most assuredly they are a clean people. They have too much self-respect not to be clean. I once remember Lausanne rating a muleteer, who was somewhat tardy in his preparations. "What!" exclaimed the peasant, reproachfully, "would you have me go without a clean shirt?" Now when we remember that this man only put on his clean shirt to toil on foot

for thirty or forty miles, we may admire his high feeling, and doubt whether we might match this incident even by that wonder, an English postilion.

Certainly the Spaniards are a noble race. They are kind and faithful, courageous and honest, with a profound mind, that will nevertheless break into rich humour, and a dignity which, like their passion, is perhaps the legacy of their oriental sires.

But, see! we have gained the summit of the hill. Behold! the noble range of the Morena mountains extends before us, and at their base is a plain worthy of such a boundary. Yon river, winding amid bowers of orange, is the beautiful Guadalquivir, and that city, with its many spires and mighty mosque, is the famous Cordova!

III.

THE court-yard was full of mules, a body of infantry were bivouacking under the colonnades. There were several servants, all armed, and a crowd of muleteers with bludgeons.

"'Tis a great lady from Madrid, sir," observed Tita, who was lounging in the court.

I had now been several days at Cordova, and intended to depart at sunset for Granada. The country between these two cities is more infested by brigands than any tract in Spain. The town was rife with their daring exploits. Every traveller during the last month had been plundered, and only the night before my arrival, they had, in revenge for some attempt of the governor to interfere, burned down a farmhouse a few miles without the gates.

When I entered the hotel, the landlord came up to me, and advised me to postpone my departure for a few hours, as a great lady from Madrid was about to venture the journey, and depart at midnight towards Malaga with a strong escort. He doubted not that she would consent with pleasure to my joining their party. I did not feel, I fear, as grateful for his proposition as I ought to have been. I was tired of Cordova—I had made up my mind to depart at a particular hour. I had hitherto escaped the brigands—I began to suspect that their activity was exaggerated. At the worst, I apprehended no great evil. Some persons always escaped, and I was confident in my fortune.

"What is all this?" I inquired of Lausanne.

"'Tis a great lady from Madrid," replied Lausanne.

"And have you seen her?"

"I have not, sir, but I have seen her husband."

"O! she has a husband—then I certainly will not stop. At sunset we go."

In half an hour's time the landlord again entered my room, with an invitation from the great lady and her lord to join them at dinner. Of course I could not refuse, although I began to suspect that my worthy host, in his considerate suggestions, had perhaps been influenced by other views than merely my security.

I repaired to the saloon. It was truly a Gil Blas scene. The grandee, in an undress uniform, and highly imposing in appearance, greeted me with dignity. He was of middle age, with a fine form and a strongly marked, true Castilian countenance, but very handsome. The senora was exceedingly young, and really very pretty, with infinite vivacity and grace. A French valet leaned

over the husband's chair, and a duenna, broad and supercilious, with beady jet eyes, mahogany complexion, and cocked-up nose, stood by her young mistress, refreshing her with a huge fan.

After some general and agreeable conversation, the senior introduced the intended journey, and understanding that I was about to proceed in the same direction, offered me the advantage of his escort. The dama most energetically impressed upon me the danger of travelling alone, and I was brutal enough to suspect that she had more confidence in foreign aid than in the courage of her countrymen.

I was in one of those ungallant fits that sometimes come over men of shattered nerves. I had looked forward with moody pleasure to a silent moonlit ride. I shrunk from the constant effort of continued conversation. It did not appear that my chivalry would be grievously affected in an almost solitary cavalier deserting a dame environed by a military force and a band of armed retainers. In short, I was not seduced by the prospect of security, and rash enough to depart alone.

The moon rose. I confess our anxiety. The muleteer prophesied an attack. "They will be out," said he, "for the great lady; we cannot escape." We passed two travelling friars on their mules, who gave us their blessing; and I observed to-night by the road-side more crosses than usual, and each of these is indicative of a violent death. We crossed an immense plain, and entered a broken mule-track through uneven ground. We were challenged by a picquet, and I, who was ahead, nearly got shot for not answering. It was a corsario of armed merchants returning from the fair of Ronda. We stopped and made inquiries, but could learn nothing, and we continued our journey for several hours in silence, by the most brilliant moon. We began to hope we had escaped, when suddenly a muleteer informed us that he could distinguish a trampling of horse in the distance. Ave Maria! a cold perspiration came over us. Decidedly they approached. We drew up out of pure fear. I had a pistol in one hand and my purse in the other, to act according to circumstances. The band were clearly in sight. I was encouraged by finding that they were a rather uproarious crew. They turned out to be a company of actors travelling to Cordova. There were dresses and decorations, scenery and machinery, all on mules and donkeys—the singers rehearsing an opera, the principal tragedian riding on an ass, and the buffo most serious, looking as grave as night, with a cigar, and in greater agitation than all the rest. The women were in side-saddles like sedans, and there were whole panniers of children. Some of the actresses were chanting an ave, while, in more than one instance, their waists were encircled by the brawny arm of a more robust devotee. All this irresistibly reminded me of Cervantes.

Night waned, and, instead of meeting robbers, we discovered that we had only lost our way. At length we stumbled upon some peasants sleeping in the field amid the harvest, who told us that it was utterly impossible to regain our road; and so, our steeds and ourselves being equally wearied, we dismounted, and turned our saddles into pillows.

I was roused, after a couple of hours' sound slumber, by the Rosario, a singing procession, in which the peasantry congregate to their labours.

It is most effective, full of noble chants and melodious responses, that break upon the still fresh air, and your fresher feelings, in a manner truly magical. This is the country for a national novelist. The out-door life of the natives induces a variety of most picturesque manners, while their semi-civilization makes each district retain, with barbarous jealousy, their peculiar customs.

I heard a shot at no great distance. It was repeated. To horse, to horse! I roused Lausanne and Tita. It occurred to me directly. Shots were interchanged. We galloped in the direction of the sound, followed by several peasants, and firing our pistols. Two or three runaway soldiers met us. "Carraho! Scoundrels, turn back!" we cried. In a few minutes we were in sight of the combat. It was a most unequal one, and nearly finished. A robber had hold of the arm of the great lady of Madrid, who was dismounted, and seated on a bank. Her husband was leaning on his sword, and evidently agreeing to a capitulation. The servants seemed still disposed to fight. Two or three wounded men were lying on the field—soldiers, and mules, and muleteers, running about in all directions.

Tita, who was an admirable shot, fired the moment he was within reach, and brought down his man. I ran up to the lady, but not in time to finish her assailant, who was off in a flash. The robbers, surprised, disorderly, and plundering, made no fight, and we permitted them to retreat with some severe loss.

Exclamations, gratitude, hysterics. Lausanne in the mean time produced order. The infantry rallied, the mules re-assembled, the baggage was again arranged. The travellers were the Marquis and Marchioness of Santiago, who were about to pay a visit to their relative, the Governor of Malaga. I remained with them until we reached Granada, when the most dangerous portion of this journey was completed, and I parted from these agreeable persons, with a promise to visit them on my arrival at their place of destination.

IV.

THERE is not a more beautiful and solemn temple in the world than the great cathedral of Seville. When you enter from the glare of a Spanish sky, so deep is the staining of the glass, and so small and few the windows, that, for a moment, you feel in darkness. Gradually the vast design of the Gothic artist unfolds itself to your vision: gradually rises up before you the profuse sumptuousness of the high altar, with its tall images, and velvet and gold hangings, its gigantic railings of brass and massy candlesticks of silver—all revealed by the dim and perpetual light of the sacred and costly lamps.

You steal with a subdued spirit over the marble pavement. All is still, save the hushed muttering of the gliding priests. Around you are groups of kneeling worshippers, some prostrate on the ground, some gazing upwards with their arms crossed in mute devotion, some beating their breasts and counting their consoling beads. Lo! the tinkling of a bell. The mighty organ bursts forth. Involuntarily you fall upon your knees, and listen to the rising chanting of the solemn choir. A procession moves from an adjoining chapel. A band of crimson acolytes advance, waving their censers,

and the melody of their distant voices responds to the deep-toned invocations of the nearer canons.

There are a vast number of chapels in this cathedral on each side of the principal nave. Most of them are adorned with masterpieces of the Spanish school. Let us approach one. The light is good, and let us gaze through this iron railing upon the picture it encloses.

I see a saint falling upon his knees, and extending his enraptured arm to receive an infant god. What mingled love, enthusiasm, devotion, reverence, blend in the countenance of the holy man! But, O! that glowing group of seraphim, sailing and smiling in the sunny splendour of that radiant sky—who has before gazed upon such grace, such ineffable and charming beauty? And in the background is an altar, whereon is a vase holding some lilies, that seem as if they were just gathered. There is but one artist who could have designed this picture, there is but one man who could have thus combined ideal grace with natural simplicity, there is but one man who could have painted that diaphanous heaven and those fresh lilies. Inimitable Murillo!

V.

A SPANISH bull-fight taught me fully to comprehend the rapturous exclamation of "Panem et Circenses!" The amusement apart, there is something magnificent in the assembled thousands of an amphitheatre. It is the trait in modern manners which most effectually recalls the nobility of antique pastime. The poetry of a bull-fight is very much destroyed by the appearance of the cavaliers. Instead of gay, gallant knights, bounding on caroling steeds, three or four shapeless, unwieldy beings, cased in armour of stuffed leather, and looking more like Dutch burgomasters than Spanish chivalry, enter the lists on limping rips. The bull is, in fact, the executioner for the dogs, and an approaching bull-fight is a respite for any doomed steed throughout all Seville.

The tauridors, in their varying, fanciful, costly, and splendid dresses, compensate, in a great measure, for your disappointment. It is difficult to conceive a more brilliant band. These are ten or a dozen footmen, who engage the bull unarmed, distract him as he rushes at one of the cavaliers by unfolding, and dashing before his eyes a glittering scarf, and saving themselves from an occasional charge by practised agility, which elicits great applause. The performance of these tauridors is, without doubt, the most graceful, the most exciting, and the most surprising portion of the entertainment.

The ample theatre is nearly full. Be careful to sit on the shady side. There is the suspense experienced at all public entertainments, only here upon a great scale. Men are gliding about selling fans and refreshments. The governor and his suite enter their box. A trumpet sounds! all is silent.

The knights advance, poising their spears, and for a moment trying to look graceful. The tauridors walk behind them, two by two. They proceed around, and across the lists. They bow to the viceregal party, and commend themselves to the Virgin, whose portrait is suspended above.

Another trumpet! a second, and a third blast. The governor throws the signal. The den opens,

and the bull bounds in. The first spring is very fine. The animal stands for a moment still, staring, stupified. Gradually his hoof moves; he paws the ground; he dashes about the sand. The knights face him with their extended lances at due distance. The tauridors are all still. One flies across him, and waves his scarf. The enraged bull makes at the nearest horseman. He is frustrated in his attack. Again he plants himself, lashes his tail, and rolls about his eye. He makes another charge, and this time, the glance of the spear does not drive him back. He gores the horse, rips up its body, the steed staggers and falls. The bull rushes at the rider, and his armour will not now preserve him, but, just as his awful horn is about to avenge his future fate, a skilful tauridor skims before him, and flaps his nostrils with his scarf. He flies after his new assailant, and immediately finds another. Now, you are delighted by all the evolutions of this consummate band: occasionally they can only save themselves by leaping the barrier. The knight, in the mean time, rises, escapes, and mounts another steed.

The bull now makes a rush at another horseman. The horse dexterously veers aside. The bull rushes on, but the knight wounds him severely in the flank with his lance. The tauridors now appear armed with darts. They rush with extraordinary swiftness and dexterity at the now infuriated animal, plant their galling weapons in different parts of his body, and scud away. To some of their darts are affixed fireworks, which ignite by the pressure of the stab. The animal is then as bewildered as infuriated. The amphitheatre echoes to his roaring, and witnesses the greatest efforts of his rage. He flies at all, staggering and streaming with blood; at length, breathless, and exhausted, he stands at bay, his black swollen tongue hanging out, and his mouth covered with foam.

'Tis horrible. Throughout, a stranger's feelings are for the bull: although this even the fairest Spaniard cannot comprehend. As it is now evident that the noble victim can only amuse them by his death, there is a universal cry for the matador; and the matador, gayly dressed, appears amid a loud cheer. The matador is a great artist. Strong nerves must combine with quickness, and great experience, to form an accomplished matador. It is a rare character, highly prized. Their fame exists after their death, and different cities pride themselves on producing, or possessing the eminent.

The matador plants himself before the bull, and shakes a red cloak suspended over a drawn sword. This last insult excites the lingering energy of the dying hero. He makes a violent charge, the mantle falls over his face, and the sword enters his spine, and he falls amid thundering shouts. The death is instantaneous, without a struggle and without a groan. A car, decorated with flowers and ribands, and drawn by oxen, now appears, and bears off the body in triumph.

I have seen eighteen horses killed in a bull-fight, and eight bulls. But the sport is not always in proportion to the slaughter. Sometimes the bull is a craven, and then, if after having recourse to every mode of excitement he will not charge, he is kicked out of the arena, amid the jeers and hisses of the audience. Every act of skill on the part of the tauridors elicits applause, nor do the spectators hesitate, if necessary, to mark their temper by a contrary method. On the whole, it is a magnificent

but barbarous spectacle, and however disgusting the principal object, the accessories of the entertainment are so brilliant and interesting, that, whatever may be their abstract disapprobation, those who have witnessed a Spanish bull-fight, will not be surprised at the passionate attachment of the Spanish people to their national pastime.

VI.

THERE is a calm voluptuousness about Spanish life that wonderfully accorded with the disposition in which I then found myself; so that, had my intellect been at command, I do not know any place where I would more willingly have indulged it. The imagination in such a country is ever at work, and beauty and grace are not scared away by those sounds and sights, those constant cares and changing feelings, which are the proud possession of lands which consider themselves more blessed.

You rise early, and should breakfast lightly, although a table covered with all fruits, renders that rather difficult to those who have a passion for the most delightful productions of nature, and would willingly linger over a medley of grape, and melon, and gourd, and prickly pear. In the morning, you never quit the house, and these are hours which might be delightfully employed under the inspiration of a climate which is itself poetry, for it sheds over every thing a golden hue, which does not exist in the objects themselves illuminated. I could then indulge only in a calm reverie, for I found the least exertion of mind instantly aggravate all my symptoms. But to exist, and to feel existence more tolerable, to observe and to remember, to record a thought that suddenly starts up, or catch a new image which glances over the surface of the mind—this was still left to me. But the moment that I attempted to meditate or combine, to ascertain a question that was doubtful, or in any way to call the higher powers of intellect into play, that moment I felt a lost man. My brain seemed to palpitate with frenzy. An indescribable feeling of idiocy came over me, and for hours I was plunged into a state of the darkest despair. When the curse had subsided to its usual dull degree of horror, my sanguine temper called me again to life and hope. My general health had never been better, and this supported me under the hardships of Spanish travelling. I never for a moment gave way to my real feelings, except under a paroxysm, and then I fled to solitude. But I resolved to pursue this life only for a year, and if at the end of that period I found no relief, the convent and the cloister should at least afford me repose. This was a firm determination.

But 'tis three o'clock, and all this time we should be at dinner. The Spanish kitchen is not much to my taste, being rich and rather gross. And yet for a pleasant, as well as a picturesque dish, commend me to an olla podrida! After dinner, comes the famed siesta. I generally slept for two hours. I think this practice conducive to health in hot climates. The aged however are apt to carry it to excess. By the time you have risen, and made your toilet, it is the hour to steal forth, and call upon any agreeable family, whose tertulla you may choose to honour, which you do, after the first time, uninvited, and with them you take your chocolate. This is often in the air; under the colonnade of the patio, or interior quadrangle of the mansion. Here

you while away the time with music and easy talk, until it is cool enough for the Alameda, or public promenade. At Cadiz and Malaga, and even at Seville, up the Guadalquivir, you are sure of a delightful breeze from the water. The sea-breeze comes like a spirit. The effect is quite magical. As you are lolling in listless languor in the hot and perfumed air, an invisible guest comes dancing into the party, and touches all with an enchanted wand. All start, all smile. It has come, it is the sea-breeze. There is much discussion, whether it be as strong as, or whether weaker than the night before. The ladies furl their fans, and seize their mantillas; the cavaliers stretch their legs, and give sign of life. All rise. You offer your arm to Dolores or Catalina, and in ten minutes you are on the Alameda. What a change! All is now life and liveliness. Such bowing, such kissing, such fluttering of fans, such gentle criticisms of gente friends! But the fan is the most wonderful part of the whole scene. A Spanish lady, with her fan, might shame the tactics of a troop of horse. Now she unfurls it with the slow pomp and conscious elegance of the bird of Juno; now she flutters it with all the languor of the listless beauty, now with all the liveliness of a vivacious one. Now, in the midst of a very tornado, she closes it with a whirl which makes you start. Pop! In the midst of your confusion, Dolores taps you on the elbow; you turn round to listen, and Catalina pokes you in your side. Magical instrument! In this land it speaks a particular language, and gallantry requires no other mode to express its most subtle conceits, or its most unreasonable demands, than this delicate machine. Yet we should remember that here, as in the north, it is not confined to the delightful sex. The cavalier also has his fan, and that the habit may not be considered an indication of effeminacy, learn that, in this scorching clime, the soldier will not mount guard without this solace.

But night wears on. We seat ourselves, we take a fanal, and fanciful refreshment which also, like the confectionary of Venice, I have since discovered to be oriental. Again we stroll. Midnight clears the public walk, but few Spanish families retire until a much later hour. A solitary bachelor, like myself, still wanders, lingering where the dancers softly move in the warm moonlight, and indicate, by the grace of their eager gestures, and the fulness of their languid eyes, the fierceness of their passion. At length the castanet is silent, the tinkling of the last guitar dies away, and the cathedral clock breaks up your reverie. You, too, seek your couch, and amid a sweet flow of loveliness, and light, and music, and fresh air, thus dies a day in Spain.

VII.

THE Spanish women are very interesting. What we associate with the idea of female beauty, is not perhaps very common in this country. There are seldom those seraphic countenances, which strike you dumb, or blind, but faces in abundance which will never pass without commanding admiration. Their charms consist in their sensibility. Each incident, every person, every word, touches the fancy of a Spanish lady, and her expressive features are constantly confuting the creed of the Moslem. But there is nothing quick, harsh, or forced about her. She is extremely unaffected, and not at all French. Her eyes gleam rather than

sparkle, she speaks with vivacity, but in sweet tones, and there is in all her carriage, particularly when she walks, a certain dignified grace which never deserts her, and which is very remarkable.

The general female dress in Spain is of black silk, called a *basquina*, and a black silk shawl, with which they usually envelope their heads, called a *mantilla*. As they walk along in this costume in an evening, with their soft dark eyes dangerously conspicuous, you willingly believe in their universal charms. They are remarkable for the beauty of their hair. Of this they are very proud, and indeed its luxuriance is only equalled by the attention which they lavish on its culture. I have seen a young girl of fourteen, whose hair reached her feet, and was as glossy as the curl of a contessa. All day long, even the lowest order are brushing, curling, and arranging it. A fruit-woman has her hair dressed with as much care as the Dutchess of Ossuna. In the summer, they do not wear their mantilla over their heads, but show their combs, which are of very great size. The fashion of these combs varies constantly. Every two or three months you may observe a new form. It is the part of the costume of which a Spanish woman is most proud. The moment that a new comb appears, even a servant wench will run to the melter's with her old one, and thus, with the cost of a dollar or two, appear the next holiday in the newest style. These combs are worn at the back of the head. They are of tortoise-shell, and with the very fashionable, they are white. I sat next to a lady of high distinction at a bull-fight at Seville. She was the daughter-in-law of the captain general of the province, and the most beautiful Spaniard I ever met. Her comb was white, and she wore a mantilla of blonde, without doubt extremely valuable, for it was very dirty. The effect, however, was charming. Her hair was glossy black, her eyes like an antelope's, and all her other features deliciously soft. She was further adorned, which is rare in Spain, with a rosy cheek, for in Spain our heroines are rather sallow. But they counteract this slight defect by never appearing until twilight, which calls them from their bowers, fresh, though languid, from the late siesta.

The only fault of the Spanish beauty is, that she too soon indulges in the magnificence of embonpoint. There are, however, many exceptions. At seventeen, a Spanish beauty is poetical. Tall, lithe, and clear, and graceful as a jennet, who can withstand the summer lightning of her soft and languid glance! As she advances, if she do not lose her shape, she resembles Juno rather than Venus. Majestic she ever is, and if her feet be less twinkling than in her first bolero, look on her hand, and you'll forgive them all.

VIII.

AT Malaga, I again met the Santiagos, and through their medium, became acquainted with a young French nobleman, who had served in the late expedition against Algiers, and retired from the army in consequence of the recent revolution in his native country. The rapturous tone in which he spoke of the delights of oriental life, and of his intention to settle permanently in Egypt, or some other part of the Ottoman empire, excited in me a great desire to visit those countries, for which my residence in a Grecian isle had somewhat prepared

me. And on inquiry at the quay, finding that there was a vessel bound for the Ionian isles at present in harbour, and about to sail, I secured our passage, and in a few days quitted the Iberian peninsula.

IX.

IN sight of the ancient Coreyra, I could not forget, that the island I beheld had given rise to one of the longest and most celebrated, and most fatal of ancient wars. The immortal struggle of the Peloponnesus was precipitated, if not occasioned, by a feeling of colonial jealousy. There is a great difference between ancient and modern colonies. A modern colony is a commercial enterprise, an ancient colony was a political settlement. In the emigration of our citizens, hitherto, we have merely sought the means of acquiring wealth; the ancients, when their brethren quitted their native shores, wept and sacrificed, and were reconciled to the loss of their fellow-citizens solely by the constraint of stern necessity, and the hope that they were about to find easier subsistence, and to lead a more cheerful and commodious life. I believe that a great revolution is at hand in our system of colonization, and that Europe will soon recur to the principles of the ancient polity.

Old Coreyra is now the modern Corfu—a lovely isle, with all that you hope to meet in a Grecian sea—gleamy waters, woody bays, the cyprus, the olive, and the vine, a clear sky and a warm sun. I learned here that a civil war raged in Albania and the neighbouring provinces of European Turkey, and, in spite of all advice, I determined, instead of advancing into Greece, to attempt to penetrate to the Turkish camp, and witness, if possible, a campaign. With these views, I engaged a small vessel to carry me to Prevesa.

X.

I WAS now in the Ambracian Gulf, those famous waters, where the soft triumvir gained greater glory by defeat than attends the victory of harsher warriors.—The site is not unworthy of the beauty of Cleopatra. From the sinuosity of the land, this gulf appears like a vast lake, walled in on all sides by mountains more or less distant. The dying glory of a Grecian eve bathed with warm lights, a thousand promontories, and gentle bays, and infinite undulations of purple outline. Before me was Olympus, whose austere peak glittered yet in the sun; a bend of the shore alone concealed from me the islands of Ulysses and of Sappho.

As I gazed upon this scene, I thought almost with disgust of the savage splendour and turbulent existence in which perhaps I was about to mingle; I recurred to the feelings in the indulgence of which I could alone find felicity, and from which an inexorable destiny seemed resolved to shut me out.

Hark! the clang of the barbaric horn, and the wild clash of the cymbal. A body of Turkish infantry marched along the shore. I landed, and learned, for the first time, of the massacre of the principal rebel beys at Monastir, at a banquet given by the grand-vizier on pretence of arranging all differences. My host, a Frank, experienced in the Turkish character, checked me, as I poured forth my indignation at this savage treachery. "Live a little longer in these countries before you hazard an opinion as to their conduct. Do you indeed think

that the rebel beys of Albania were so simple as to place the slightest trust in the vizier's pledge. The practice of politics in the East may be defined by one word—dissimulation. The most wary disssembler is the most consummate statesman. The Albanian chiefs went up to the divan in full array, and accompanied by a select body of their best troops. They were resolved to overawe the vizier, perhaps they even meditated, with regard to him, the very stroke which he had put in execution against themselves. He was the most skilful disssembler, that is all. His manner threw them off their guard. With their troops bivouacking in the court-yard, they did not calculate that his highness could contrive to massacre the troops by an ambush, and would dare, at the same moment, to attack the leaders by their very attendants at the banquet. There is no feeling of indignation in the country at the treachery of the conqueror, though a very strong sentiment of rage, and mortification, and revenge."

I learned that the grand-vizier had rejoined the main army, and was supposed to have advanced to Yanina, the capital; that in the mean time, the country between this city and the coast was overrun with prowling bands, the remnants of the rebel army, who, infuriate and flying, massacred, burned, and destroyed all persons and all property. This was an agreeable prospect. My friend dissuaded me from my plans, but, as I was unwilling to relinquish them, he recommended me to sail up to Salora, and from thence journey to Arta, where I might seek assistance from Kalio Bey, a Moslem chief, one of the most powerful and wealthy of the Albanian nobles, and ever faithful to the Porte.

To Salora I consequently repaired, and the next day succeeded in reaching Arta, a town once as beautiful as its site, and famous for its gardens, but now a mass of ruins. The whole place was razed to the ground, the minaret of the principal mosque alone untouched, and I shall never forget the effect of the muezzin with his rich, and solemn, and sonorous voice, calling us to adore God in the midst of all this human havoc.

I found the Bey of Arta keeping his state, which, notwithstanding the surrounding desolation, was not contemptible, in a tenement which was not much better than a large shed. He was a very handsome, stately man, grave but not dull, and remarkably mild and bland in his manner. His polished courtesies might perhaps be ascribed to his recent imprisonment in Russia, where he was treated with so much consideration that he mentioned it to me. I had lived in such complete solitude in Candia, and had there been so absorbed by passion, that I really was much less acquainted with Turkish manners than I ought to have been. I must confess that it was with some awe that for the first time in my life I entered the divan of a great Turk, and found myself sitting cross-legged on the right hand of a bey, smoking an amber-mouthed chibouque, sipping coffee, and paying him compliments through an interpreter.

There were several guests in the room, chiefly his officers. They were, as the Albanians in general, finely formed men, with expressive countenances, and spare forms. Their picturesque dress is celebrated, though to view it with full effect it should be seen upon an Albanian. The long hair and the small cap, the crimson velvet vest and jacket, embroidered and embossed with golden

patterns of the most elegant and flowing forms, the white and ample kilt, the ornamented buskins, and the belt full of silver-sheathed arms,—it is difficult to find humanity in better plight.

There was a considerable appearance of affairs, and of patriarchal solitude in the divan of Kalio Bey. It is possible that it was not always as busy, and that he was not uninfluenced by the pardonable vanity of impressing a stranger with his importance and beneficence. Many persons entered, and casting off their slippers at the door, advanced and parleyed; to some was given money, to all directions, and the worthy bey doled out his piastres and his instructions with equal solemnity. At length, I succeeded in calling my host's attention to the purport of my visit, and he readily granted me an escort of twenty of his Albanians. He was even careful that they should be picked men, and, calculating that I might reach the capital in two days, he drew his writing materials from his belt, and gave me a letter to a Turkish bimbashce, or colonel, who was posted with his force in the mountains I was about to pass, and under the only roof which probably remained between Arta and Yanina. He pressed me to remain his guest, though there was little, he confessed, to interest me, but I was anxious to advance, and so, after many thanks, I parted from the kind Kalio Bey.

XI.

By daybreak we departed, and journeyed for many hours over a wild range of the ancient Pindus, stopping only once for a short rest at a beautiful fountain of marble. Here we all dismounted, and lighted a fire, boiled the coffee, and smoked our pipes. There were many fine groups, but little Spiro was not as delighted as I expected at finding himself once more among his countrymen.

An hour before sunset we found ourselves at a vast, but dilapidated khan, as big as a Gothic castle, situated on a high range, and built for the accommodation of travellers from the capital to the coast, by the great Ali Pasha, when his long, sagacious, and unmolested reign permitted him to develop, in a country which combines the excellences of Western Asia and Southern Europe, some of the intended purposes of a beneficent nature. This khan had now been converted into a military post, and here we found the Turkish commander, to whom Kalio Bey had given me a letter. He was a young man of very elegant and pleasing exterior, but unluckily could not understand a word of Greek, and we had no interpreter. What was to be done? Proceed we could not, for there was not an inhabited place before Yanina, and here was I sitting before sunset on the same divan with my host, who had entered the place to receive me, and would not leave the room while I was there, without the power of communicating an idea. I was in despair, and also very hungry, and could not therefore, in the course of an hour or two, plead fatigue as an excuse for sleep, for I was ravenous, and anxious to know what prospect of food existed in this wild and desolate mansion. So we smoked. It is a great resource. But this wore out, and it was so ludicrous smoking and looking at each other, and dying to talk, and then exchanging pipes by way of compliment, and then pressing our hands to our hearts by way of thanks. At last it occurred to me that I had some brandy, and that I would offer my host a glass,

which might serve as a hint for what should follow so vehement a schnaps. Mashallah! the effect was indeed miraculous. My mild friend smacked his lips, and instantly asked for another cup. We drank it in coffee-cups. A bottle of brandy was despatched in quicker time, and fairer proportions, than had ever solemnized the decease of the same portion of Burgundy. We were extremely gay. The bimbashee ordered some dried figs, talking all the time, and indulging in the most graceful pantomime, examining my pistols, inquiring about percussion locks, which greatly surprised him, handing his own more ornamented although less effective weapons, for my inspection, and finally making out Greek enough to misunderstand most ludicrously every observation communicated. But all was taken in good part, and I never met such a jolly fellow in the course of my life.

In the mean time I became painfully ravenous, for the dry, round, unsugary fig of Albania is a great whetter. At last I asked for bread. The bimbashee gravely bowed, and said, "Leave it to me, take no thought," and nothing more occurred. I prepared myself for hungry dreams, when to my great astonishment and delight, a capital supper was brought in, accompanied, to my equal horror, by wine. We ate with our fingers. It was the first time I had performed such an operation. You soon get used to it, and dash, but in turn, at the choice morsels with perfect coolness. One, with a basin and ewer, is in attendance, and the whole process is by no means so terrible as it would first appear to European habits. For drinking—we really drank with a rapidity which, with me, was unprecedented. The wine was not bad, but, had it been poison, the forbidden juice was such a compliment from a Moslem, that I must quaff it all. We quaffed it in rivers. The bimbashee called for brandy. Unfortunately there was another bottle. We drank it all. The room turned round, the wild attendants, who sat at our feet, seemed dancing in strange whirls, the bimbashee shook hands with me, he shouted Italian, I Turkish. "Buono, buono," he had caught up,—"*Pecche, pecche,*" was my rejoinder, which, let me inform the reader, although I do not even now know much more, is very good Turkish. He roared, he patted me on the back. I remember no more.

In the middle of the night I awoke. I found myself sleeping on the divan, rolled up in its sacred carpet. The bimbashee had wisely reeled to the fire. The thirst I felt was like that of *Loises*. All were sleeping except two, who kept up, during the night, the great wood-fire. I rose, lightly stepping over my sleeping companions, and the shining arms, that here and there informed me that the dark mass wrapped up in a capote was a human being. I found Abraham's bosom in a flagon of water. I think I must have drunk a gallon at the draught. I looked at the wood-fire, and thought of the blazing blocks in the hall of *Jonsterna*, asked myself whether I were indeed in the mountain fastness of a Turkish chief, and shrugging my shoulders went to sleep, and woke without a headache.

XII.

I PARTED from my jovial host the next morning very cordially, and gave him my pipe, as a memorial of having got tipsy together.

After having crossed one more range of steep mountains, we descended into a vast plain, over which we journeyed for some hours, the country presenting the same mournful aspect which I had too long observed: villages in ruins, and perfectly desolate—khans deserted, and fortresses razed to the ground—olive woods burnt up, and fruit trees cut down. So complete had been the work of destruction, that I often unexpectedly found my horse stumbling amid the foundation of a village, and what at first appeared the dry bed of a torrent, often turned out to be the backbone of the skeleton of a ravaged town. At the end of the plain, immediately backed by very lofty mountains, and jutting into the beautiful lake that bears its name, we suddenly came upon the city of *Yanina*: suddenly, for a long tract of gradually rising ground had hitherto concealed it from our sight. At the distance I first beheld it, this city, once, if not the largest, one of the most thriving and brilliant in the Turkish dominions, was still imposing, but when I entered, I soon found that all preceding desolation had been only preparatory to the vast scene of destruction now before me. We proceeded through a street winding in its course, but of very great length. Ruined houses, mosques with their tower only standing, streets utterly razed—these are nothing. We met great patches of ruin a mile square, as if an army of locusts had had the power of desolating the works of man, as well as those of God. The great heart of the city was a sea of ruin,—arches and pillars, isolated and shattered, still here and there jutting forth, breaking the uniformity of the annihilation, and turning the horrible into the picturesque. The great Bazaar, itself a little town, had been burned down only a few days before my arrival, by an infuriate band of Albanian warriors, who heard of the destruction of their chiefs by the grand vizier. They revenged themselves on tyranny by destroying civilization.

But while the city itself presented this mournful appearance, its other characteristics were any thing but sad. At this moment a swarming population, arrayed in every possible and fanciful costume, buzzed and bustled in all directions. As I passed on, and myself of course not unobserved, where a Frank had not penetrated for nine years, a thousand objects attracted my restless attention and roving eye. Every thing was so strange and splendid, that for a moment I forgot that this was an extraordinary scene even for the East, and gave up my fancy to full credulity in the now almost obsolete magnificence of oriental life. I longed to write an Eastern tale. Military chieftains, clothed in the most brilliant colours and sumptuous furs, and attended by a cortege of officers equally splendid, continually passed us. Now for the first time a dervish saluted me; and now a *delhi*, with his high cap, reined in his desperate steed, as the suite of some pasha blocked up some turning of the street. It seemed to me that my first day in a Turkish city brought before me all the popular characteristics of which I had read, and which I expected occasionally to observe during a prolonged residence. I remember, as I rode on this day, I observed a Turkish sheikh in his entirely green vestments, a scribe with his writing materials in his girdle, an ambulatory physician and his boy. I gazed about me with a mingled feeling of delight and wonder.

Suddenly a strange, wild, unearthly drum is heard, and at the end of the street, a huge camel,

with a slave sitting cross-legged on its neck, and playing upon an immense kettledrum, appears, and is the first of an apparently interminable procession of his Arabian brethren. The camels were very large, they moved slowly, and were many in number. There were not less than a hundred moving on one by one. To me who had then never seen a caravan, it was a novel and impressive spectacle. All immediately hustled out of the way of the procession, and seemed to shrink under the sound of the wild drum. The camels bore corn for the vizier's troops encamped without the walls.

At length I reached the house of a Greek physician, to whom I carried letters. My escort repaired to the quarters of their chieftain's son, who was in the city in attendance on the grand vizier, and for myself I was glad enough once more to stretch my wearied limbs under a Christian roof.

XIII.

THE next day, I signified my arrival to the kehaya bey of his highness, and delivered, according to custom, a letter, with which I had been kindly provided by an eminent foreign functionary. The ensuing morning was fixed for my audience. I repaired at the appointed hour to the celebrated fortress palace of Ali Pasha, which, although greatly battered by successive sieges, is still inhabitable, and still affords a very fair idea of its pristine magnificence. Having passed through the gates of the fortress, I found myself in a number of small dingy streets, like those in the liberties of a royal castle. These were all full of life, stirring and excited. At length I reached a grand square, in which, on an ascent, stands the palace. I was hurried through courts and corridors, full of guards, and pages, and attendant chiefs, and in short every variety of Turkish population; for among the orientals all depends upon one brain, and we, with our subdivisions of duty, and intelligent and responsible deputies, can form no idea of the labour of a Turkish premier. At length I came to a vast, irregular apartment, serving as the immediate antechamber of the hall of audience.

This was the first thing of the kind I had ever yet seen. In the whole course of my life I had never mingled in so picturesque an assembly. Conceive a chamber of very great dimensions, full of the choicest groups of an oriental population, each individual waiting by appointment for an audience, and probably about to wait for ever. It was a sea of turbans, and crimson shawls, and golden scarfs, and ornamented arms. I marked with curiosity the haughty Turk stroking his beard, and waving his beads; the proud Albanian strutting with his tarragan, or cloak, dependent on one shoulder, and touching with impatient fingers his silver-sheathed arms; the olive-visaged Asiatic, with his enormous turban and flowing robes, gazing, half with wonder and half with contempt, at some scarlet colonel of the newly-disciplined troops in his gorgeous, but awkward imitation of Frank uniforms; the Greek, still servile, though no more a slave; the Nubian eunuch, and the Georgian page.

In this chamber, attended by the drogouman, who presented me, I remained about ten minutes—too short a time. I never thought I could have lived to wish to kick my heels in a ministerial antechamber. Suddenly I was summoned to the awful presence of the pillar of the Turkish empire,

the man who has the reputation of being the main-spring of the new system of regeneration, the renowned Redschid, an approved warrior, a consummate politician, unrivalled as a dissembler in a country where dissimulation is the principal portion of moral culture. The hall was vast, entirely covered with gilding and arabesques, inlaid with tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl. Here, squatted up in a corner of the large divan, I bowed to a little ferocious-looking, shrivelled, care-worn man, plainly dressed, with a brow covered with wrinkles, and a countenance clouded with anxiety and thought. I entered the shed-like divan of the kind, and comparatively insignificant Kalio Bey with a feeling of awe; I seated myself on the divan of the grand vizier of the Ottoman empire, who, as my attendant informed me, had destroyed, in the course of the last three months, *not* in war, "upwards of four thousand of my acquaintance," with the self-possession of a morning visit. At a distance from us, in a group on his left-hand, were his secretary, and his immediate suite. The end of the saloon was lined with tchawooshes, or lackeys, in waiting, in crimson dresses with long silver canes.

Some compliments passed between us. I congratulated his highness on the pacification of Albania, and he rejoined, that the peace of the world was his only object, and the happiness of his fellow-creatures his only wish. Pipes and coffee were then brought, and then his highness waved his hand, and in an instant the chamber was cleared.

He then told me that he had read the letter, that the writer was one whom he much loved, and that I should join the army, although, of course, I was aware that, as a Frank, I could hold no command. I told him that such was not my desire, but that, as I intended to proceed to Stamboul, it would be gratifying to me to feel that I had co-operated, however humbly, in the cause of a sovereign whom I greatly admired. A Tartar now arrived with despatches, and I rose to retire, for I could perceive that the vizier was overwhelmed with business, and although courteous, moody and anxious. He did not press me to remain, but desired that I would go and visit his son, Amin Pasha, to whose care he had consigned me.

Amin, Pasha of Yanina, was a youth of eighteen, but apparently ten years older. He was the reverse of his father: incapable in affairs, refined in manners, plunged in debauchery, and magnificent in dress. I found him surrounded by his favourites and flatterers, lolling on his divan in a fanciful hussar uniform of blue cloth covered with gold and diamonds, and worn under a Damascus pelisse of thick maroon silk, lined with white fox furs. I have seldom met with a man of more easy address, and more polished breeding. He paid many compliments to the Franks, and expressed his wish to make a visit to the English at Corfu. As I was dressed in regimentals, he offered to show me his collection of military costumes, which had been made for him principally at Vienna. He also ordered one of his attendants to bring his manuscript book of cavalry tactics, which were unfortunately all explained to me. I mention these slight traits to show how eagerly the modern Turks pique themselves on European civilization. After smoking, and eating sweetmeats, a custom indicative of friendship, he proposed that I should accompany him to the camp, where he was about to review a division of the forces. I assented. We descended together,

and I found a boy with a barb magnificently caparisoned, waiting at the portal: of both of these Amin begged my acceptance. Mounting, we proceeded to the camp, nor do I think that the cortege of the young pasha consisted of less than a hundred persons, who were all officers of his household, or of the cavalry regiment which he commanded.

XIV.

I GLADLY believe that the increased efficiency of the Turkish troops compensates for their shorn splendour and sorry appearance. A shaven head, covered with a tight red cloth cap, a small blue jacket of coarse cloth, huge trousers of the same material, puckered out to the very stretch of art, yet sitting tight to the knee and calf, mean accoutrements, and a pair of dingy slippers—behold the successor of the superb janissary! Yet they perform their manœuvres with precision, and have struggled even with the Russian infantry with success. The officer makes a better appearance. His dress, although of the same fashion, is of scarlet, and of the finest cloth. It is richly embroidered, and the colonel wears upon his breast a star and crescent of diamonds. At the camp of Yanina, however, I witnessed a charge of delhis with their cimets, and a more effective cavalry I never wish to lead.

We returned to the city, and I found that apartments were allotted to me in the palace, whither Lausanne and the rest had already repaired. In the evening the vizier sent to me the first singer in Turkey, with several musicians. The singer chanted for an hour in a wild, piercing voice, devoid both of harmony and melody, a triumphant ballad on the recent massacre of Veli Bey and his rebel coadjutors. Nothing appears to me more frightful than Turkish music, yet it produces on those who are accustomed to it a very great effect, and my room was filled with strangers who hastened to listen to the enchanting and exciting strain. The Turkish music is peculiar and different from that of other Eastern nations. I have seldom listened to more simple and affecting melodies than those with which the boatmen are wont to soothe their labours.

The dancing girls followed, and were more amusing, but I had not then witnessed the Alwyn of Egypt.

A week flew away at Yanina in receiving and returning visits from pashas, agas, and selictars, in smoking pipes, sipping coffee, and tasting sweetmeats. Each day the vizier, or his son, sent me provisions ready prepared from their table, and indicated by some attention their considerate kindness. There is no character in the world higher bred than a Turk of rank. Some of these men, too, I found extremely intelligent, deeply interested in the political amelioration of their country, and warm admirers of Peter the Great. I remember with pleasure the agreeable hours I have spent in the society of Mehemet Aga, Selictar of the Pasha of Lepanto, a warrior to whom the obstinate resistance of Varna is mainly to be attributed, and a remarkably enlightened man. Yet even he could not emancipate himself from their fatalism. For I remember when once conversing with him on the equipments of the cavalry, a subject in which he was very much interested, I suggested to him the propriety of a corps of cuirassiers. "A cuirass cannot stop the ball that

bears your fate," he replied, shrugging up his shoulder, and exclaiming Mashallah!

While I was leading this novel and agreeable life, news arrived that the Pasha of Scutari, who had placed himself at the head of the insurgent janissaries, and was the champion of the old party, had entered Albania at the head of sixty thousand men, to avenge the massacre of the boys.

XV.

THE grand vizier set off the same night with ten thousand men, reached Okhrida by forced marches, attacked and routed a division of the rebel troops before they supposed him to be apprized of their movements, and again encamped at Monastir, sending urgent commands to Yanina for his son to advance with the rest of the army. We met his Tartar on our march, and the divisions soon joined. After a day's rest, we advanced, and entered the pashalic of Scutari.

The enemy, to our surprise, avoided an engagement. The fierce, undisciplined warriors were frightened at our bayonets. They destroyed all before us, and hung with their vigilant cavalry on our exhausted rear. We had advanced on one side of Scutari; on the other we had penetrated into Romelia. We carried every thing before us, but we were in want of supplies, our soldiers were without food, and a skilful general and disciplined troops might have cut off all our communications.

Suddenly the order was given to retreat. We retreated slowly, and in excellent order. Two regiments of the newly-organized cavalry, with whom I had the honour to act, covered the rear, and were engaged in almost constant skirmishing with the enemy. This skirmishing is very exciting. We concentrated, and again encamped at Okhridi.

We were in hopes of now drawing the enemy into an engagement, but he was wary. In this situation the vizier directed that in the night a powerful division under the command of Mehemet, Pasha of Lepanto, he who stabbed Ali Pasha, should fall back to Monastir with the artillery, and take up a position in the mountains. The ensuing night his highness, after having previously spiked some useless guns, scattered about some tents and baggage-wagons, and given a general appearance of a hurried and disorderly retreat, withdrew in the same direction. The enemy instantly pursued, rushed on, and attacked us full of confidence. We contented ourselves by protecting our rear, but still retreated, and appeared anxious to avoid an engagement. In the evening, having entered the mountain passes, and reached the post of the Pasha of Lepanto, we drew up in battle array.

It was a cloudy morning among the mountains, and some time before the mist drew away. The enemy appeared to be in great force, filling the gorge through which we had retreated, and encamped on all the neighbouring eminences. When they perceived us, a large body instantly charged with the famous janissary shout, the terror of which I confess. I was cold, somewhat exhausted, for I had tasted no food for two days, and for a moment my heart sunk.

They were received, to their surprise, by a well-directed discharge of artillery from our concealed batteries. They seemed checked. Our ranks opened and a body of five thousand troops instantly

charged them with the bayonet. 'This advance was sublime, and so exciting that, what with the shouts and cannonading, I grew mad, and longed to rush forward. The enemy gave way. Their great force was in cavalry, which could not act among the mountains. They were evidently astonished and perplexed. In a few minutes they were routed. The vizier gave orders for a general charge and pursuit, and in a few minutes I was dashing over the hills in rapid chase of all I could catch, cutting, firing, shouting, and quite persuaded that a battle was, after all, the most delightful pastime in the world.

The masses still charging, the groups demanding quarter, the single horsemen bounding over the hills, the wild scared steeds without a rider, snorting and plunging, the dense smoke clearing away, the bright arms and figures flashing, ever and anon, in the moving obscurity, the wild shouts, the strange and horrible spectacles, the solitary shots and shrieks now heard in the decreasing uproar, and the general feeling of energy, and peril, and triumph—it was all wonderful, and was a glorious moment in existence.

The enemy was scattered like chaff. To rally them was impossible; and the chiefs, in despair, were foremost in flight. They offered no resistance, and the very men who, in the morning, would have been the first to attack a battery, sabre in hand, now yielded in numbers without a struggle to an individual. There was a great slaughter, a vast number of prisoners, and plunder without end. My tent was filled with rich arms, and shawls, and stuffs, and embroidered saddles. Lausanne and Tita were the next day both clothed in splendid Albanian dresses, and little Spiro plundered the dead as became a modern Greek.

I reached my tent, I dismounted from my horse, I leaned upon it from exhaustion. An Albanian came forward, and offered a flask of Zitza wine. I drank it at a draught, and assuredly experienced the highest sensual pleasure. I took up two Cachemere shawls, and a gun mounted in silver, and gave them to the Albanian. Lucky is he who is courteous in the hour of plunder!

The vizier I understood to be at Okhrida, and I repaired to that post over the field of battle. The moon had risen, and tinged with its white light all the prominent objects of the scene of destruction; groups of bodies, and, now and then, a pallid face, distinct and fierce; steeds, and standards, and arms, and shattered wagons. Here and there a moving light showed that the plunderer was still at his work, and, occasionally seated on the carcass of a horse, and sometimes on the corpse of a human being, were some of the fortunate survivors, smoking with admirable coolness, as if there were not on earth such a fearful mystery as death.

I found the victorious Redschid seated on a carpet in the moonlight in a cypress grove, and surrounded by attendants, to whom he was delivering instructions, and distributing rewards. He appeared as calm and grave as usual. Perceiving him thus engaged, I mingled with the crowd, and stood aside, leaning on my sword: but observing me, he beckoned me to advance, and pointing to his carpet, he gave me the pipe of honour from his own lips. As I seated myself by his side, I could not help viewing this extraordinary man with great interest and curiosity. A short time back, at this very place, he had perpetrated an act which would have ren-

dered him infamous in a civilized land; the avengers meet him, as if by fate, on the very scene of his bloody treachery, and—he is victorious. What is life!

So much for the battle of Bitoglia or Monastir, a very pretty fray, although not as much talked of as Austerlitz or Waterloo, and which probably would have remained unknown to the great mass of European readers, had not a young Frank gentleman mingled, from a silly fancy, in its lively business.

XVI.

THE effect of the battle of Bitoglia was the complete pacification of Albania, and the temporary suppression of the conspiracies in the adjoining provinces. Had it been in the power of the Porte to have supported, at this moment, its able and faithful servant, it is probable that the authority of the sultan would have been permanently consolidated in these countries. As it is, the finest regions in Europe are still the prey of civil war, in too many instances excited by foreign powers, for their miserable purposes, against a prince, who is only inferior to Peter the Great, because he has profited by his example.

For myself, perceiving that there was no immediate prospect of active service, I determined to visit Greece, and I parted from his highness with the hope that I might congratulate him at Stamboul.

XVII.

A COUNTRY of promontories, and gulfs, and islands clustering in an azure sea, a country of wooded vales and purple mountains, wherein the cities are built on plains, covered with olive woods, and at the base of an Acropolis, crowned with a temple or a tower. And there are quarries of white marble, and vines, and much wild honey. And wherever you move is some fair and elegant memorial of the poetic past, a lone pillar on the green and silent plain once echoing with the triumphal shouts of sacred games, the tomb of a hero, or the fane of a god. Clear is the sky, and fragrant is the air, and, at all seasons, the magical scenery of this land is coloured with that mellow tint, and invested with that pensive character, which, in other countries, we conceive to be peculiar to autumn, and which beautifully associate with the recollections of the past. Enchanting Greece!

XVIII.

IN the Argolic Gulf I found myself in the very heart of the Greek tragedy; Nauplia and Sparta, the pleasant Argos, and the rich Mycene, the tomb of Agamemnon, and the palace of Clytemnestra. The fortunes of the house of Atreus form the noblest of all legends. I believe in that destiny before which the ancients bowed. Modern philosophy, with its superficial discoveries, has infused into the breast of man a spirit of skepticism, but I think that, ere long, science will again become imaginative, and that, as we become more profound, we may become also more credulous. Destiny is our will, and our will is our nature. The son who inherits the organization with the father, will be doomed to the same fortunes as his sire, and again the mysterious matter in which his ancestors were moulded may, in other forms, by a necessary

attraction, act upon his fate. All is mystery, but he is a slave who will not struggle to penetrate the dark veil.

I quitted the Morea without regret. It is covered with Venetian memorials, no more to me a source of joy, and bringing back to my memory a country on which I no longer loved to dwell. I cast anchor in a small but secure harbour. I landed. I climbed a hill. From it I looked over a vast plain, covered with olive woods, and skirted by mountains. Some isolated hills, of every picturesque form, rose in the plain at a distance from the terminating range. On one of these I beheld a magnificent temple bathed in the sunset. At the foot of the craggy steep on which it rested was a walled city of considerable dimensions, in front of which rose a Doric temple of exquisite proportion, and apparently uninjured. The violet sunset threw over this scene a colouring becoming its loveliness, and, if possible, increasing its refined character. Independent of all associations, it was the most beautiful spectacle that had ever passed before a vision always musing on sweet sights, yet I could not forget that it was the bright capital of my youthful dreams, the fragrant city of the violet crown, the fair, the sparkling, the delicate ATHENS!

XIX.

THE illusion vanished when I entered Athens. I found it in scarcely a less shattered condition than the towns of Albania. Ruined streets, and roofless houses, and a scanty population. The women were at Egina in security; a few males remained behind to watch the fortune of war. The Acropolis had not been visited by travellers for nine years, and was open to inspection for the first time the very day I entered. It was still in possession of the Turks, but the Greek Commission had arrived to receive the keys of the fortress. The ancient remains have escaped better than we could hope. The Parthenon and the other temples on the Acropolis have necessarily suffered in the sieges, but the injury is only in detail; the general effect is not marred, although I observed many hundred shells and cannon-balls lying about.

The Theseum has not been touched, and looks, at a short distance, as if it were just finished by Cimon. The sumptuous columns of the Olympium still rise from their stately platform, but the Choric monument is sadly maimed, although, as I was assured, by English sailors, and not Eastern barbarians. Probably the same marine monsters, who have commemorated their fatal visit to Egypt, and the name of the fell craft that waited them there, by covering the granite pillar of Pompey with gigantic characters in black paint.

The durability of the Parthenon is wonderful. As far as I could observe, had it not been for the repeated ravages of man, it might at this day have been in as perfect condition as in the age of Pericles. Abstract time it has defied. Gilt and painted, with its pictures and votive statues, it must have been one of the most brilliant creations of human genius. Yet we err if we consider this famous building as an unparalleled effort of Grecian architecture. Compared with the temples of Ionia and the Sicilian fanes, compared even with the Olympium at its feet, the Parthenon could only rank as a church with a cathedral.

In art, the Greeks were the children of the

Egyptians. The day may yet come when we shall do justice to the high powers of that mysterious and imaginative people. The origin of Doric and Ionic invention must be traced amid the palaces of Carnac and the temples of Luxoor. For myself I confess I ever gaze upon the marvels of art with a feeling of despair. With horror I remember that, through some mysterious necessity, civilization seems to have deserted the most favoured regions and the choicest intellects. The Persian, whose very being is poetry, the Arab, whose subtle mind could penetrate into the very secret shrine of nature, the Greek, whose acute perceptions seemed granted only for the creation of the beautiful—these are now unlettered slaves in barbarous lands. The arts are yielded to the flat-nosed Franks. And they toil, and study, and invent theories to account for their own incompetence. Now it is the climate, now the religion, now the government, every thing but the truth, every thing but the mortifying suspicion that their organization may be different, and that they may be as distinct a race from their models, as they undoubtedly are from the Kalnuck and the Negro.

XX.

WHATEVER may have been the faults of the ancient governments, they were in closer relation to the times, to the countries, and to the governed, than ours. The ancients invented their governments according to their wants; the moderns have adopted foreign policies, and then modelled their conduct upon this borrowed regulation. This circumstance has occasioned our manners and our customs to be so confused, and absurd, and unphilosophical. What business had we, for instance, to adopt the Roman law?—a law foreign to our manners, and consequently disadvantageous. He, who profoundly meditates upon the situation of modern Europe, will also discover how productive of misery has been the senseless adoption of oriental customs by northern people. Whence came that divine right of kings, which has deluged so many countries with blood?—that pastoral and Syrian law of tithes, which may yet shake the foundation of so many ancient institutions?

XXI.

EVEN as a child, I was struck by the absurdity of modern education. The duty of education is to give ideas. When our limited intelligence was confined to the literature of two dead languages, it was necessary to acquire those languages in order to obtain the knowledge which they embalmed. But now each nation has its literature, each nation possesses, written in its own tongue, a record of all knowledge, and specimens of every modification of invention. Let education, then, be confined to that national literature, and we should soon perceive the beneficial effects of this revolution upon the mind of the student. Study would then be a profitable delight. I pity the poor Gothic victim of the grammar and the lexicon. The Greeks, who were masters of composition, were ignorant of all languages but their own. They concentrated their study of the genius of expression upon one tongue. To this they owe that blended simplicity and strength of style, which the imitative Romans, with all their splendour, never attained

To the few, however, who have leisure or inclination to study foreign literatures, I will not recommend them the English, the Italian, the German, since they may rightly answer, that all these have been in great part founded upon the classic tongues, and therefore it is wise to ascend to the fountain head; but I will ask them for what reason they would limit their experience to the immortal languages of Greece and Rome? Why not study the Oriental? Surely, in the pages of the Persians and the Arabs, we might discover new sources of emotion, new modes of expression, new trains of ideas, new principles of invention, and new bursts of fancy.

These are a few of my meditations amid the ruins of Athens. They will disappoint those who might justly expect an ebullition of classic rapture from one who has gazed upon Marathon by moonlight, and sailed upon the free waters of Salamis. I regret their disappointment, but I have arrived at an age when I can think only of the future. A mighty era is at hand, prepared by the blunders of long centuries. Ardently I hope that the necessary change in human existence may be effected by the voice of philosophy alone: but I tremble and I am silent. There is no bigotry so terrible as the bigotry of a country that flatters itself that it is philosophical.

XXII.

UNDERSTANDING that the Turkish squadron I left at Prevesa had arrived in the Negropont, I passed over, and paid a visit to its commander, with whom I was acquainted, Halil Pasha. Halil informed me that all remained quiet in Albania, but that Redschid did not venture to return. He added that he himself was about to sail from Stamboul immediately, and proposed that I should accompany him. His offer suited me, and as the wind was fair, in a few hours we were all on board.

I had a most splendid view of Sunium, its columns against a dark cloud looked like undriven snow, and we were soon among the Cyclades. Sixteen islands were in sight, and we were now making our course in the heart of them. An archipelago by sunset is lovely—small isles of purple and gold studding the glowing waters. The wind served well through the night, but we were becalmed the next day off Mitylene. In the afternoon, a fresh breeze sprung up and carried us to the Dardanelles.

We were yet, I believe, upwards of a hundred miles from Constantinople. What a road to a great city! narrower and much longer than the Straits of Gibraltar, but not with such sublime shores. Asia and Europe look more kindly on each other than Europe and her more sultry sister. I found myself, the next morning, becalmed off Troy: a vast hilly, uncultivated plain, a scanty rill, a huge tumulus, some shepherds and their flocks—behold the kingdom of Priam, and the successors of Paris!

A signal summoned us on board, the wind was fair and fresh. We scudded along with great swiftness, passing many towns and fortresses. Each dome, each minaret, I thought was Constantinople. At last it came; we were in full sight. Masses of habitations, grouped on gentle acclivities, rose on all sides out of the water, part in Asia, part in Europe; a gay and confused vision of red buildings, and dark-green cypress groves,

hooded domes, and millions of minarets. As we approached, the design became more obvious. The groups formed themselves into three considerable cities, intersected by arms of the sea. Down one of these, rounding the seraglio point, our vessel held her course. We seemed to glide into the heart of the capital. The water was covered with innumerable boats as swift as gondolas, and far more gay, curiously carved, and richly gilt. In all parts swarmed a showy population. The characteristic of the whole scene was brilliancy. The houses glittered, the waters sparkled, and flocks of white and sacred birds glanced in the golden air, and skimmed over the blue wave. On one side of the harbour was moored the Turkish fleet, dressed out in all their colours. Our course was ended, and we cast our anchor in the famous Golden Horn.

XXIII.

No picture can ever convey a just idea of Constantinople. I have seen several that are faithful, as far as they extend, but the most comprehensive can only exhibit a small portion of this extraordinary city. By land or by water, in every direction, passing up the Golden Horn to the valley of Sweet Waters, or proceeding on the other hand down the famous Bosphorus to Buyukkere, and Terapia, to the Euxine, what infinite novelty! New kiosks, new hills, new windings, new groves of cypress, and new forests of chestnut, open on all sides.

The two most wonderful things at Constantinople are the Bosphorus and the bazaar. Conceive the ocean a stream not broader than the Rhine, with shores with all the beauty and variety of that river, running between gentle slopes covered with rich woods, gardens, and summer palaces, cemeteries, and mosques, and villages, and bounded by sublime mountains. The view of the Euxine from the heights of Terapia, just seen through the end of the straits, is like gazing upon eternity.

The bazaar is of a very different order, but not less remarkable. I never could obtain from a Turk any estimate of the ground it covered. Several in the habit of daily attendance have mentioned to me that they often find themselves in divisions they have not before visited. Fancy a Parisian panorama passage, fancy perhaps a square mile covered with these arcades, intersecting each other in all directions, and full of every product of the empire, from diamonds to dates. This will give you some idea of the great bazaar at Constantinople. The dealers, in every possible costume, sit cross-legged on their stalls, and dealers in the same article usually congregate together. The armourers, the grocers, the pipemakers, the jewellers, the shawl-sellers, the librarians, all have their distinct quarter. Now you walk along a range of stalls, filled with the most fanciful slippers, cloth and leather of all colours embroidered with gold, or powdered with pearls: now you are in the street of confectionary, and now you are cheapening a Damascus sabre in the bazaar of arms, or turning over a vividly illuminated copy of Hafiz in that last stronghold of Turkish bigotry, the quarter of the venders of the Koran. The magnificence, novelty, and variety of goods on sale, the whole nation of shopkeepers all in different dress, the crowds of buyers from all parts of the world—I only hint at these traits. Here every people has

a characteristic costume; Turks, Greeks, Jews, and Armenians are the staple population, the latter are numerous. The Armenians wear round, and very unbecoming black caps, and flowing robes; the Jews a black hat wreathed with a white handkerchief; the Greeks black turbans. The Turks are fond of dress, and indulge in all combinations of costume. Of late, among the young men in the capital, it has been the fashion to discard the huge turban, and the ample robes, and they have formed an exceedingly ungraceful dress upon the Frank. But vast numbers cling to the national costume, especially the Asiatics, renowned for the prodigious height and multifarious folds of their head-gear.

XXIV.

HALIL PASHA paid me a visit one day at my residence on the Bosphorus, and told me that he had mentioned my name to the sultan, who had expressed a desire to see me. As it is not etiquette for the padishah to receive Franks, I was of course as sensible of the high honour as I was anxious to become acquainted with the extraordinary man who was about to confer it.

The sultan was at this moment at a palace on the Bosphorus, not far from Tophana. Hither on the appointed day I repaired with Halil, and the drogouman of the Porte. We were ushered into a chamber, where a principal officer of the household received us, and where I smoked out of a pipe tipped with diamonds, and sipped coffee perfumed with roses in cups studded with precious stones.

When we had remained here for about half an hour, Mustapha, the private secretary and favourite of the sultan, entered, and after saluting us, desired us to follow him. We proceeded along a corridor, at the end of which stood two or three eunuchs, richly dressed, and then the door opened, and I found myself in an apartment of moderate size, painted with indifferent arabesques in fresco, and surrounded with a divan of crimson velvet and gold. Seated upon this, with his feet on the ground, his arms folded, and in a hussar dress, was the grand signor.

As we entered, he slightly touched his heart, according to the fashion of the Orientals, and Mustapha, setting us an example, desired us to seat ourselves. I fancied, and I was afterward assured of the correctness of my observation, that the sultan was very much constrained, and very little at his ease. The truth is, he is totally unused to interviews with strangers, and this was for him a more novel situation than for me. His constraint wore off as conversation proceeded. He asked a great many questions, and often laughed, turning round to Mustapha with a familiar nod when my replies pleased him. He inquired much about the Albanian war. Without flattering my late commander, it was in my power to do him service. He asked me what service I had before seen, and was evidently surprised when I informed him I was only an amateur. He then made many inquiries as to the European forces, and, as I answered them, I introduced some opinions on politics which interested him. He asked me who I was. I told him I was the son of the prime minister of —, a power always friendly to the Ottoman. His eyes sparkled, and he repeated several times, "It is well, it is well;" meaning, I suppose, that he did not repent of the interview. He told me that in two years'

time he should have two hundred thousand regular infantry. That if the Russian war could have been postponed another year, he should have beat the Muscovites; that the object of the war was to crush his schemes of regeneration; that he was betrayed at Adrianople as well as at Varna. He added that he had only done what Peter the Great had done before him, and that Peter was thwarted by unsuccessful wars, yet at last succeeded.

I, of course, expressed my conviction that his highness would be as fortunate.

The padishah then abruptly said that all his subjects should have equal rights, that there should be no difference between Moslemin and infidel, that all who contributed to the government had a right to the same protection,

Here Mustapha nodded to Halil, and we rose, and bowing, quitted the presence of a really great man.

I found, at the portal, a fine Arabian, two Cachemere shawls, a scarlet cloak of honour, with the collar embroidered with gold, and fastened with diamond clasps, a sabre, and two superb pipes. This was my reward for charging with the Turkish cavalry at Bitoglia.

XXV.

ONE of the most curious things at Constantinople is the power you have in the capital of the East of placing yourselves in ten minutes in a lively Frank town. Such is Pera. I passed there the winter months of December and January in very agreeable and intelligent society. My health improved, but my desire of wandering increased. I began to think that I should now never be able to settle in life. The desire of fame did not revive. I felt no intellectual energy, I required nothing more than to be amused. And having now passed four or five months at Stamboul, and seen all its wonders, from the interior of its mosques to the dancing dervishes, I resolved to proceed. So, one cold morning of February, I crossed over to Scutari, and pressed my wandering foot upon Asia.

PART THE SIXTH.

I.

I WAS now in the great peninsula of Asia Minor, a country admirably fortified by nature, abounding in vast, luxuriant, and enchanting plains, from which a scanty population derive a difficult subsistence, and watered by broad rivers rolling through solitude.

As I journeyed along I could not refrain from contrasting the desolation of the present with the refinement of the past, and calling up a vision of the ancient splendour of this famous country. I beheld those glorious Greek federations that covered the provinces of the coast with their rich cultivation and brilliant cities. Who has not heard of the green and bland Ionia, and its still more fruitful, although less picturesque sister, the rich Æolia? Who has not heard of the fame of Ephesus, and the Anacreontic Teios; Chios, with its rosy wine, and Cnidos, with its rosy goddess? Colophon, Priene, Phocæa, Samos, Miletos, the splendid Halicarnas-

sus, and the sumptuous Cos—magnificent cities abounding in genius and luxury, and all that polished refinement that ennobles life! Everywhere around these free and famous citizens disseminated their liberty and their genius, in the savage Tauris, and on the wild shores of Pontus; on the banks of the Borysthènes, and by the waters of the rapid Tyras. The islands in their vicinity shared their splendour and their felicity; the lyric Lesbos, and Tenedos with its woods and vines, and those glorious gardens, the fortunate Cyprus and the prolific Rhodes.

Under the empire of Rome, the peninsula of Asia did not enjoy a less eminent prosperity. The interior provinces vied in wealth and civilization with the ancient colonies of the coast. Then the cavalry of Cappadocia and Paphlagonia were famous as the Lycian mariners, the soldiers of Pontus, and the bowmen of Armenia; then Galatia sent forth her willing and welcome tribute of corn, and the fruitful Bithynia rivalled the Pamphylian pastures, the vines of Phrygia, and the Pisidian olives. Tarsus, Ancyra, Sardos, Cæsarea, Sinope, Anisus, were the great and opulent capitals of these flourishing provinces. Alexandria rose upon the ruins of Tyre, and Nicæa and Nicomedia ranked with the most celebrated cities.

And now the tinkling bell of the armed and wandering caravan was the only indication of human existence!

It is in such scenes as these, amid the ruins of ancient splendour, and the recollection of vanished empire, that philosophers have pondered on the nature of government, and have discovered, as they fancied, in the consequences of its various forms, the causes of duration or of decay, of glory or of humiliation. Freedom, says the sage, will lead to prosperity, and despotism to destruction.

Yet has this land been regulated by every form of government that the ingenuity of man has devised. The federal republic, the military empire, the oriental despotism, have in turn controlled its fortunes. The deputies of free states have here assembled in some universal temple which was the bond of union between their cities; here has the proconsul presided at his high tribunal; and here the pasha reposes in his divan. The Pagan fane, and the Christian church, and the Turkish mosque, have here alike been erected to form the opinions of the people. The legends of Chaos and Olympus are forgotten, the sites of the Seven Churches cannot even be traced, and all that is left are the revelations of the son of Kahrîda, a volume, the whole object of which is to convert man into a fanatic slave.

Is there then no hope? Is it an irrevocable doom, that society shall be created only to be destroyed? When I can accept such a dogma, let me also believe that the beneficent Creator is a malignant demon. Let us meditate more deeply, let us at length discover that no society can long subsist that is based upon metaphysical absurdities.

The law that regulates man must be founded on a knowledge of his nature, or that law leads him to ruin. What is the nature of man? In every clime and in every creed we shall find a new definition.

Before me is a famous treatise on Human Nature, by a professor of Königsberg. No one has more profoundly meditated on the attributes of his subject. It is evident that in the deep study of his

own intelligence, he has discovered a noble method of expounding that of others. Yet when I close his volumes can I conceal from myself that all this time I have been studying a treatise upon the nature—not of man, but—of a German?

What then! Is the German a different animal from the Italian! Let me inquire in turn whether you conceive the negro of the Gold Coast to be the same being as the Esquimaux, who tracks his way over the polar snows?

The most successful legislators are those who have consulted the genius of the people. But is it possible to render that which is the occasional consequence of fine observation, the certain result of scientific study?

One thing is quite certain, that the system we have hitherto pursued to attain a knowledge of man has entirely failed. Let us disembarass ourselves of that "moral philosophy," which has filled so many volumes with words. History will always remain a pleasant pastime; it never could have been a profitable study. To study man from the past is to suppose, that man is ever the same animal, which I do not. Those who speculated on the career of Napoleon had ever a dog's-careed annalist to refer to. The past equally proved that he was both a Cromwell and a Washington. Prophetic past! He turned out to be the first. But suppose he had been neither; suppose he had proved a Sylla?

Man is an animal, and his nature must be studied as that of all other animals. The Almighty Creator has breathed his spirit into us, and we testify our gratitude for this choice boon by never deigning to consider what may be the nature of our intelligence. The philosopher, however, amid this darkness, will not despair. He will look forward to an age of rational laws and beneficent education. He will remember that all the truth he has attained has been by one process. He will also endeavour to become acquainted with himself by demonstration, and not by dogma.

II.

ONE fair spring morning, with a clear blue sky and an ardent but not intense sun, I came in sight of the whole coast of Syria; very high and mountainous, and the loftiest ranges covered with snow.

I had sailed from Smyrna through its lovely gulf, vaster and more beautiful than the Ambracian, found myself in a new archipelago, the Sporades, and having visited Rhodes and Cyprus, engaged, at the last island, a pilot, to take us to the most convenient Syrian port.

Syria is, in fact, an immense chain of mountains, extending from Asia Minor to Arabia. In the course of this great chain, an infinity of branches constantly detach themselves from the parent trunk, forming on each side, either towards the desert or the sea, beautiful and fertile plains. Washed by the Levantine wave, on one side we behold the once luxurious Antioch, now a small and dingy Turkish town. The traveller can no longer wander in the voluptuous woods of Daphne. The palace and the garden pass away with the refined genius and the delicate taste that create them, but nature is eternal, and even yet the valley of the Orontes offers, under the glowing light of an eastern day, scenes of picturesque beauty that Switzerland cannot surpass. The hills of Laodicea, once famous for their wine,

are now celebrated for producing the choicest tobacco of the East. Tripoli is a flourishing town, embosomed in wild groves of Indian figs, and famous for its fruits and silks. Advancing along the coast we reach the ancient Berytus, whose tobacco vies with Laodicea, and whose silk surpasses that of Tripoli. We arrive at all that remains of the superb Tyre; a small peninsula and a mud village. The famous Acre is still the most important place upon the coast, and Jaffa, in spite of so many wars, is yet fragrant amid its gardens and groves of lemon trees.

The towns on the coast have principally been built on the sites and ruins of the ancient cities whose names they bear. None of them have sufficient claims to the character of a capital; but on the other side of the mountains we find two of the most important of oriental cities—the populous Aleppo and the delicious Damascus; nor must we forget Jerusalem, that city sacred in so many creeds!

In ancient remains, Syria is only inferior to Egypt. All have heard of the courts of Baalbec, and the columns of Palmyra. Less known, because only recently visited, and visited with extreme danger, are the vast ruins of magnificent cities in the Arabian vicinity of the Lake Asphalines.

The climate of this country is as various as its formation. In the plains is often experienced that intense heat so fatal to the European invader; yet the snow that seldom falls upon the level ground, or falls only to vanish, rests upon the heights of Lebanon, and, in the higher lands, it is not difficult at all times to discover exactly the temperature you desire. I travelled in Syria at the commencement of the year, when the short, but violent rainy season had just ceased. It is not easy to conceive a more beautiful and fruitful land. The plains were covered with that fresh green tint so rare under an Eastern sky, the orange and lemon trees were clothed both with fruit and blossom, and then too I first beheld the huge leaf of the banana, and tasted, for the first time, the delicate flavour of its unrivalled fruit. From the great extent of the country, and the consequent variation of climate, the Syrian can always command a succession, as well as a variety of luxuries. The season of the pomegranate will commence in Antioch when it ends in Jaffa, and when you have exhausted the figs of Beiroot, you can fly to the gardens of Damascus. Under the worst government that perhaps ever oppressed its subjects, Syria still brings forth the choice productions of almost every climate; corn and cotton, maize and rice, the sugar-cane of the Antilles, and the indigo and cochineal of Mexico. The plains of Antioch and of Palestine are covered with woods of the finest olives, the tobaccos of the coast are unrivalled in any country, and the mountains of Lebanon are clothed with white mulberry trees, that afford the richest silks, or with vineyards that yield a wine that justly bears the name of Golden.

The inhabitants of this country are various as its productions, and its mutable fortunes. The Ottoman conqueror is now the lord, and rules the posterity of the old Syrian Greeks and of the Arabs, who were themselves once predominant. In the mountains, the independent and mysterious Druses live in freedom under their own emir, and, in the ranges near Antioch, we find the Ansarce tribes, who, it is whispered, yet celebrate the most singu-

lar rites of paganism. In the deserts around Aleppo wander the pastoral Kourds and the warlike Turkman, and from Tadmor to Gaza, the whole Syrian desert is traversed by the famous Bedouin.

There is a charm in oriental life, and it is—repose. Upon me, who had been bred in the artificial circles of corrupt civilization, and who had so freely indulged the course of my impetuous passions, this character made a very forcible impression. Wandering over those plains and deserts, and sojourning in those silent and beautiful cities, I experienced all that serenity of mind which I can conceive to be the enviable portion of the old age of a virtuous life. The memory of the wearing cares, and corroding anxieties, and vaunted excitement of European life, filled me with pain. Keenly I felt the vanity and littleness of all human plans and aspirations. Truly may I say, that on the plains of Syria, I parted forever with my ambition. The calm enjoyment of existence appeared to me, as it now does, the highest attainable felicity; nor can I conceive that any thing could tempt me from my solitude, and induce me once more to mingle with mankind, with whom, I fear, I have too little in common, but the strong conviction that the fortunes of my race depended on my effort, or that I could materially advance the great amelioration of their condition, in the practicability of which I devoutly believe.

III.

I GALLOPED over an illimitable plain, covered with a vivid, though scanty pasture, and fragrant with aromatic herbs. A soft, fresh breeze danced on my cheek, and brought vigour to my frame. Day after day I journeyed, and met no sign of human existence, no village, no culture, no resting-place, not even a tree. Day after day I journeyed, and the land indicated no termination. At an immense distance, the sky and the earth mingled in a uniform horizon. Sometimes, indeed, a rocky vein shot out of the soil; sometimes, indeed, the land would swell into long undulations; sometimes, indeed, from a dingle of wild bushes, a gazelle would rush forward, stare, and bound away.

Such was my first wandering in the Syrian desert! But remember it was the burst of spring, I could conceive nothing more delightful, nothing more unlike what I had anticipated. The heat was never intense, the breeze was ever fresh and sweet, the nocturnal heavens luminous and clear to a degree which it is impossible to describe. Instead of that uniform appearance, and monotonous splendour I had hitherto so often gazed on, the stars were of different tints and forms. Some were green, some white, some red; and, instead of appearing as if they only studded a vast and azure vault, I clearly distinguished them, at different distances, floating in ether.

I no longer wondered at the love of the Bedouins for their free and unsophisticated earth. It appeared to me, that I could have lived in the desert forever. At night we rested. Our camels bore us water in goat-skins, cakes of fuel, which they themselves produced, and scanty, although sufficient, provisions. We lit our fire, pounded our coffee, and smoked our pipes, while others prepared our simple meal, bread made at the instant, and on the cinders, a slice of dried meat, and a few dates.

I have described the least sterile of the deserts,

and I have described it at the most favourable period. In general, the soil of the Syrian wilderness is not absolutely barren. The rains cover it with verdure, but these occur only for a very few weeks, when the rigour of a winter day arrests the clouds, and they dissolve into showers. At all other seasons they glide over the scorched and heated plain, which has neither hills nor trees to attract them. It is then the want of water which is the occasion of this sterility. In the desert there is not even a brook, springs are rare, and generally brackish, and it is on the artificial wells, stored by the rains, that the wanderer chiefly depends.

From the banks of the Euphrates to the shores of the Red Sea; from the banks of the Nile to the Persian Gulf, over a spread of country three times the extent of Germany, nature, without an interval, ceases to produce. Beneficent nature! Let us not wrong her; for even in a land apparently so unfavoured, exists a numerous and happy race. As you wander along, the appearance of the desert changes. The wilderness, which is comparatively fertile in Syria, becomes rocky when you enter Arabia, and sandy as you proceed. Here, in some degree, we meet with the terrible idea of the desert prevalent in Europe; but it is in Africa, in the vast and unexplored regions of Lybia and Zahara, that we must seek for that illimitable and stormy ocean of overwhelming sand, which we associate with the popular idea of the desert.

The sun was nearly setting when an Arab horseman, armed with his long lance, was suddenly observed on an eminence in the distance. He galloped towards us, wheeled round and round, scudded away, again approached, and our guide, shouting, rode forward to meet him. They entered into earnest conversation, and then joined us. Abdallah, the guide, informed me that this was an Arab of the tribe I intended to visit, and that we were very near their encampment.

The desert was here broken into bushy knolls, which limited the view. Advancing and mounting the low ridge on which we had at first observed the Bedouin, Abdallah pointed out to me, at no great distance, a large circle of low black tents, which otherwise I might not have observed, or have mistaken them in the deceptive twilight for some natural formation. On the left of the encampment was a small grove of palm trees, and when he had nearly gained the settlement, a procession of women in long blue robes, covering with one hand their faces with their veils, and with the other supporting on their heads a tall and classically formed vase, advanced with a beautiful melody, to the fountain, which was screened by the palm trees.

The dogs barked, some dark faces and long matchlocks suddenly popped up behind the tents. The Bedouin, with a shout, galloped into the encampment, and soon reappeared with several of his tribe. We dismounted. I entered into the interior court of the camp, which was filled with camels and goats. There were few persons visible, although as I was conducted along to the tent of the chief, I detected many faces staring at me from behind the curtains of their tents. The pavilion of the sheikh was of considerable size. He himself was a man advanced in years, but hale and lively; his long white beard curiously contrasting with his dark visage. He received me sitting on a mat, his son standing on his right hand, without his slippers, and a young grandchild squatting by his side.

He welcomed me with the usual oriental salutation, touching his forehead, his mouth, and his heart, while he exclaimed, "Salam;" thus indicating that all his faculties and feelings were devoted to me. He motioned that we should seat ourselves on the unoccupied mats, and taking from his mouth a small pipe of date wood, gave it to his son to bear to me. A servant instantly began pounding coffee. I then informed him, through Abdallah, that having heard of his hospitality and happy life, I had journeyed even from Damascus to visit him; that I greatly admired the Bedouin character, and I eulogized their valour, their independence, their justice, and their simplicity.

He answered that he liked to be visited by Franks, because they were wise men, and requested that I would feel his pulse.

I performed this ceremony with becoming gravity, and inquired whether he were indisposed. He said that he was well, but that he might be better. I told him that his pulse was healthy and strong for one of his age, and I begged to examine his tongue, which greatly pleased him, and he observed that he was eighty years of age, and could ride as well, and as long as his son.

Coffee was now brought. I ventured to praise it. He said it was well for those who had not wine. I observed that wine was not suited to these climes, and that although a Frank, I had myself renounced it. He answered that the Franks were fond of wine, but that for his part he had never tasted it, although he should like once.

I regretted that I could not avail myself of this delicate hint, but Lausanne produced a bottle of eau de Cologne, and I offered him a glass. He drank it with great gravity, and asked for some for his son, observing it was good raki, but not wine. I suspected from this that he was not totally unacquainted with the flavour of the forbidden liquor, and I dared to remark with a smile that raki had one advantage over wine, that it was not forbidden by the prophet. Unlike the Turks, who never understand a jest, he smiled, and then said that the book (meaning the Koran) was good for men who lived in cities, but that God was everywhere.

Several men now entered the tent, leaving their slippers on the outside, and some saluting the sheikh as they passed, seated themselves.

I now inquired after horses, and asked him whether he could assist me in purchasing some of the true breed. The old sheikh's eyes sparkled as he informed me that he possessed four mares of pure blood, and that he would not part with one, not even for fifty thousand piastres. After this hint I was inclined to drop the subject, but the sheikh seemed interested by it, and inquired if the Franks had any horses?

I answered that some Frank nations were famous for their horses, and mentioned the English, who had bred a superb race from the Arabs. He said he had heard of the English, and asked me which was the greatest nation of the Franks? I told him there were several equally powerful, but perhaps that the English nation might be fairly described as the most important. He answered, "Ay! on the sea, but not on the land."

I was surprised by the general knowledge indicated by this remark, and more so when he further observed that there was another nation stronger by land. I mentioned the Russians. He had not heard of them, notwithstanding the recent war with

the Porte. The French? I inquired. He knew the French, and then told me he had been at the siege of Acre, which explained all this intelligence. He then inquired if I were an Englishman? I told him my country, but was not astonished that he had never heard of it. I observed that when the old man spoke, he was watched by his followers with the greatest attention, and they grinned with pride and exultation at his knowledge of the Franks, showing their white teeth, elevating their eyes, and exchanging looks of wonder.

Two women now entered the tent, at which I was surprised. They had returned from the fountain, and wore small black masks, which covered the upper part of their face. They knelt down at the fire, and made a cake of bread, which one of them handed to me. I now offered to the sheikh my own pipe, which Lausanne had prepared. Coffee was again handed, and a preparation of sour milk and rice, not unpalatable.

I offered the sheikh renewed compliments on his mode of life, in order to maintain conversation; for the chief, although like the Arabs in general, of a very lively temperament, had little of the curiosity of what are considered the more civilized orientals, and asked very few questions.

"We are content," said the sheikh.

"Then, believe me, you are in the condition of no other people," I replied.

"My children," said the sheikh, "hear the words of the wise man! If we lived with the Turks," continued the chieftain, "we should have more gold and silver, and more clothes, and carpets, and baths; but we should not have justice and liberty. Our luxuries are few, but our wants are less."

"Yet you have neither priests nor lawyers?"

"When men are pure, laws are useless: when men are corrupt, laws are broken."

"And for priests?"

"God is everywhere."

The women now entered with a more substantial meal, the hump of a young camel. I have seldom eaten any thing more delicate and tender. This dish was a great compliment, and could only have been offered by a wealthy sheikh. Pipes and coffee followed.

The moon was shining brightly when, making my excuses, I quitted the pavilion of the chieftain, and went forth to view the humours of the camp. The tall camels crouching on their knees in groups, with their outstretched necks, and still and melancholy visages, might have been mistaken for works of art, had it not been for the process of rumination. A crowd was assembled round a fire, before which a poet recited impassioned verses. I observed the slight forms of the men, short and meager, agile, dry, and dark, with teeth dazzling white, and quick, black glancing eyes. They were dressed in cloaks of coarse black cloth, apparently of the same stuff as their tents, and few of them, I should imagine, exceeded five feet two or three inches in height. The women mingled with the men, although a few affected to conceal their faces on my approach. They were evidently deeply interested in the poetic recital. One passage excited their loud applause. I inquired its purport of Abdallah, who thus translated it to me. A lover beholds his mistress, her face covered with a red veil. Thus he addresses her.

"O! withdraw that veil, withdraw that red veil! Let me behold the beauty that it shrouds! Yes!

let that rosy twilight fade away, and let the full moon rise to my vision!"

Beautiful! Yet more beautiful in the language of the Arabs, for in that rich tongue there are words to describe each species of twilight, and where we are obliged to have recourse to an epithet, the Arabs reject the feeble and unnecessary aid.

It was late ere I retired, and I stretched myself on my mat, musing over this singular people, who combined primitive simplicity of habits with the most refined feelings of civilization, and who in a great degree appeared to me to offer an evidence of that community of property, and that equality of condition, which have hitherto proved the despair of European sages, and fed only the visions of their fanciful Utopias.

IV.

A SYRIAN village is very beautiful in the centre of a fertile plain. The houses are isolated, and each surrounded by palm trees; the meadows divided by rich plantations of Indian fig, and bounded by groves of olive.

In the distance rose a chain of severe and savage mountains. I was soon wandering, and for hours, in the wild, stony ravines of these shaggy rocks. At length, after several paces, I gained the ascent of a high mountain. Upon an opposite height, descending as a steep ravine, and forming with the elevation on which I rested, a dark and narrow gorge, I beheld a city entirely surrounded, by what I should have considered in Europe an old feudal wall, with towers and gates. The city was built upon an ascent, and, from the height on which I stood, I could discern the terrace and the cupola of almost every house, and the wall upon the other side rising from the plain; the ravine extending only on the side to which I was opposite. The city was in a bowl of mountains. In the front was a magnificent mosque, with beautiful gardens and many light and lofty gates of triumph; a variety of domes and towers rose in all directions from the buildings of bright stone.

Nothing could be conceived more wild, and terrible, and desolate than the surrounding scenery, more dark, and stony, and severe; but the ground was thrown about in such picturesque undulations, that the mind, full of the sublime, required not the beautiful; and rich, and waving woods, and sparkling cultivation would have been misplaced. Except Athens, I had never witnessed any scene more essentially impressive. I will not place this spectacle below the city of Minerva. Athens and the holy city in their glory must have been the finest representations of the beautiful and the sublime—the holy city, for the elevation on which I stood was the Mount of Olives, and the city on which I gazed was JERUSALEM!

V.

THE dark gorge beneath me was the vale of Jehoshaphat; farther on, was the fountain of Siloah. I entered by the gate of Bethlehem, and sought hospitality at the Latin convent of Terra Santa.

Easter was approaching, and the city was crowded with pilgrims. I had met many caravans in my progress. The convents of Jerusalem are remarkable. That of the Armenian Christians, at this time, afforded accommodation for four thousand

pilgrims. It is a town of itself, and possesses within its walls streets and shops. The Greek convent held perhaps half as many. And the famous Latin convent of Terra Santa, endowed by all the monarchs of Catholic Christendom, could boast only of one pilgrim—myself! The Europeans have ceased to visit the holy sepulchre.

As for the interior of Jerusalem, it is hilly and clean. The houses are of stone, and well built, but, like all Asiatic mansions, they offer nothing to the eye but blank walls and dull portals. The mosque I had admired was the famous Mosque of Omar, built upon the supposed site of the temple. It is perhaps the most beautiful of Mohammedan temples; but the Frank, even in the Eastern dress, will enter it at the risk of his life. The Turks of Syria have not been contaminated by the heresies of their enlightened sultan. In Damascus, it is impossible to appear in the Frank dress without being pelted; and although they would condescend, perhaps, at Jerusalem, to permit an infidel dog to walk about in his national dress, he would not escape many a curse, and many a scornful expression of "Giaour!" There is only one way to travel in the East with ease, and that is with an appearance of pomp. The Turks are much influenced by the exterior, and although they are not mercenary, a well-dressed and well-attended infidel will command respect.

VI.

THE church of the Holy Sepulchre is nearly in the middle of the city, and professedly built upon Mount Calvary, which it is alleged was levelled for the structure. Within its walls they have contrived to assemble the scenes of a vast number of incidents in the life of the Saviour, with a highly romantic violation of the unity of the place. Here the sacred feet were anointed, there the sacred garments parcelled, from the pillar of the scourging to the rent of the rock, all is exhibited in a succession of magical scenes. The truth is, the whole is an ingenious imposture of a comparatively recent date, and we are indebted to that favoured individual, the Empress Helen, for this exceedingly clever creation, as well as for the discovery of the true cross. The learned believe, and with reason, that Calvary is at present, as formerly, without the walls, and that we must seek for this celebrated elevation in the lofty hill now called Sion.

The church is a spacious building, surrounded by a dome. Attached to it are the particular churches of the various Christian sects, and many chapels and sanctuaries. Mass in some part or other is constantly celebrating, and companies of pilgrims may be observed in all directions visiting the holy places, and offering their devotions. Latin, and Armenian, and Greek friars are everywhere moving about. The court is crowded with the venders of relics and rosaries. The church of the Sepulchre itself is a point of common union, and in its bustle and lounging character, rather reminded me of an exchange than a temple.

One day as I was pacing up and down this celebrated building, in conversation with a very ingenious Neapolitan friar, experienced in the East, my attention was attracted by one who, from his sumptuous dress, his imposing demeanour, self-satisfied air, and the coolness with which, in a Christian temple, he waved in his hand a rosary

of Mecca, I for a moment considered a Moslem. "Is it customary for the Turks to visit this place?" I inquired, drawing the attention of my companion to the stranger.

"The stranger is not a Turk," answered the friar, "though I fear I cannot call him a Christian. It is Marigny, a French traveller. Do you not know him? I will introduce you. He is a man of distinguished science, and has resided some months in this city, studying Arabic."

We approached him, and the friar made us acquainted.

"Salem Aleikoum! Count. Here at least is no Inquisition. Let us enjoy ourselves. How mortifying, my good brother Antony, that you cannot burn me!"

The friar smiled, and was evidently used to this rillery.

"I hope yet to behold the Kaaba," said Marigny, "it is at least more genuine than any thing we here see."

"Truth is not truth to the false," said Brother Antony.

"What, you reason!" exclaimed Marigny, "Stick to faith and infallibility, my good friend Antonio. I have just been viewing the rent in the rock. It is a pity, holy father, that I have discovered that it is against the grain."

"The greater the miracle," said the friar.

"Bravo! you deserve to be a bishop."

"The church has no fear of just reasoners," observed Brother Antony.

"And is confuted, I suppose, only by the unjust," rejoined Marigny.

"Man without religion is a wild beast," remarked the friar.

"Which religion?" inquired Marigny.

"There is only one true religion," said Brother Antony.

"Exactly; and in this country, Master Antony remember you are an infidel."

"And you, they say, are a Moslem."

"They say wrong. I believe in no human revelation, because it obtrudes the mind of another man into my body, and must destroy morality, which can only be discovered by my own intelligence."

"All is divine revelation," said a stranger who joined us.

"Ah! Werner," said Marigny, "you see we are at our old contests."

"All is divine revelation," repeated Werner, "for all comes from God."

"But what do you mean by God?"

"I mean the great luminous principle of existence, the first Almighty Cause from whom we are emanations, and in whose essence we shall again mingle."

"I asked for bread and you give me a stone. I asked for a fact, and you give me a word. I cannot annex an idea to what you say. Until my Creator gift me with an intelligence that can comprehend the idea of his existence, I must conclude that he does not desire that I should busy myself about it."

"That idea is implanted in our breasts," said Werner.

"Innate!" exclaimed Marigny, with a sneer.

"And why not innate?" replied Werner, solemnly. "Is it impossible for the Great Being who created us, to create us with a sense of his existence?"

"Listen to these philosophers," said Brother Antony; "I never heard two of them agree. I must go to mass."

"Mr. Werner and myself, count," said Marigny, "are about to smoke a pipe with Besso, a rich Hebrew merchant here. He is one of the finest-hearted fellows in the world, and generous as he is rich. Will you accompany us? You will greatly honour him, and find in his divan some intelligent society."

VII.

MARIGNY was a skeptic, and an absolute materialist, yet he was influenced by noble views, for he had devoted his life to science, and was now, at his own charge, about to penetrate into the interior of Africa, by Sennaar. Werner was a German divine, and a rationalist, tauntingly described by his companion as a devout Christian, who did not believe in Christianity. Yet he had resided in Palestine and Egypt nearly four years, studying their language and customs, and accumulating materials for a history of the miraculous creed whose miracles he explained. Both were men of remarkable intellectual powers, and the ablest champions of their respective systems.

I accompanied these new acquaintances to the house of Besso, and was most hospitably received and sumptuously entertained. I have seldom met a man with more easy manners and a more gracious carriage than Besso, who, although sincere in his creed, was the least bigoted of his tribe. He introduced us to his visiter, his friend, and correspondent, Sheriff Effendi, an Egyptian merchant, and who fortunately spoke the lingua Franca with facility. The other guest was an Englishman, by name Benson, a missionary, and a very learned, pious, and acute man.

Such was the party in whose society I generally spent a portion of my day during my residence at Jerusalem, and I have often thought, that were the conversations to which I have there listened recorded, a volume might be sent forth of more wit and wisdom than are now usually met with. The tone of discussion was, in general, metaphysical and scientific, varied with speculations principally on African travel, a subject with which Sheriff Effendi was well acquainted. In metaphysics, sharp were the contests between Benson, Marigny, and Werner, and on all sides ably maintained. I listened to them with great interest. Besso smiled, and Sheriff Effendi shrugged his shoulders.

Understanding this mild and intelligent Moslem in a few days about to join the caravan over the desert through Gaza to Egypt, I resolved to accompany him. I remember well that on the eve of our departure, one of those metaphysical discussions arose in which Marigny delighted. When it terminated, he proposed, that as our agreeable assembly was soon about to disperse, each of us should inscribe, on a panel of the wall, some sentence as a memorial of his sojourn.

Benson wrote first, "*For us in Adam all die, so in Christ all men shall be made alive.*"

Werner wrote, "*Glory to Christ! The supernatural has destroyed the natural.*"

Marigny wrote, "*Knowledge is human.*"

Besso wrote, "*I will not believe in those who must believe in me.*"

Sheriff Effendi wrote, "*God is great. Man should be charitable.*"

Contarini Fleming wrote, "*Time.*"

These are the words that were written in the house of Besso, the Hebrew, residing at Jerusalem, near the gate of Sion. Amen! Travel teaches toleration

VIII.

PERCHANCE, while I am writing these pages, some sage may be reading, in the once mysterious inscriptions of the most ancient of people, some secret which may change the foundations of human knowledge. Already the chronology of the world assumes a new aspect, already in the now intelligible theology of Egypt, we have discovered the origin of Grecian polytheism, already we have penetrated beyond the delusive veil of Ptolemaic transmutation: Isis has yielded to Athor, and Osiris to Kneph. The scholar discards the Grecian nomenclature of Sesostris and Memnon. In the temples of Carnac, he discovers the conquests of Rameses, and in the palaces of Medinet Abou, the refined civilization of Amenoph.

Singular fate of modern ages, that beneficent Omnipotence has willed, that for all our knowledge, we should be indebted to the most insignificant of ancient states. Our divine instruction is handed down to us by an Arabian tribe, and our profane learning flows only from the clans of the Ægean!

Where are the records of the great Assyrian monarchy? Where are the books of the Medes and Persians? Where the learned annals of the Pharaohs?

Fortunate Jordan! Fortunate Ilissus! I have waded through the sacred waters; with difficulty, I traced the scanty windings of the classic stream. Alas! for the exuberant Tigris; alas! for the mighty Euphrates; alas! for the mysterious Nile!

A river is suddenly found flowing through the wilderness; its source is unknown. On one side are interminable wastes of sand; on the other a rocky desert and a narrow sea. Thus it rolls on for five hundred miles, throwing up on each side, to the extent of about three leagues, a soil fertile as a garden. Within a hundred and fifty miles of the sea it divides into two branches, which wind through an immense plain, once the granary of the world. Such is Egypt!

From the cataracts of Nubia to the gardens of the Delta, in a course of twelve hundred miles, the banks of the Nile are covered at slight intervals with temples and catacombs, pyramids and painted chambers. The rock temples of Ipsambol, guarded by colossal forms, are within the roar of the second cataract: avenues of sphinxes lead to Derr, the chief town of Nubia: from Derr to the first cataract, the Egyptian boundary, a series of rock temples conduct to the beautiful and sacred buildings of Philæ: Edfou and Esneh are a fine preparation for the colossal splendour and the massy grace of ancient Thebes.

Even after the inexhaustible curiosity and varied magnificence of this unrivalled record of ancient art, the beautiful Dendera, consummate blending of Egyptian imagination and Grecian taste, will command your enthusiastic gaze; and if the catacombs of Siout, and the chambers of Benihasan prove less fruitful of interest after the tombs of the kings, and the cemeteries of Gornou, before you are the obelisks of Memphis, and the pyramids of Gizeh, Saccarah, and Dashour!

IX.

THE traveller who crosses the desert, and views the Nile with its lively villages, clustered in groves of palm, and its banks entirely lined with that graceful tree, will bless with sincerity "The Father of Waters." 'Tis a rich land, and indeed flowing with milk and honey. The Delta, in its general appearance, somewhat reminded me of Belgium. The soil everywhere is a rich black mud, without a single stone. The land is so uniformly flat, that those who arrive by sea do not detect it until within half a dozen miles, when a palm tree creeps upon the horizon, and then you observe the line of land that supports it. The Delta is intersected by canals which are filled with the rising Nile. It is by their medium, and not by the absolute overflowing of the river, that the country is periodically deluged.

The Arabs are gay, witty, vivacious, and very susceptible and acute. It is difficult to render them miserable, and a beneficent government might find in them the most valuable subjects. A delightful climate is some compensation for a grinding tyranny. Every night as they row along the moonlit river, the boatmen join in a melodious chorus, shouts of merriment burst from each illumined village, everywhere are heard the sounds of laughter and of music, and wherever you stop you are saluted by the dancing girls. These are always graceful in their craft; sometimes very agreeable in their persons. They are gayly, even richly dressed: in bright colours, with their hair braided with pearls, and their necks and foreheads adorned with strings of gold coin. In their voluptuous dance we at once detect the origin of the boleros, and fandangos, and castanets of Spain.

I admire very much the Arab women. They are very delicately moulded. Never have I seen such twinkling feet, and such small hands. Their complexion is clear, and not dark; their features beautifully formed, and sharply defined; their eyes liquid with passion, and bright with intelligence. The traveller is delighted to find himself in an oriental country where the women are not imprisoned, and scarcely veiled. For a long time I could not detect the reason why I was so charmed with Egyptian life. At last I recollected that I had recurred, after a long estrangement, to the cheerful influence of women.

X.

I FOLLOWED the course of the Nile far into Nubia, and did not stop until I was under the tropic of Cancer. Shortly after quitting Egypt the landscape changes. It is perfectly African; mountains of burning sand, vegetation unnaturally vivid, groves of cocoa trees, groups of crocodiles, and an ebony population in a state of nudity, armed with spears of reeds, and shields of the hippopotamus and the giraffe.

The voyage back was tedious, and I was glad, after so much wandering, to settle down in Cairo.

XI.

CAIRO is situated on the base of considerable hills, whose origin cannot be accounted for, but which are undoubtedly artificial. They are formed by the ruins and the rubbish of long centuries. When I witness these extraordinary formations,

which are not uncommon in the neighbourhood of eastern cities, I am impressed with the idea of the immense antiquity of oriental society.

There is a charm about Cairo, and it is this,—that it is a capital in a desert. In one moment you are in the stream of existence, and in the other in boundless solitude, or, which is still more awful, the silence of tombs. I speak of the sepulchre of the Mamlouk sultans without the city. They form what may indeed be styled a city of the dead an immense necropolis, full of exquisite buildings, domes covered with fret-work, and minarets carved and moulded with rich and elegant fancy. To me, they proved much more interesting than the far-famed pyramids, although their cones in a distance are indeed sublime,—their gray cones soaring in the light blue sky.

The genius that has raised the tombs of the sultans, may also be traced in many of the mosques of the city—splendid specimens of Saracenic architecture. In gazing upon these brilliant creations, and also upon those of ancient Egypt, I have often been struck by the felicitous system which they display, of ever forming the external ornaments by inscriptions. How far excelling the Grecian and Gothic method! Instead of a cornice of flowers, or an entablature of unmeaning fancy, how superior to be reminded of the power of the Creator, or the necessity of government, the deeds of conquerors, or the discoveries of arts!

XII.

IT was in these solitary rides in the Desert of Cairo, and in these lone wanderings amid the tombs of the sultans, that I first again felt the desire of composition. My mind appeared suddenly to have returned. I became restless, disquieted. I found myself perpetually indulging in audible soliloquy, and pouring forth impassioned monologues. I was pleased with the system of oriental life, and the liberty in which in Egypt Franks can indulge. I felt no inclination to return to Europe, and I determined to cast my lot in this pleasant and fruitful land. I had already spent in Cairo several months, and I now resolved to make it my permanent residence, when I received strange letters from my father. I style them strange, for there breathed throughout a tone of melancholy which with him was quite unusual, and which perplexed me. He complained of ill-health, and expressed a hope that my wanderings were drawing to a close, and that we might again meet. I had been nearly six years absent. Was it possible? Was it indeed six years since I stood upon Mount Jura? And yet in that time how much had happened! How much had I seen, and felt, and learned! What violent passions, what strange countries, what lively action, and what long meditation!

Strange as may have appeared my conduct to my father, I loved him devotedly. An indication of sentiment on his part ever called forth all my latent affection. It was the conviction from which I could never divest myself, that he was one who could spare no portion of his sense for the softer feelings, and that his conduct to me was rather in accordance with the system of society than instigated by what I should consider the feelings of a father—it was this conviction that had alone permitted me so long to estrange myself from his

hearth. But now he called me back, and almost in sorrow. I read his letter over and over again, dwelt on all its affection, and on all its suppressed grief. I felt an irresistible desire to hasten to him without a moment's delay. I longed to receive his blessing and his embrace.

I quitted Cairo. The Mahmadie canal was not yet open. I was obliged, therefore, to sail to Rossetto. Thence I crossed the desert in a constant mirage, and arrived at the famous Alexandria. In this busy port I was not long in finding a ship. One was about to sail for Ancona. I engaged a passage, and soon the palms and sands of Egypt vanished from my sight.

XIII.

OUR passage was tedious. The captain was afraid of pirates, and, alarmed in the night, suddenly changed his course, and made for the Barbary coast, by which we lost our wind. We were becalmed off Candia. I once more beheld Mount Ida.

I induced the captain to run into port. I landed once more on that fatal coast. The old consul and his family were still there, and received me with a kindness which reminded me of our first happy meeting. I slept in the same chamber. I woke in the morning—the sun was still shining, the bright plants still quivering in its beams. But the gazelle had gone—the white gazelle had died. And my gazelle—where was she?

I beheld our home—our once happy home. Spiro only was with me, and his family came forth with joy to greet him. I left them. I hastened with tremulous steps to the happy valley. I passed by the grove of orange trees. My strength deserted me. I leaned, nearly fainting, against a tree. At last, I dared to advance a step, and look forward.

I beheld it. Yes! I beheld it, green and verdant, and covered with white roses, but I dared not approach. I wafted it a kiss and a blessing, and rushed like a madman to the shore.

At Ancona, I entered the lazaretto to perform a long quarantine. I instantly wrote to my father, and I despatched a courier to my banker at Florence. I received from him, in a few days, a packet. I opened it with a sad foreboding. A letter in my father's handwriting reassured me. I tore it open—I read.

XIV.

"My beloved Contarini, the hand of death is upon me. Each day my energies decrease. I can conceal from others, but not from myself, my gradual, but certain decay. We shall not meet again, my child—I have a deep conviction we shall not meet again. Yet I would not die without expressing to you my love, without yielding to feelings which I have too long suppressed.

"Child of my affections! receive my blessing. Offspring of my young passion! let me press you, in imagination, to my lone bosom!

"Ah! why are you not with me? why is not my hand in yours? There is much to say—more, more than I can ever express—yet, I must write, for I would not die without my son doing justice to his father.

"As a child, you doubted my love—as a man,

in spite of all your struggles, I am conscious you never divested yourself of the agonizing idea. O, my Contarini, what is this life, this life of error, and misconception, and woe!

"My feeble pen trembles in my hand. There is much, there is much to write, much, alas! that never can be written. Why are we parted?

"You think me cold—you think me callous—you think me a hollow-hearted worldling. O! my Contarini, recall the doubt and misery of your early years, and all your wild thoughts, and dark misgivings, and vain efforts—recall all these, and behold the boyhood of your father!

"I, too, believed myself a poet—I, too, aspired to emancipate my kind—I, too, looked forward to a glorious future, and the dazzling vista of eternal fame. The passions of my heart were not less violent than yours, and not less ardent was my impetuous love.

"Wo! wo! the father and the son have been alike stricken. I know all, my Contarini—I know all, my sweet, sweet child. I would have saved you from the bitter lot—I alone would have borne the deep despair.

"Was she fair, my Contarini? Was she beautiful? Alas! there was once one as bright and as glorious—you knew not your mother.

"I can remember the day but as yesterday when I first gazed upon the liquid darkness of her eye. It was at that fatal city I will not name—horrible Venice!

"I found her surrounded by a thousand slaves—I won her from amid this band—against the efforts and opposition of all her family, I won her. Yes! she was my bride—the beautiful daughter of this romantic land—a land to which I was devoted, and for which I would have perilled my life. Alas! I perilled my love! My imagination was fired by that wondrous and witching city. My love of freedom, my hatred of oppression, burned each day with a brighter and more vehement flame. I sighed over its past glory and present degradation, and when I mingled my blood with the veins of Contarini, I vowed I would revive the glory they had themselves created.

"Venice was at that time under the yoke of the French. The recollection of the republic was still fresh in men's minds; the son of the last doge was my relative and my friend. Unhappy Pasmualigo! thy memory demands a tear.

"We conspired. Even now my blood seems to flow with renewed force, when I recall the excitement of our secret meetings in the old Palazzo Contarini, on the Grand Lagune. How often has daylight on the waters reminded us of our long counsels!

"We were betrayed. Timely information permitted me to escape. I bore away my wife. We reached Mantua in safety. Perhaps it was the agitation of the event and the flight—since the tragedy of Candia, I have sometimes thought it might have been a constitutional doom. But that fatal night—why, why recall it? We have both alike suffered. No, no, not alike—for I had my child.

"My child, my darling child, even now your recollection maintains me, even now my cheek warms as I repose upon the anticipation of your glory.

"I will not dwell upon what I now endured. Alas! I cannot leave it to your imagination. Your reality has taught you all. I roved a madman amid the mountains of the Tyrol. But you were with

me, my child, you were with me, and I looked upon your mild and pensive eyes, and the wildness of my thoughts died away.

"I recurred to those hopes of poetic fame which had soothed the dull wretchedness of my boyhood. Alas! no flame from heaven descended on my lyre. I experienced only mortification, and so complete was my wretchedness, so desolate my life, so void of hope and cheerfulness, and even the prospect of that common ease that the merest animals require, that had it not been for you, I would have freed myself from the indescribable burthen of my existence. My hereditary estates were confiscated; my friends, like myself, were in exile. We were, in fact, destitute, and I had lost all confidence in my energies.

Thus wo-begone, I entered Vienna, where, fortunately, I found a friend. Mingling in the artificial society of that refined city, those excited feelings, fed by my strange adventures and solitary life, subsided. I began to lose what was peculiar in me, and share much that was general. Worldly feelings sprang up. Some success brought back my confidence. I believed that I was not destitute of power, but had only mistaken its nature. It was a political age. A great theatre seemed before me. I had ever been ambitious. I directed my desires in a new channel, and I determined to be a statesman.

"I had attracted the attention of the Austrian minister. I became his secretary. You know the rest.

"I resolved that my child should be happy. I desired to save him from the misery that clouded my own youth. I would have preserved him from the tyranny of impetuous passions, and the harrowing wo that awaits an ill-regulated mind. I observed in him a dangerous susceptibility that alarmed me. I studied to prevent the indulgence of his feelings. I was kind, but I was calm. His imaginative temperament did not escape me. I perceived only hereditary weakness, and would have prevented hereditary wo. It was my aim to make him a practical man. O! Contarini, it was the anxiety of affection that prevented me from doing justice to your genius.

"My son, my child, my only beloved, could I but once press you in my arms, I should die happy. And even now the future supports me, and I feel the glory of your coming fame irradiating my tomb.

"Why, why cannot we meet? I could say so much, although I would say only I loved you. The pen falls from my hand, the feeble pen, that has signified nothing. Imagine what I would express, my Contarini—love me, love me. Cherish my memory while you receive my blessing."

"Let me fly, let me fly to him instantly!" was my exclamation. I felt the horrors of my imprisonment. I wrung my hands, and stamped from helplessness. There was a packet. I opened it—a lock of rich, dark hair, whose colour was not strange to me, and a beautiful miniature, that seemed a portrait of my beloved, yet I gazed upon the countenance of my mother.

XV.

THERE was yet a letter from my banker, which I long neglected to open. I opened it at last, and learned the death of my remaining parent.

The age of tears was past. That relief was denied me. I looked up to heaven in despair. I flew to a darkened chamber. I buried my face in my hands, and, lone and speechless, I delivered myself up for days to the silent agony of the past.

PART THE SEVENTH.

I.

I LEANED against a column of the temple of Castor. On one side was the palace of the Cæsars; on the other, the colossal amphitheatre of Vespasian. Arches of triumph, the pillars of Pagan temples, and the domes of Christian churches, rose around me. In the distance was the wide Campagna, the Claudian Aqueduct, and the Alban Mount.

Solitude and silence reigned on that sacred road once echoing with the shouts and chariots of three hundred triumphs—solitude and silence, meet companions of imperial desolation! Where are the spoils of Egypt and of Carthage? Where the golden tribute of Iberia? Where the long Gallic trophies? Where are the rich armour and massy cups of Macedon? Where are the pictures and statues of Corinth? Where the libraries of Athens? Where is the broken bow of Parthia? Where the elephants of Pontus, and the gorgeous diadems of the Asian kings?

And where is Rome! All nations rose and flourished only to swell her splendour, and now I stand amid her ruins.

In such a scene, what are our private griefs and petty sorrows? And what is man? I felt my nothingness. Life seemed flat, and dull, and trifling. I could not conceive that I could again become interested in its base pursuits. I believed that I could no longer be influenced by joy or by sorrow. Indifference alone remained.

A man clambered down the steep of the Palatine. It was Winter, flushed and eager from a recent excavation.

"What, count," he exclaimed, "moralizing in the forum!"

"Alas! Winter, what is life?"

"An excellent thing, as long as one can discover as pretty a Torso as I have stumbled upon this morning."

"A Torso! a maimed memorial of the past. The very name is melancholy."

"What is the past to me? I am not dead. You may be. I exist in the present."

"The vanity of the present overpowers me."

"Pooh! I will tell you what, my friend, the period has arrived in your life when you must renounce meditation. Action is now your part. Meditation is culture. It is well to think until a man have discovered his genius, and developed his faculties, but then let him put his intelligence in motion. Act, act, act; act without ceasing, and you will no longer talk of the vanity of life."

"But how am I to act?"

"Create. Man is made to create, from the poet to the potter."

II.

MY father bequeathed me his entire property which was more considerable than I had imagined,

the countess and her children being amply provided for by her own estate. In addition to this, I found that he had claimed in my favour the Contarini estates, to which, independent of the validity of my marriage, I was entitled through my mother. After much litigation, the question had been decided in my behalf a few months before my return to Italy. I found myself, therefore, unexpectedly, a very rich man. I wrote to the countess, and received from her a very affectionate reply; nor should I omit that I was honoured by an autograph letter of condolence from the king, and an invitation to re-enter his service.

As I was now wearied with wandering, and desirous of settling down in life, and as I had been deprived of those affections which render home delightful, I determined to find, in the creations of art, some consolation and some substitute for that domestic bliss, which I value above all other blessings. I resolved to create a paradise.

I purchased a large estate in the vicinity of Naples, with a palace and beautiful gardens. I called in the assistance of the first artists in the country, and I availed myself, above all, of the fine taste of my friend Winter. The palace was a Palladian pile, built upon a stately terrace covered with orange and citron trees, and to which you ascended by broad flights of marble steps. The formation of the surrounding country was highly picturesque; hills beautifully peaked or undulating, richly wooded, covered with the cypress and the ilex, and crowned with the stone pine. Occasionally you caught a glimpse of the blue sea and the brilliant coast.

Upon the terrace, on each side of the portal, I have placed a colossal sphinx, which were excavated when I was at Thebes, and which I was fortunate enough to purchase. They are of cream-coloured granite, and as fresh and sharp as if they were finished yesterday. There is a soft majesty and a serene beauty in the countenances, which are very remarkable.

It is my intention to build in these beautiful domains a Saracenic palace, which my oriental collections will befit, but which I hope also to fill with the masterpieces of Christian art. At present, in a gallery, I have placed some fine specimens of the Venetian, Roman, and Eclectic schools, and have ranged between them copies in marble, by Bertolini, of the most celebrated ancient statues. In one cabinet by itself is the gem of my collection, a Magdalen, by Murillo, and in another, a sleeping Cupid, by Canova, over which I have contrived by a secret light to throw a rosy flush, that invests the ideal beauty of the sculptor with still more ideal life. At the end of the gallery I have placed the portraits of my father and of my mother; the latter copied by an excellent artist from the miniature. Between them is a frame of richly carved ivory,

enclosing a black velvet veil, studded with white roses, worked in pearls.

Around me, I hope in time to create a scene which may rival in beauty and variety, although not in extent, the villa of Hadrian, whom I have always considered the most sumptuous and accomplished character of antiquity. I have already commenced the foundation of a tower which shall rise at least one hundred and fifty feet, and which I trust will equal in the beauty of design, and the solidity of the masonry, the most celebrated works of antiquity. This tower I shall dedicate to the future, and I intend that it shall be my tomb.

Lausanne has married, and will never quit me. He has promised also to form a band of wind instruments, a solace necessary to solitude. Winter is my only friend and my only visitor. He is a great deal with me, and has a studio in the palace. He is so independent, that he often arrives and quits it without my knowledge; yet I never converse with him without pleasure.

Here let me pass my life in the study and the creation of the beautiful. Such is my desire; but whether it will be my career is, I feel, doubtful. My interest in the happiness of my race is too keen to permit me for a moment to be blind to the storms that lower on the horizon of society. Perchance also the political regeneration of the country to which I am devoted may not be distant, and in that great work I am resolved to participate. Bitter jest, that the most civilized portion of the globe should be considered incapable of self-government!

When I examine the state of the European society with the unimpassioned spirit which the philosopher can alone command, I perceive that it is in a state of transition—a state of transition from feudal to federal principles. This I conceive to be the sole and secret cause of all the convulsions that have occurred, and are to occur.

Circumstances are beyond the control of man; but his conduct is in his own power. The great event is as sure as that I am now penning this prophecy of its occurrence. With us it rests whether it shall be welcomed by wisdom or by ignorance—whether its beneficent results shall be accelerated by enlightened minds, or retarded by our dark passions.

What is the arch of the conqueror, what the laurel of the poet! I think of the infinity of space, I feel my nothingness. Yet if I am to be remembered, let me be remembered as one who, in a sad night of gloomy ignorance and savage bigotry, was prescient of the flaming morning-break of bright philosophy,—as one who deeply sympathized with his fellow-men, and felt a proud and profound conviction of their perfectibility,—as one who devoted himself to the amelioration of his kind, by the destruction of error, and the propagation of truth.

THE
WONDROUS TALE OF ALROY.
AND
THE RISE OF ISKANDER.

WONDROUS TALE OF ALROY.

TO

* * * * *

SWEET sister! as I wandered on the mountains of Sion, behold! a gazelle came bounding o'er the hills! It perceived me, it started back, it gazed at me with trembling surprise. Ah! fear not! fair creature, I fondly exclaimed, fear not, and flee not away! I too have a gazelle in a distant land; not less beautiful her airy form than thine, and her dark eye not less tremulously bright.

Ah! little did I deem, my sweetest friend, that ere I pressed that beauteous form again, sorrow should dim the radiance of thy smile, and charge that brilliant eye with many a tear! Yet trust thee, dearest, in a brother's love, the purest sympathy of our fallen state! If I recall one gleam of rapture to thy pensive cheek, not in vain I strike my lonely lyre, or throw these laurels at thy fairy feet!

PREFACE.

THE time of this Romance is the twelfth century. At that period, this was the political condition of the East.

The caliphate was in a state of rapid decay. The Seljukian sultans, who had been called to the assistance of the commanders of the faithful, had become, like the mayors of the palace in France, the real sovereigns of the empire. They had carved four kingdoms out of the dominions of the successors of the prophet, which conferred titles on four Seljukian princes, to wit, the sultan of Bagdad, the sultan of Persia, the sultan of Syria, and the sultan of Roum, or Asia Minor.

But these warlike princes, in the relaxed discipline and doubtful conduct of their armies, began themselves to evince the natural effects of luxury and indulgence. They were no longer the same invincible and irresistible warriors who had poured forth from the shores of the Caspian over the fairest regions of the East, and although they still contrived to preserve order in their dominions, they witnessed, with ill-concealed apprehension, the rising power of the kings of Karasme, whose conquests daily made their territories more contiguous.

With regard to the Hebrew people, it should be known that after the destruction of Jerusalem, the eastern Jews, while they acknowledged the supremacy of their conquerors, gathered themselves together for all purposes of jurisdiction, under the control of a native ruler, an asserted descendant of David, whom they dignified with the title of "The Prince of the Captivity." If we are to credit the enthusiastic annalists of this imaginative people, there were periods of prosperity when "the princes of the captivity" assumed scarcely less state, and enjoyed scarcely less power than the ancient kings of Judah themselves. Certain it is that their power increased always in an exact proportion with the weakness of the caliphate, and without doubt in some of the most distracted periods of the Arabian

rule, the Hebrew princes rose into some degree of local and temporary importance. Their chief residence was Bagdad, where they remained until the eleventh century, an age fatal in oriental history, and from the disasters of which "the princes of the captivity" were not exempt. They are heard of even in the twelfth century. I have ventured to place one at Hamadan, a favourite residence of the Hebrews, from being the burial place of Esther and Mordecai.

In this state of affairs arose Alroy, a name perhaps unknown to the vast majority of my readers; yet, if I mistake not, a memorable being, and the dry record of whose marvellous career I have long considered as enveloping the richest materials of poetic fiction.

With regard to the supernatural machinery of this romance, it is cabalistical and correct. From the spirits of the tombs to the sceptre of Solomon, authority may be found in the traditions of the Hebrews for all these spiritual introductions.

I believe that the character of oriental life is not unfaithfully portrayed in these pages. It has undergone less changes than the genius of the occident. I have had the advantage of studying the Asiatics in their most celebrated countries and capitals. An existence of blended splendour and repose, varied only by fitful starts of extravagant and overwhelming action, and marvellous vicissitudes of fortune, a strong influence of individual character, a blind submission to destiny, imagination, passion, credulity: these are some of the principal features of society in the most favoured regions of the globe.

And now for my style. I must frankly confess that I have invented a new one. I am conscious of the hazard of such innovation, but I have not adopted my system without long meditation, and a severe examination of its qualities. I have in another work already ventured to express my opinion that the age of versification has passed. I have there observed, "The mode of composition must ever be greatly determined by the manner in which the composition can be made public. In ancient days, the voice was the medium by which we became acquainted with the inventions of a poet. In such a method, where those who listened had no time to pause, and no opportunity to think, it was necessary that every thing should be obvious. The audience who were perplexed would soon become wearied. The spirit of ancient poetry, therefore, is rather material than metaphysical. Superficial, not internal; there is much simplicity and much nature, but little passion, and less philosophy. To obviate the baldness, which is the consequence of a style where the subject and the sentiments are rather intertwined than developed, the poem was enriched by music and enforced by action. Occasionally, were

added the enchantment of scenery, and the fascination of the dance. But the poet did not depend merely upon these brilliant accessories. He resolved that his thoughts should be expressed in a manner different from other modes of communicating ideas. He caught a suggestion from his sister art, and invented metre. And in this modulation, he introduced a new system of phrasology, which marked him out from the crowd, and which has obtained the title of 'poetic diction.'

"His object in this system of words was to heighten his meaning by strange phrases, and unusual constructions. Inversion was invented to clothe a commonplace with an air of novelty; vague epithets were introduced to prop up a monotonous modulation; were his meaning to be enforced, he shrank from wearisome ratiocination and the agony of precise conceptions, and sought refuge in a bold personification, or a beautiful similitude. The art of poetry was to express natural feelings in unnatural language.

"Institutions ever survive their purpose, and customs govern us when their cause is extinct. And this mode of communicating poetic invention still remained, when the advanced civilization of man, in multiplying manuscripts, might have made many suspect that the time had arrived when the poet was to cease to sing, and to learn to write. Had the splendid refinement of imperial Rome not been doomed to such rapid decay, and such mortifying and degrading vicissitudes, I believe that versification would have worn out. Unquestionably that empire, in its multifarious population, scenery, creeds and customs, offered the richest materials for emancipated fiction; materials, however, far too vast and various for the limited capacity of metrical celebration.

"That beneficent Omnipotence, before which we must bow down, has so ordered it, that imitation should be the mental feature of modern Europe; and has ordained that we should adopt a Syrian religion, a Grecian literature, and a Roman law. At the revival of letters, we behold the portentous spectacle of national poets communicating their inventions in an exotic form. Conscious of the confined nature of their method, yet unable to extricate themselves from its fatal ties, they sought variety in increased artifice of diction, and substituted for the melody of the lyre, the barbaric clash of rhyme.

"A revolution took place in the mode of communicating thought. Now, at least, it was full time that we should have emancipated ourselves forever from sterile metre. One would have supposed that the poet who could not only write, but even print his inventions, would have felt that it was both useless and unfit that they should be communicated by a process invented when his only medium was simple recitation. One would have supposed, that the poet would have rushed with desire to the new world before him, that he would have seized the new means that permitted him to revel in a universe of boundless invention; to combine the highest ideal creation with the infinite delineation of teeming nature; to unravel all the dark mysteries of our bosoms, and all the bright purposes of our being; to become the great instructor and champion of his species; and not only delight their fancy, and charm their senses, and command their will, but demonstrate their rights, illustrate their necessities, and expound the object of their existence; and all this too in a style charming and changing with its

universal theme, now tender, now sportive; now earnest, now profound; now sublime, now pathetic; and substituting for the dull monotony of metre, the most various, and exquisite, and inexhaustible melody.*"

While I have endeavoured to effect my own emancipation from the trammels of the old style, I do not for a moment flatter myself that the new one, which I offer, combines those rare qualities which I anticipate may be the ultimate result of this revolution. But such as it is, it stands upon its own merits, and may lead abler men to achieve abler consequences.

It has been urged by a very ingenious and elegant critic, when commenting, perhaps with the apprehensive indignation of a versifier, upon the passage which I have quoted, "that the melodies of language are the echoes of the melodies of thought: as in hearing martial music, the step involuntarily takes a stately tread, as to gayer airs, a lighter and more buoyant one; so does the elevated idea take a more noble, or the feelings of tenderness a sweeter tone, than those of ordinary discourse."

I perfectly assent to this remark, which was intended to show "the fallacies" of my system. I do not oppose melody because I oppose verse. Thoughts are not always melodious, ideas always noble, and feelings always tender. The curse of metre is, that it makes all thoughts, ideas, and feelings—all action and all passion alike monotonous, and is at the same time *essentially limited in its capacity of celebration*. As for myself, I never hesitate, although I discard verse, to have recourse to rhythm whenever I consider its introduction desirable, and occasionally even to rhyme. There is no doubt that the style in which I have attempted to write this work is a delicate and difficult instrument for an artist to handle. He must not abuse his freedom. He must alike beware the turgid and the bombastic, the meager and the mean. He must be easy in his robes of state, and a degree of elegance and dignity must accompany him even in the camp and the markethouse. The language must rise gradually with the rising passions of the speakers, and subside in harmonious unison with their sinking emotions.

With regard to the conduct of this tale, it will speedily be observed to be essentially dramatic. Had, indeed, the drama in this country not been a career encompassed with difficulties, I should have made Alroy the hero of a tragedy. But as, at the present day, this is a mode of composition which for any practical effect is almost impossible, I have made him the hero of a dramatic romance. The author, therefore, seldom interferes in the conduct of the story. He has not considered it his duty to step in between the reader and the beings of his imagination, to develop and dwell upon their feelings, or to account for their characters and actions. He leaves them in general to explain every thing for themselves, substituting on his part description for scenery, and occasional bursts of lyric melody for that illustrative music, without which all dramatic representations are imperfect, and which renders the serious opera of the Italians the most effective performance of modern times, and most nearly approaching the exquisite drama of the ancient Greeks.

* Contarini Fleeming.

To the Tale of Aloy I have added the history of a Christian hero placed in a somewhat similar position, but achieving a very different end; and I hope the reader will experience the pleasure of an agreeable contrast in the Rise of the great Iskander.

PART I.

I.

THE cornets sounded a final flourish as the prince of the captivity dismounted from his white mule; his train shouted as if they were once more a people, and had it not been for the contemptuous leer which played upon the countenances of the Moslem bystanders, it might have been taken for a day of triumph rather than of tribute.

"The glory has not departed!" exclaimed the venerable Bostenay, as he entered the hall of his mansion. "It is not as the visit of Sheba unto Solomon; nevertheless the glory has not yet departed. You have done well, faithful Caleb." The old man's courage waxed more vigorous as each step within his own walls the more assured him against the recent causes of his fear—the audible curses and the threatened missiles of the unbelieving mob.

"It shall be a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving," continued the prince; "and look, my faithful Caleb, that the trumpeters be well served. That last flourish was bravely done. It was not as the blast before Jericho; nevertheless it told that the Lord of Hosts was for us. How the accursed Ishmaelites started! Did you mark, Caleb, that tall Turk in green upon my left? By the sceptre of Jacob, he turned pale! O! it shall be a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving! And spare not the wine, nor the flesh-pots for the people. Look you to this, my child, for the people shouted bravely, and with a stout voice. It was not as the great shout in the camp when the ark returned, but, nevertheless, it was boldly done, and showed that the glory had not yet departed. So spare not the wine, my son, and drink to the desolation of Ishmael in the juice which he dare not quaff."

"It has indeed been a great day for Israel!" exclaimed Caleb, echoing his master's exultation.

"Had the procession been forbidden," continued Bostenay, "had it been reserved for me of all the princes to have dragged the accursed tribute upon foot, without trumpets and without guards, by this sceptre, my good Caleb, I really think, that sluggishly as this old blood now runs, I would—but it is needless now to talk—the God of our fathers hath been our refuge."

"Verily, my lord, we were as David in the wilderness of Ziph; but now we are as the Lord's anointed in the stronghold of Engedi!"

"The glory truly has not yet utterly departed," resumed the prince in a more subdued tone; "yet if—I tell you what, Caleb—praise the Lord that you are young."

"My prince may yet live to see the good day."

"Nay, my child, you misinterpret me. Your prince has lived to see the evil day. 'Twas not of the coming that I thought when I bid you praise the Lord because you were young—the more my sin. I was thinking, Caleb, that if your hairs were

as mine, if you could call back like me the days that are gone by—the days when it needed no bribe to prove we were princes—the glorious days when we led captivity captive—I was thinking, I say, my son, what a gainful heritage it is to be born after the joys that have passed away."

"My father lived at Babylon," said Caleb.

"O! name it not!—name it not!" exclaimed the old chieftain. "Dark was the day that we lost that second Sion! We were then also slaves to the Egyptian; but verily we ruled over the realm of Pharaoh. Why, Caleb, Caleb, you who know all—the days of toil—the nights restless as a love-sick boy's, which it has cost your prince to gain permission to grace our tribute day with the paltry presence of half a dozen guards—you who know all my difficulties, who have witnessed all my mortification, what would you say to the purse of dirhems, surrounded by seven thousand cimeters?"

"Seven thousand cimeters!"

"Not one less; my father flourished one."

"It was indeed a great day for Israel!"

"Nay, that is nothing. When old Aloy was prince—old David Aloy—for thirty years, good Caleb—thirty long years we paid no tribute to the caliph."

"No tribute! no tribute for thirty years! What marvel then, my prince, that the Philistines have of late exacted interest?"

"Nay, that is nothing," continued old Bostenay, unmindful of his servant's ejaculations. "When Mactador was caliph, he sent to the same Prince David, to know why the dirhems were not brought up, and David immediately called to horse, and attended by all the chief people rode to the palace, and told the caliph that tribute was an acknowledgment made from the weak to the strong to insure protection and support, and inasmuch as he and his people had just garrisoned the city for ten years against the Seljuks, he held the caliph in arrears."

"We shall see an ass mount a ladder,"* exclaimed Caleb with uplifted eyes of wonder.

"It is true though," continued the prince; "often have I heard my father tell the tale. He was then a child, and his mother held him up to see the procession return, and all the people shouted, 'The sceptre has not gone out of Jacob!'"

"It was indeed a great day for Israel."

"Nay, that is nothing. I could tell you such things! But we prattle; our business is not yet done. You to the people; the widow and the orphan are waiting. Give freely, good Caleb, give freely; the spoils of the Canaanite are no longer ours; nevertheless the Lord is still our God, and, after all, even this is a great day for Israel. And Caleb, Caleb, bid my nephew, David Aloy, know that I would speak with him."

"I will do all promptly, good master! We wondered that our honoured lord, your nephew, went not up with the donation this day."

"Who bid you wonder! Begone, sir! How long are you to idle here!—Away!"

"They wonder he went not up with the tribute to-day. Ay! surely—a common talk. This boy will be our ruin: a prudent hand to wield our shattered sceptre! I have observed him from his infancy; he should have lived in Babylon. The old Aloy blood flows in his veins, a stiff-necked race

When I was a youth his grandsire was my friend; I had some fancies then myself. Dreams, dreams! we have fallen on evil days, and yet we prosper. I have lived long enough to feel a rich caravan, laden with the shawls of India, and the stuffs of Samarcand, if not exactly like dancing before the ark, is still a goodly sight. And our hard-hearted rulers, with all their pride, can they subsist without us? Still we wax rich. I have lived to see the haughty caliph sink into a slave, viler far than Israel. And the victorious and voluptuous Seljuks, even now they tremble at the dim mention of the distant name of Arslan. Yet I, Bostenay, and the frail remnant of our scattered tribes, still we exist, and still, thanks to our God, we prosper. But the age of power has past; it is by prudence now that we must flourish. The jibe, the jest, the curse, perchance the blow, Israel must now bear, and with a calm, or even smiling visage. What then? For every jibe and jest, for every curse, I'll have a dirhem; and every blow—let him look to it who is my creditor, or wills to be so. But see, he comes, my nephew! His grandsire was my friend. He thinks I look upon him now; the same Alroy that was the partner of my boyish hours. And yet that fragile form and girlish face but ill consort with the dark passions, and the dangerous fancies, I fear lie hidden in that tender breast. Well, sir?"

"You want me, uncle?"

"What then? Uncles often want what nephews seldom offer."

"I at least can refuse nothing; for I have naught to give."

"You have a jewel which I greatly covet."

"A jewel! See my chaplet! You gave it me, my uncle; it is yours."

"I thank you. Many a blazing ruby, many a soft and shadowy pearl, and many an emerald glowing like a star in the far desert, I behold, my child. They are choice stones, and yet I miss a jewel far more precious, which, when I gave you this rich chaplet, David, I deemed you did possess."

"How do you call it, sir?"

"Obedience."

"'Tis a word of doubtful import, sir; for to obey, when duty is disgrace, is not a virtue."

"I see you read my thought. In a word, I sent for you to know, wherefore you joined me not to-day in offering—"

"Tribute."

"Be it so: tribute. Why were you absent?"

"Because it was a tribute: I pay none."

"But that the dreary course of seventy winters has not erased the memory of my boyish follies, David, I should esteem you mad. Think you, because I am old, I am enamoured of disgrace, and love a house of bondage. If life were a mere question between freedom and slavery, glory and dishonour, all could decide. Trust me, there needs but little spirit to be a moody patriot in a sullen home, and vent your heroic spleen upon your fellow-sufferers, whose sufferings you cannot remedy. But of such stuff your race were ever made. Such deliverers ever abounded in the house of Alroy. And what has been the result? I found you, and your sister, orphan infants, your sceptre broken, and your tribes dispersed. The tribute, which now at least we pay like princes, was then exacted with the scourge, and offered in chains. I collected our scattered people, I re-established our ancient throne, and this day, which you look upon as a day of lu-

miliation, and of mourning, is rightly considered by all a day of triumph, and of feasting; for has it not proved, in the very teeth of the Ishmaelites, that the sceptre has not yet departed from Jacob?"

"I pray you, uncle, speak not of these things. I would not willingly forget you are my kinsman, and a kind one. Let there be no strife between us. What my feelings are is nothing. They are my own: I cannot change them. And for my ancestors, if they pondered much, and achieved little, why, then, 'twould seem our pedigree is pure, and I am their true son. At least *one* was a hero."

"Ah! the great Alroy; you may well be proud of such an ancestor."

"I am ashamed, uncle,—ashamed, ashamed."

"His sceptre still exists. At least, I have not betrayed him. And this brings me to the real purport of our interview. That sceptre I would return."

"To whom?"

"To its right owner, to yourself."

"O! no, no, no—I pray you, pray you, uncle, I pray you not. I do entreat you, sir, upon my knees, forget I have a right as utterly as I myself disclaim it. That sceptre—you have wielded it wisely and well; I do beseech you keep it. Indeed, good uncle, I have no sort of talent for all the busy duties of this post."

"You sigh for glory, yet you fly from toil."

"Toil without glory is a menial's lot."

"You are a boy; you may yet live to learn that the sweetest lot of life consists in tranquil duties and well-earned repose."

"If my lot be repose, I'll find it in a lair."

"Ah! David, David, there is a wilderness in your temper, boy, that makes me often tremble. You are already too much alone, child. And for this, as well as weightier reasons, I am desirous that you should at length assume the office you inherit. What my poor experience can afford to aid you, as your counsellor, I shall ever proffer; and for the rest, our God will not desert you, an orphan child, and born of royal blood."

"Pr'ythee, no more, kind uncle. I have but little heart to mount a throne, which only ranks me as the first of slaves."

"Pooh, pooh, you are young. Live we like slaves? Is this hall a servile chamber? These costly carpets, and these rich divans, in what proud harem shall we find their match? I feel not like a slave. My coffers are full of dirhems. Is that slavish? The wealthiest company of the caravan is ever Bostenay's. Is that to be a slave? Walk the bazaar of Bagdad, and you will find my name more potent than the caliph's. Is that a badge of slavery?"

"Uncle, you toil for others."

"So do we all, so does the bee, yet he is free and happy."

"At least he has a sting."

"Which he can use but once; and when he stings—"

"He dies, and like a hero. Such a death is sweeter than his honey."

"Well, well, you are young, you are young. I once, too, had fancies. Dreams all, dreams all. I willingly would see you happy, child. Come, let that face brighten; after all, to-day is a great day. If you had seen what I have seen, David, you too would feel grateful. Come, let us feast, let us feast. The Ishmaelite, the accursed child of Hagar, he does confess to-day you are a prince: this day also you

complete your eighteenth year. The custom of our people now requires you should assume the attributes of manhood. To-day, then, your reign commences; and at our festival I will present the elders to their prince. For a while farewell, my child. Array that face in smiles. I shall most anxiously await your presence."

"Farewell, sir."

He turned his head and watched his uncle as he departed; the bitter expression of his countenance gradually melted away as Bostenay disappeared; dejection succeeded to sarcasm; he sighed, he threw himself upon a couch, and buried his face in his hands.

Suddenly he arose, and paced the chamber with an irregular and moody step. He stopped, he leaned against a column. He spoke in a tremulous and smothered voice.

"O! my heart is full of care, and my soul is dark with sorrow! What am I! What is all this! A cloud hangs heavy o'er my life. God of my fathers! let it burst.

"I know not what I feel—yet what I feel is madness. Thus to be, is not to live, if life be what I sometimes dream, and dare to think it might be. To breathe, to feed, to sleep, to wake and breathe again—again to feel existence without hope; if this be life, why then these brooding thoughts that whisper death were better!

"Away! away! The demon tempts me. But to what, to what? What nameless deed shall desecrate this hand! No, no, it must not be; the royal blood of twice two thousand years, it must not die—die like a dream. O! my heart is full of care, and my soul is dark with sorrow!

"Hark! the trumpets that sound our dishonour. O! but that they sounded to battle! Lord of Hosts! Let me conquer or die! Let me conquer like David, or die, Lord, like Saul.

"Ah! were I in the woods once more, a melancholy child! Each flower, that raised its haughty head, should be the turbaned enemy, and I would wave some sword of straw, and find revenge in every blow, that quelled their painted pride.

"'Tis over now; that sweet, sweet prime, when fancy solaced solitude. Yet I am still alone. But how alone! The madness of the past and the despair of the future—are not these the choice companions of my pleasant life!

"I once remember, when a child, I cried to be a man—and now, methinks, I'll sit me down and cry to be a child. Ah! tears of bliss, though shed in sadness, unutterable joys! No more the sunshine of the breast succeeds those freshening showers of grief; light season of my boyish spring, when care was but a mimic game, and wo a wild delusion!

"Behold this chaplet rich and rare; its stones might deck a soldan's brow! Could I but weep, for each bright tear I'd give a flaming gem; could I but weep, for each soft sob I'd yield a lustrous pearl. Alas! the age of tears is o'er, and yet—my heart is full of care, and my soul is dark with sorrow.

"Why do I live! Ah! could the thought that lurks within my secret heart but answer—not the trumpet's blast when echoing on the noisy hills, could speak as loud or clear. The votary of a false idea, I linger in this shadowy life, and feed on silent images which no eye but mine can gaze on, until, at length, they are invested with all terrible circum-

stances of life, and breathe, and act, form a stirring world of fate and beauty, time, and death, and glory. And then from out this dazzling wilderness of deeds I wander forth and wake, and find myself in this dull house of bondage, even as I do now. Horrible! horrible!

"God of my fathers! for indeed I dare not style thee God of their wretched sons—yet by the memory of Sinai let me tell thee that some of the antique blood yet beats within these pulses, and there yet is one who fain would commune with thee face to face—commune and conquer.

"And if the promise unto which we cling be not a cheat, why let him come, come, and come quickly, for thy servant Israel, Lord, is now a slave so infamous, so wo-begone, and so contemned, that even when our fathers hung their harps by the sad waters of the Babylonian stream, why, it were paradise again to what we suffer.

"Alas! they do not suffer; they endure and do not feel. Or by this time our shadowy cherubim would guard again the ark. It is the will that is the father to the deed, and he who broods over some long idea, however wild, will find his dream was but the prophecy of coming fate.

"And even now a vivid flash darts through the darkness of my mind—methinks, methinks—Ah! worst of woes to dream of glory in despair. No, no, I live and die a most ignoble thing; beauty and love, and fame and mighty deeds, the smile of women and the gaze of men, and the ennobling consciousness of worth, and all the fiery course of the creative passions—these are not for me and I, Alroy, the long posterity of sacred kings, and with a soul that pants for empire, I stand here extending my vain arm for my lost sceptre, a most dishonoured slave! And do I still exist? Exist! ay, merrily. Hark! Festivity holds her fair revel in these light-hearted walls. We are gay to-day; and yet ere yon proud sun, whose mighty course was stayed before our swords, that now he even does not deign to shine upon: ere yon proud sun shall, like a hero from a glorious field, enter the bright pavilion of his rest; there shall a deed be done.

"My fathers, my heroic fathers, if this feeble arm cannot redeem thy heritage, if the foul boar must still wallow in thy sweet vineyard, Israel, at least, I'll not disgrace you. No! let me perish. The house of David is no more: no more our sacred seed shall lurk and linger, like a blighted thing in this degenerate earth. If we cannot flourish, why then we'll die!"

"O! say not so, my brother!"

A voice broke on the air, so soft, so sweet, so wildly musical—it sounded like a holy bell upon a summer day, a holy bell that calls to prayer, and stills each fierce emotion.

And softly kneeling at his side behold a female form! Her face is hid, her lips are pressed against the hand she gently steals. And now she raises up her head, and waits with tender patience for a glance from one who seldom smiles.

"O! say not so, my brother!"

He turns, he gazes on a face beauteous as a starry night—a starry night in those fair climes where not a cloud is marked in heaven, where all below on earth's so sweet, and all above in air so still, that every passion melts away, and life seems but a fragrant dream.

I, too, have wandered in those lands, and roamed

'mid Jordan's vocal bowers. Ah! could the nightingale that sang to Syria's rose now sing to me, I'd give the fame of coming years to listen to that lay!

He turns, he gazes, and he bends; his heart is full, his voice is low.

"Ah, Miriam! thou queller of dark spirits! is it thou? Why art thou here?"

"Why am I here? Are you not here? and need I urge a stronger plea? O! brother dear, I pray you come, and mingle in our festival! Our walls are hung with flowers you love;* I culled them by the fountain's side; the holy lamps are trimmed and set, and you must raise their earliest flame. Without the gate my maidens wait to offer you a robe of state. Then, brother dear, I pray you come and mingle in our festival."

"Why should we feast?"

"Ah! is it not in thy dear name these lamps are lit—these garlands hung? To-day to us a prince is given, to-day—"

"A prince without a kingdom."

"But not without *that* which makes kingdoms precious, and which full many a royal heart has sighed for—willing subjects, David."

"Slaves, Miriam, fellow-slaves."

"What we are, my brother, our God has willed; and let us bow and tremble."

"I will not, I cannot tremble."

"Hush, David, hush! It was this haughty spirit that called the vengeance of the Lord upon us."

"It was this haughty spirit that conquered Canaan."

"O! my brother, my dear, dear brother! they told me the dark spirit had fallen on thee, and I came, and hoped thy Miriam might have charmed it. What we have been, Alroy, is a bright dream; and what we may be, at least as bright a hope; and for what we are, thou art my brother. In thy love I find present felicity, and value more thy chance embraces and thy scanty smiles, than all the vanished splendour of our race, our gorgeous gardens, and our glittering halls."

"Who waits without there?"

"Caleb."

"Caleb?"

"My lord."

"Go tell my uncle I presently will join the banquet. Leave me a moment, dearest. I'll soon be with thee. Nay, dry these tears, my life, or let me stop them with a soft kiss."

"O! Alroy, they are not tears of sorrow!"

"God be with thee, angel! fare thee well, though but for a moment. Thou art the charm and consolation of my life. Farewell, farewell."

"I do observe the influence of women very potent over me. 'Tis not of such stuff that they make heroes. I know not love, save that pure affection that does subsist between me and this girl—an orphan and my sister. We are so alike, that when, last Passover, in mimicry, she twined my turban round her graceful head, our uncle called her David."

"The daughters of my tribe, they please me not, though they are passing fair. Were our sons as brave as they are beautiful, we still might dance

on Sion. Yet have I often thought that I could pillow this moody brow upon some snowy bosom that were my own, and dwell in the wilderness, far from the sight and ken of man, and all the care, and toil, and wretchedness, that groan, and sweat, and sigh about me, I might haply lose this deep sensation of o'erwhelming wo, that broods upon my being. No matter—life is but a dream and mine must be a dull one."

II.

WITHOUT the gates of Hamadan, a very short distance from the city, was an enclosed piece of elevated ground, in the centre of which rose an ancient sepulchre, the traditionary tomb of Esther and Mordecai.* This solemn and solitary spot was an accustomed haunt of Alroy; and thither escaping from the banquet, about an hour before sunset, he this day repaired.

As he unlocked the massy gate of the burial-place, he heard behind him the trampling of a horse; and before he had again secured the entrance, some one shouted to him.

He looked up, and recognised the youthful and voluptuous Alschiroch, the governor of the city, and brother of the sultan of the Seljuks. He was attended only by a single running footman, an Arab, a detested favourite, and notorious minister of his pleasures.

"Dog!" exclaimed the irritated Alschiroch, "art thou deaf, or obstinate! or both? Are we to call twice to our slaves? Unlock that gate!"

"Wherefore?" inquired Alroy.

"Wherefore! By the holy prophet, he bandies questions with us. Unlock that gate, or thy head shall answer for it!"

"Who art thou," inquired Alroy, "whose voice is so loud? Art thou some holiday Turk, who hast transgressed the orders of thy prophet, and drunken aught but water? Go to, or I will summon thee before thy cadi;" and so saying, he turned towards the tomb.

"By the eyes of my mother, the dog jeers us. But that we are already late, and this horse is like an untamed tiger, I would impale him on the spot. Speak to the dog, Mustapha! manage him!"

"Worthy Hebrew," said the silky Mustapha, advancing, "apparently you are not aware that this is our lord Alschiroch. His highness would fain walk his horse through the burial-ground of thy excellent people, as he is obliged to repair, on urgent matters, to a holy santon, who sojourns on the other side of the hill, and time presses."

"If this be our lord Alschiroch, thou, doubtless, art his faithful slave Mustapha."

"I am, indeed, his poor slave. What, then, young master?"

"Deem thyself lucky that the gate is closed. It was but yesterday thou didst insult the sister of a

* It is the custom of the Hebrews in many of their festivals, especially in the feast of the tabernacle, to hang the walls of their chambers with garlands of flowers.

* I accompanied the priest through the town over much ruin and rubbish, to an enclosed piece of ground, rather more elevated than any in its immediate vicinity. In the centre was the Jewish tomb, a square building of brick, of a mosque-like form, with a rather elongated dome at the top. The door is in the ancient sepulchral fashion of the country, very small, consisting of a single stone of great thickness, and turning on its own pivots from one side. Its key is always in possession of the eldest of the Jews resident at Hamadan. Within the tomb are two sarcophagi, made of a very dark wood, carved with great intricacy of pattern and richness of twisted ornament, with a line of inscription in Hebrew, &c.—*Sir R. K. Porter's Travels in Persia*, vol. ii. p. 107.

servant of my house. I would not willingly sully my hands with such miserable blood as thine—but away, wretch, away!"

"Holy prophet! who is this dog?" exclaimed the astonished governor.

"'Tis the young Aloy," whispered Mustapha, who had not at first recognised him, "he they call their prince—a most headstrong youth. My lord, we had better proceed."

"The young Aloy! I mark him. They must have a prince, too! The young Aloy! Well, let us away—and, dog!" shouted Alschiroch, rising in his stirrups and shaking his hand with a threatening air, "dog! remember thy tribute!"

Aloy rushed to the gate, but the massy lock was slow to open; and ere he could succeed, the fiery steed had borne Alschiroch beyond pursuit.

An expression of baffled rage remained for a moment on his countenance; for a moment he remained with his eager eye fixed on the route of his vanished enemy, and then he walked slowly towards the tomb; but his excited temper was now little in unison with the still revelry in which he had repaired to the sepulchre to indulge. He was restless and disquieted, and at length he wandered into the woods which rose on the summit of the burial-place.

He found himself at length upon a brow, crested with young pine trees, in the midst of which rose a mighty cedar. He threw himself underneath its thick and shadowy branches, and looked upon a valley small and green; in the midst of which was a marble fountain, the richly carved cupola,* supported by twisted columns, and banded by a broad inscription in Hebrew characters. The bases of the white pillars were covered with wild flowers, or hidden by beds of variegated gourds. The transparent sunset flung over the whole scene a soft but brilliant light.

The tranquil hour, the beauteous scene, the sweetness and the stillness blending their odour and serenity, the gentle breeze that softly rose, and summoned forth the languid birds, to cool their plumage in the twilight air, and wave their radiant wings in skies as bright—Ah! what stern spirit will not yield to the soft genius of subduing eve?

And Aloy gazed upon the beauteous loneliness of earth, and a tear stole down his haughty cheek.

"'Tis singular! but when I am thus alone at this still hour, I ever fancy I gaze upon the Land of Promise. And often in my dreams, some sunny spot, the bright memorial of a roving hour, will rise upon my sight, and when I wake, I feel as if I had been in Canaan. Why am I not? The caravan that bears my uncle's goods across the desert, would bear me too. But I rest here, my miserable life running to seed in the dull misery of this wretched city, and do nothing. Why! the old captivity was empire to our inglorious bondage. We have no Esther now to share their thrones, no politic Mordecai, no purple-vested Daniel. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! I do believe one sight of thee would nerve me to the sticking point. And yet to

* The vast magnificence and elaborate fancy of the tombs and fountains is a remarkable feature of oriental architecture. The eastern nations devote to these structures the richest and the most durable materials. While the palaces of Asiatic monarchs are in general built only of wood, painted in fresco, the rarest marbles are dedicated to the sepulchre and the spring, which are often richly gilt, and adorned even with precious stones.

gaze upon thy fallen state—my uncle tells me that of the temple not a stone remains. 'Tis horrible. Is there no hope?"

"The bricks are fallen, but we will rebuild with marble; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars."

"The chorus of our maidens, as they pay their evening visit to the fountain's side.* The burden is prophetic.

"Hark again! How beautifully, upon the soft and flowing air, their sweet and mingled voices blend and float!"

"Yet again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O Virgin of Israel! Yet again shalt thou deck thyself with thy tabrets, and go forth in the dance of those that make merry. Yet again shalt thou plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria."

"See! their white forms break through the sparkling foliage of the sunny shrubs as they descend, with measured step, that mild acclivity. A fair society in bright procession: each one clothed in solemn drapery, veiling her shadowy face with modest hand, and bearing on her graceful head a graceful vase. Their leader is my sister.

"And now they reach the fountain side, and dip their vases in the water, pure and beauteous as themselves. Some repose beneath the marble pillars; some, seated mid the flowers, gather sweets, and twine them into garlands; and that wild girl, now that the order's broke, touches with light fingers her moist vase, and showers startling drops of glittering light on her serener sisters. Hark! again they sing?"

"O vine of Sibmah! upon thy summer fruits, and upon thy vintage, a spoiler hath fallen!"

A scream, a shriek, a long wild shriek, confusion, flight, despair! Behold! from out the woods a turbaned man rushes, and seizes the leader of the chorus. Her companions fly on all sides, Miriam alone is left in the arms of Alschiroch.

The water column wildly raising, from the breast of summer ocean, in some warm tropic clime, when the sudden clouds too well discover, the holiday of heaven is over, and the shrieking sea-birds tell a time of fierce commotion, the column rising from the sea, it was not as wild as he—the young Aloy.

Pallid and mad, he swiftly upsprang, and he tore up a tree by its lusty roots, and down the declivity dashing with rapid leaps, panting and wild, he struck the ravisher on the temple with the mighty pine. Alschiroch fell lifeless on the sod, and Miriam fainting into her brother's arms.

And there he stood, fixed and immovable, gazing upon his sister's deathly face, and himself exhausted by passion and his exploit, supporting her cherished but senseless body.

One of the fugitive maidens appeared reconnoitring in the distance. When she observed her

* It is still the custom for the women in the east to repair at sunset in company to the fountain for their supply of water. In Egypt you may observe at twilight the women descending the banks of the Nile in procession from every town and village. Their graceful drapery, their long veils, not concealing their flashing eyes, and the classical forms of their vases, render this a most picturesque and agreeable spectacle.

mistress in the arms of one of her own people, her courage revived, and desirous of rallying her scattered companions, she raised her voice and sang:

*"Haste, daughters of Jerusalem, O!
haste, for the Lord has avenged us, and
the spoiler is spoiled."*

And soon the verse was responded to from various quarters of the woods, and soon the virgins re-assembled, singing,

*"We come, O daughter of Jerusalem!
we come; for the Lord has avenged us,
and the spoiler is spoiled."*

They gathered round their mistress, and one loosened her veil, and another brought water from the fountain, and sprinkled her reviving countenance. And Miriam opened her eyes and said, "My brother!" And he answered, "I am—here." And she replied, in a low voice, "Fly, David, fly, for the man you have stricken is a prince among the people."

"He will be merciful, my sister; and, doubtless, since he first erred, by this time he has forgotten my offence."

"Justice and mercy; O, my brother, what can these foul tyrants know of either! Already he has perhaps doomed you to some refined and procrustinated torture, already—Ah! what unutterable wo is mine—fly, my brother, fly!"

"Fly, fly, fly!"

"There is no fear, my Miriam; would all his accursed race could trouble us as little as their sometime ruler. See, he sleeps soundly. But his carcass shall not defile our fresh fountain, and our fragrant flowers. I'll stow it in the woods, and stroll here at night to listen to the jackals at their banquet."

"You speak wildly, David. What! No! It is impossible! He is not dead! You have not slain him! He sleeps—he is afraid. He mimics death that we may leave his side and he may rise again in safety. Girls, look to him. David, you do not answer. Brother, dear, dear brother; surely he has swooned. I thought he had fled. Bear water, maidens, to that terrible man. I dare not look upon him."

"Away! I'll look upon him, and I'll triumph. Dead! Alschiroch dead! Why! but a moment since, this clotted carcass was a prince, my tyrant. So we can rid ourselves of them, eh? If the prince fall, why not the people? Dead, absolutely dead, and I his slayer. Hah! at length I am a man. This, this indeed is life. Let me live slaying!"

"Wo! wo! our house is fallen! The wildness of his gestures frightens me. David, David, I pray thee cease. He hears me not, my voice, perchance, is thin. I'm very faint. Maidens, kneel to your prince, and soothe the madness of his passion."

*"Sweet is the voice of a sister in the
season of sorrow, and wise is the counsel
of those who love us."*

"Why, this is my Goliath! a pebble or a stick, it is the same. The Lord of Hosts is for us. Rightly am I called David."

*"Deliver us from our enemies, O
Lord! from those who rise up against
us, and those who lie in wait for us."*

"Were but this blow multiplied, were but the servants of my uncle's house to do the same, why, we should see again the days of Elah! The Philistine, the foul, lascivious, damnable Philistine; and he must touch my sister. O that all his tribe

were here, all, all! I'd tie such firebrands to their foxes' tails, the blaze should light to freedom!"

While he spoke, a maiden, who had not rejoined the company, came running towards them very swiftly with an agitated countenance.

"Fly, fly," she exclaimed; "they come, they come."

Miriam was reclining in an attendant's arms, feeble and faint, but the moment her quick ear caught these words, she sprang up, and seized her brother's arm.

"Alroy! David, David, brother, brother, sweet brother. I beseech thee, listen—I am thy sister, thy Miriam, thy fond, beloved Miriam;—they come, they come, the hard-hearted, wicked men, they come, they come, to kill, perhaps to torture thee, my tender brother. Rouse thyself, David, rouse thyself from this wild, fierce dream: save thyself—fly."

"Ah! is it thou, Miriam? Be easy, love, thou seest he sleepeth soundly. I will collect my senses. I was dreaming of noble purposes and mighty hopes. 'Tis over now. I am myself again. What wouldst thou, my sweet treasure?"

"They come, the fierce retainers of this fallen man: they come to seize thee. Fly, David."

"And leave thee?"

"I and my maidens, we have yet time to escape by the private way we entered our uncle's garden. When in his house we are for a moment safe—as safe as our poor race can ever be. Bostenay is so rich, so wise, so prudent, so learned in man's ways, and knows so well the character and spirit of these men, all will go right: I fear nothing, nothing, nothing. But thou, if thou art here, or to be found, thy blood alone will satiate them. If they be persuaded that thou hast escaped, as I yet pray thou mayest, their late master here, whom they could scarcely love, why—give me thy arm an instant, sweet Beruna, I am rather faint. So, that's well. I was saying, if well bribed, and they may have all my jewels, why, very soon, he will be as little in their memories, as he is now in life. I can scarcely speak—I feel my words wander, or seem to wander; I could swoon, but will not—nay! do not fear, my love, I will reach home. These maidens are my charge. 'Tis in these crises we should show the worth of royal blood. I'll see them safe—or die with them."

"O! my sister, methinks I never knew I was a brother until this hour. My precious Miriam, what is life? what is revenge, or even fame and freedom, without thee? I'll stay."

*"Sweet is the voice of a sister in the
season of sorrow, and wise is the counsel
of those who love us."*

"Fly, David, fly."

"Fly whither, and how?"

The neigh of the horse sounded from the thicket.

"Ah! they come, they come!" exclaimed the distracted Miriam.

*"All this has come upon us, O Lord,
yet have we not forgotten thee, neither
have we dealt falsely in thy covenant."*

"Hark! again it neighs! It is a horse that calleth to its rider. I see it, I see it. Courage, Miriam! it is no enemy, but a very present friend in time of trouble. It is Alschiroch's coursier. He passed me on it by the tomb ere sunset. I marked it well—a very princely steed."

*"Behold, behold, a ram is caught in
the thicket by his horns."*

"Our God hath not forgotten us! Quick, maidens, bring forth the goodly steed. What! do you tremble! I'll be his groom!"

"Nay! Miriam, beware, beware. It is an untamed beast, wild as the whirlwind. Let me deal with him."

He ran after her, kissed her as he passed, dashed into the thicket, and brought forth the horse.

Short time I ween that stately steed had parted from his desert home; his haughty crest, his eye of fire, the glory of his snorting nostril, betokened well his conscious pride and pure nobility of race. His colour was like the sable night shining with a thousand stars, and he pawed the ground with his delicate hoof, like an eagle flapping its wing.

Alroy vaulted on his back, and reined him with a master's hand.

"Hah!" he exclaimed, "I feel more like a hero than a fugitive. Farewell, my sister; farewell, ye gentle maidens; fare ye well, and cherish my precious Miriam. One kiss, sweet sister," and he bent down and whispered, "Tell the good Bostenay not to spare his gold, love, for I have a deep persuasion, that ere a year shall roll its heavy course, I shall return, and make our masters here pay for this hurried ride and bitter parting. Now for the desert!"

PART II.

I.

SPEED, fleetly speed, thou courser bold, and track the desert's trackless way. Beneath thee is the boundless earth, above thee is the boundless heaven, an iron soil and brazen sky. Speed, swiftly speed, thou courser bold, and track the desert's trackless way!

Ah! dost thou deem these salty plains* lead to thy Yemen's happy groves, and dost thou scent, on the hot breeze, the spicy breath of Araby? A sweet delusion, noble steed, for this briny wilderness leads not to the happy groves of Yemen, and the breath thou scentest on the coming breeze is not the spicy breath of Araby.

The day has died, the stars have risen, with all the splendour of a desert sky, and now the night descending brings solace on her dewy wings, to the fainting form and pallid cheek of the youthful Hebrew prince.

Still the courser onward rushes, still his mighty heart supports him. Season and space, the glowing soil, the burning ray, yield to the tempest of his frame; the thunder of his nerves and lightning of his veins.

Food or water they have none. No genial fount, no grateful tree, rise with their pleasant company. Never a beast or a bird is there, in that hoary desert bare. Nothing breaks the almighty stillness. Even the jackal's felon cry, might seem a soothing melody. A gray wild rat, with snowy whiskers, out of a withered bramble stealing with a youthful snake in its ivory teeth, in the moonlight grins with glee. This is their sole society.

Morn comes, the fresh and fragrant morn, for

* I describe the salty deserts of Persia, a locality which my tale required; but I have ventured to introduce here, and in the subsequent pages, the principal characteristics of the Great Arabian Deserts—the mirage, the simoom, the gazelle, the oasis,

which even the guilty sigh. Morn comes, and all is visible. And light falls like a signet on the earth, and its face is turned like wax with a seal. Before them, and also on their right, was the sandy desert; but in the night they had approached much nearer to the mountainous chain, which bounded the desert on the left, and whither Alroy had at first guided the steed.

The mountains were a chain of the mighty Elburz; and as the sun rose from behind a lofty peak, the horse suddenly stopped, and neighed as if asking for water. But Alroy, himself exhausted, could only soothe him with caresses. And the horse, full of courage, understood his master, and neighed again more cheerfully.

For an hour or two the prince and his faithful companion proceeded slowly, but as the day grew on, the heat became so oppressive, and the desire to drink so overwhelming, that Alroy again urged on the steed toward the mountains, where he knew that he should find a well. The courser dashed willingly forward, and seemed to share his master's desire to quit the arid and exhausting wilderness.

More than once the unhappy fugitive debated whether he should not allow himself to drop from his seat and die; no torture that awaited him at Hamadan, that did not seem preferable to the prolonged and inexpressible anguish that he now endured. As he rushed along, leaning on his bearer's neck, he perceived a patch of the desert that seemed of a darker colour than the surrounding sand. Here, he believed, might perhaps be found water. He tried to check the steed, but with difficulty he succeeded, and with still greater difficulty dismounted. He knelt down and feebly raked up the sand with his hands. It was very moist. He nearly fainted over his fruitless labour. At length, when he had dug about a foot deep, there bubbled up some water. He dashed in his hand, but it was salt as the ocean. When the horse saw the water his ears rose, but when he smelt it, he turned away his head and neighed most piteously.

"Alas, poor beast!" exclaimed Alroy, "I am the occasion of thy sufferings, who would be a kind master to thee, if the world would let me. O that we were once more by my own fair fountain! The thought is madness. And Miriam too! I fear I am sadly tender-hearted." He leaned against his horse's back with a feeling of utter exhaustion, and burst into hysteric sobs.

And the steed softly moaned, and turned its head, and gently rubbed its face against his arm, as if to solace him in his suffering. And strange, but Alroy was relieved by having given way to his emotion, and charmed with the fondness of the faithful horse, he leaned down and took water, and threw it over his feet to cool them, and wiped the foam from his face, and washed it, and the horse again neighed.

And now Alroy tried to remount, but his strength failed him, and the horse immediately knelt down and received him. And the moment that the prince was in his seat, the horse rose and again proceeded at a rapid pace in the old direction. Towards sunset they were within a few miles of the broken and rocky ground into which the mountains descended; and afar off Alroy recognised the cupola of the long expected well. With reanimated courage and rallied energies, he patted his courser's

neck, and pointed in the direction of the cupola, and the horse pricked up its ears, and increased its pace.

Just as the sun set, they reached the well. Alroy jumped off the horse, and would have led it to the fountain, but the animal would not advance. It stood dreadfully shivering with a glassy eye, and then it bowed its head, and with a groan fell down and died.

II.

NIGHT brings rest; night brings solace; rest to the weary; solace to the sad. And to the desperate night brings despair.

The moon has sunk to early rest; but a thousand stars are in the sky. The mighty mountains rise severe in the clear and silent air. In the forest all is still. The tried wind no longer moans, but has lightly dropped on its leafy couch, and sleeps like man. Silent all but the fountain's drip. And by the fountain's side a youth is lying.

Suddenly a creature steals through the black and broken rocks. Ha, ha! the jackal smells from afar the rich corruption of the courser's clay. Suddenly and silently it steals, and stops and smells. Brave banqueting I ween to-night for all that goodly company. Jackal, and fox, and martin-cat, haste ye now ere morning's break shall call the vulture to his feast, and rob you of your prey.

The jackal lapped the courser's blood, and moaned with exquisite delight. And in a moment a faint bark was heard in the distance. And the jackal peeled the flesh from one of the ribs, and again burst into a shriek of mournful ecstasy.

Hark, their quick tramp! First six, and then three galloping with ungodly glee. And a martencat came rushing down from the woods; but the jackals, fierce in their numbers, drove her away, and there she stood without the circle, panting, beautiful and baffled with her white teeth and glossy skin, and sparkling eyes of rabid rage.*

Suddenly, as one of the half-gorged jackals retired from the main corpse, dragging along a stray member by some still palpitating nerves, the martencat made a spring at her enemy, carried off his prey, and rushed into the woods.

Her wild scream of triumph woke a lion from his lair. His mighty form, black as ebony, moved on a distant eminence, his tail flowed like a serpent. He roared, and the jackals trembled, and immediately ceased from their banquet, turned their heads in the direction of their sovereign's voice. He advanced; he stalked towards them. They retired; he bent his head, examined the carcass with condescending curiosity, and instantly quitted it with royal disdain. The jackals again collected around their garbage. The lion advanced to the fountain to drink. He beheld a man. His mane rose, his tail was wildly agitated, he bent over the sleeping prince, he uttered an awful roar, which woke Alroy.

* At night-fall, especially in Asia Minor, the lonely horse-man will often meet the jackals, at their evening prowl. Their moaning is often heard during the night. I remember, when boating off Troy, the most terrible and singular screams were heard at intervals throughout the night, from a forest on the opposite shore, which a Greek sailor assured me proceeded from a martencat, which had probably found the carcass of some horse.

III.

HE awoke; his gaze met the flaming eyes of the enormous beast fixed upon him with a blended feeling of desire and surprise. He awoke, and from a swoon; but the dreamless trance had refreshed the exhausted energies of the desolate wanderer; in an instant he collected his senses, remembered all that had passed, and comprehended his present situation. He returned the lion a glance as imperious, and fierce, and scrutinizing as his own. For a moment their flashing orbs vied in regal rivalry; but at length the spirit of the mere animal yielded to the genius of the man. The lion cowed, slunk away, stalked with haughty timidity through the rocks, and then sprang into the forest.

IV.

MORN breaks; a joyful light is shed over the blue and starry sky. Pleasant to feel is the breath of dawn. Night brings repose, but day brings joy.

The carol of a lonely bird singing in the wilderness! A lonely bird that sings with glee! Sunny and sweet, and light and clear, its airy notes float through the sky, and thrill with innocent revelry.

The lonely youth on the lonely bird upgazes from the fountain side. High in the air it proudly floats, balancing its crimson wings, and its snowy tail, long, delicate and thin, shines like a sparkling meteor in the sun.

The carol of a lonely bird singing in the wilderness! Suddenly it downward dashes, and thrice with circling grace it flies around the head of the Hebrew prince. Then by his side it gently drops a bunch of fresh and fragrant dates.

'Tis gone, 'tis gone! that cheerful stranger, gone to the palmy land it loves; gone like a bright and pleasant dream. A moment since and it was there, glancing in the sunny air, and now the sky is without a guest. Alas, alas! no more is heard, the carol of that lonely bird singing in the wilderness.

V.

"As thou didst feed Elisha, so also hast thou fed me, God of my fathers!" And Alroy arose, and he took his turban and unfolded it, and knelt and prayed. And then he ate of the dates, and drank of the fountain, and full of confidence in the God of Israel, the descendant of David pursued his flight.

He now commenced the ascent of the mountainous chain, a wearisome and painful toil. Two hours past noon he reached the summit of the first ridge, and looked over a wild and chaotic waste full of precipices and ravines, and dark unfathomable gorges. The surrounding hills were ploughed in all directions by the courses of dried-up cataracts, and here and there a few savage goats browsed on an occasional patch of lean and sour pasture. This waste extended for many miles; the distance formed by a more elevated range of mountains, and beyond these, high in the blue sky, rose the loftiest peaks of Elburz,* shining with sharp glaciers of eternal snow.

* *Elburz* or *Elborus*, the highest range of the Caucasus

was apparent that Aloy was no stranger in the scene of his flight. He had never hesitated as to his course, and now, after having rested for a short time on the summit, he descended towards the left by a natural but intricate path, until his progress was arrested by a black ravine. Scarcely half a dozen yards divided him from the opposite precipice by which it was formed, but the gulf beneath—no one could shoot a glance at its invisible termination without drawing back with a cold shudder.

The prince knelt down and examined the surrounding ground with great care. At length he raised a small square stone which covered a metallic plate, and taking from his vest a cornelian talisman covered with strange characters,* he knocked thrice upon the plate with the signet. A low solemn murmur sounded around. Presently the plate flew off, and Aloy pulled forth several yards of an iron chain, which he threw over to the opposite precipice. The chain fastened without difficulty to the rock, and was evidently constrained by some magnetic influence. The prince, seizing the chain with both his hands, now swung across the ravine. As he landed, the chain parted from the rock, swiftly disappeared down the opposite aperture, and its covering closed with the same low, solemn murmur as before.

VI.

ALOY proceeded for about a hundred paces through a natural cloister of basalt until he arrived at a large uncovered court of the same formation, which a stranger might easily have been excused for believing to have been formed and smoothed by art. In its centre bubbled up a perpetual spring icy cold; the stream had worn a channel through the pavement, and might be traced for some time wandering among the rocks, until it at length leaped from a precipice, into a gorge below, in a gauzy shower of variegated spray. Crossing the court, Aloy now entered a vast cavern.

The cavern was nearly circular in form, lighted from a large aperture in the top. Yet a burning lamp in a distant and murky corner indicated that its inhabitant did not trust merely to this natural source of the great blessing of existence. In the centre of the cave was a circular and brazen table, sculptured with strange characters and mysterious figures: near it was a couch on which ~~ke~~ several volumes,† Suspended from the walls were a shield, some bows and arrows, and other arms.

As the prince of the captivity knelt down and kissed the vacant couch, a figure advanced from the extremity of the cavern into the light. He was a man of middle age, considerably above the common height, with a remarkably athletic frame, and a strongly marked, but majestic countenance. His black beard descended to his waist, over a dark

red robe, encircled by a black girdle embroidered with yellow characters, like those sculptured on the brazen table. Black also was his turban, and black his large and luminous eyes.

The stranger advanced so softly, that Aloy did not perceive him until the prince again rose up.

"Jabaster!" exclaimed the prince.

"Sacred seed of David," answered the cabalist,* "thou art expected. I read of thee in the stars last night. They spoke of trouble."

"Trouble or triumph, time must prove which it is, great master. At present I am a fugitive and exhausted. The bloodhounds track me, but methinks I have baffled them now. I have slain an Ishmaelite."

PART III.

I.

It was midnight. Aloy slept upon the couch: his sleep was troubled. Jabaster stood by his side motionless, and gazing intently upon his slumbering guest.

"The only hope of Israel," murmured the cabalist, "my pupil and my prince! I have long perceived in his young mind the seed of mighty deeds, and o'er his future life have often mused with a prophetic hope. The blood of David, the sacred offspring of a solemn race. There is a magic in his flowing veins my science cannot reach.

"When in my youth I raised our standard by my native Tigris, and called our nation to restore their ark, why, we were numerous, wealthy, potent; we were a people then, and they flocked to it boldly. Did we lack counsel? Did we need a leader? Who can aver Jabaster's brain or arm was ever wanting? And yet the dream dissolved, the glorious vision. O! when I struck down Marvan, and the caliph's camp flung its blazing shadow o'er the bloody river—ah! then indeed I lived. Twenty years of vigil may gain a pardon that I then forgot we lacked the chief ingredient in the spell,—the blood that sleeps beside me.

"I recall the glorious rapture of that sacred strife amid the rocks of Caucasus. A fugitive, a proscribed and outlawed wretch, whose life is common sport, and whom the vilest hind may slay without a bidding. I who would have been Messiah!

* Talismans have not in any degree lost their influence in the East. Most that I have seen have been cut upon cornelian. A very precious one of this nature, obtained at great cost and peril, of the most celebrated sorcerer in Cairo, lies at this moment by my side. It secures to its possessor a constancy of good fortune. Unfortunately its present holder is the exception that proves the rule.

† A cabalistic table, perhaps a zodiac. The books were doubtless *Sepher Happehiah*, the Book of Wonders; *Sepher Haaknech*, the Book of the Pen; and *Sepher Habbahir*, the Book of Light. This last unfolds the most sublime mysteries.

* "Simcon ben Jochai, who flourished in the second century, and was a disciple of Akibha, is called by the Jews, the prince of the cabalists. After the suppression of the sedition, in which his master had been so unsuccessful, he concealed himself in a cave, where, according to the Jewish historians, he received revelations, which he afterwards delivered to his disciples, and which they carefully preserved in the book called *Sohar*. His master Akibha, who lived soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, was the author of the famous book *Jezirah*, quoted by the Jews as of divine authority. When Akibha was far advanced in life appeared the famous imposter Barchochebas, who, under the character of the Messiah, promised to deliver his countrymen from the power of the emperor Adrian. Akibha espoused his cause, and afforded him the protection and support of his name, and an army of two hundred thousand men repaired to his standard. The Romans at first slighted the insurrection; but when they found the insurgents spread slaughter and rapine wherever they came, they sent out a military force against them. At first, the issue of the contest was doubtful. The Messiah himself was not taken until the end of four years."—*Enfield; Philosophy of the Jews*, vol. ii.

"Two methods of instruction were in use among the Jews, the one public, or *exoteric*; the other secret, or *esoteric*.

"Burn thy books, Jabaster; break thy brazen tables; forget thy lofty science, cabalist, and read the stars no longer.* But last night I stood upon the gulf which girds my dwelling: in one hand, I held my sacred talisman, that bears the name ineffable; in the other the mystic record of our holy race. I remember that I had evoked spirits, that I had communed with the great departed, and that the glowing heavens were with me a natural language. I recalled, as consolation to my gloomy soul, that never had my science e'er been exercised but for a sacred or a noble purpose. And I remembered Israel, my brave, my chosen, and my antique race,—slaves, wretched slaves. I was strongly tempted to fling me down this perilous abyss, and end my learning and my life together.

"But as I gazed upon the star of David, a sudden halo rose around its rays, and ever and anon a meteor shot from out the silver veil. I read that there was trouble in the holy seed; and now comes this boy, who has done a deed which—"

"The ark, the ark! I gaze upon the ark!"

"The slumberer speaks; the words of sleep are sacred."

"Salvation only from the house of David."

The exoteric doctrine was that which was openly taught the people from the law of Moses, and the traditions of the fathers. The esoteric was that which treated of the mysteries of the divine nature, and other sublime subjects, and was known by the name of the Cabala. The latter was after the manner of the Pythagorean and Egyptian mysteries, taught only to certain persons, who were bound, under the most solemn anathema, not to divulge it. Concerning the miraculous origin and preservation of the Cabala, the Jews relate many marvellous tales. They derive these mysteries from Adam; and assert, that while the first man was in paradise, the angel Rasiel brought him a book from heaven, which contained the doctrines of heavenly wisdom, and that when Adam received this book, angels came down to him to learn its contents; but that he refused to admit them to the knowledge of sacred things entrusted to him alone; that after the fall, this book was taken back into heaven; that after many prayers and tears God restored it to Adam, from whom it passed to Seth. In the degenerate age before the flood, this book was lost, and the mysteries it contained almost forgotten; but they were restored by special revelation to Abraham, who committed them to writing in the book *Jezirah*.—*Vid. Enfield*, vol. ii. p. 219.

"The Hebrew word *Cabala*," says Dom Calmet, "signifies tradition, and the rabbins, who are named Cabalists, apply themselves principally to the combination of certain words, numbers, and letters, by means of which they boasted they could reveal the future, and penetrate the sense of the most difficult passages of Scripture. This science does not appear to have any fixed principles, but depends upon certain ancient traditions, whence its name *Cabala*. The cabalists have a great number of names which they style sacred, by means of which they raise spirits, and affect to obtain supernatural intelligence."—See *Calmet*, art. *Cabala*.

"We spoke before," says Lightfoot, "of the commonness of magic among them, one singular means whereby they kept their own in delusion, and whereby they affronted ours. The general expectation of the nation of Messiah's coming when he did, had this double and contrary effect, that it forwarded those that belonged to God to believe and receive the gospel; and those that did not, it gave encouragement to some to take upon them they were Christ, or some great prophet, and to others it gave some persuasion to be deluded by them. These deceivers dealt most of them with magic, and that cheat ended not when Jerusalem ended, though one would have thought that had been a fair term of not further expecting Messias; but since the people were willing to be deceived by such expectation, there rose up deluders still that were willing to deceive them."—*Lightfoot*, vol. ii. p. 37.

For many curious details of the cabalistical magic, *Vid. Basnage*, vol. v. p. 384, &c.

* "The modern Jews," says Basnage, "have a great idea of the influence of the stars." Vol. iv. p. 454. But astrology was most prevalent among the Babylonian rabbins, of whom Jabaster was one. Living in the ancient land of the Chaldeans, these sacred sages imbibed a taste for the mystic lore of their predecessors. The stars moved and formed letters and lines, when consulted by any of the high initiated of the cabalists. This they styled the celestial alphabet.

"A mighty truth; my life too well has proved it. He is more calm. It is the holy hour. I'll steal into the court, and gaze upon the star that sways the fortunes of his royal house."

II.

THE moonbeam fell upon the fountain; the pavement of the court was a flood of light; the rocks rose dark around. Jabaster, seated by the spring, and holding his talisman in his left hand, shaded his sight with the other, as he gazed upon the luminous heavens.

A shriek, his name was called. Alroy, wild and panting, rushed into the court, with extended arms. The cabalist started up, seized him, and held him in his careful grasp, foaming and in convulsions.

"Jabaster, Jabaster!"

"I am here, my child."

"The Lord hath spoken."

"The Lord is our refuge. Calm thyself, son of David, and tell me all."

"I have been sleeping, master; is it not so?"

"Even so, my child. Exhausted by his flight and the exciting narrative of his exploit, my prince laid down upon the couch and slumbered; but I fear that slumber was not repose."

"Repose and I have naught in common now. Farewell forever to that fatal word. I am the Lord's anointed."

"Drink of the fountain, David: it will restore thee."

"Restore the covenant, restore the ark, restore the holy city."

"The spirit of the Lord hath fallen upon him. Son of David, I adjure thee to tell me all that hath passed, I am a Levite; in my hand I hold the name ineffable."

"Take thy trumpet, then, summon the people, bid them swiftly raise again our temple. 'The bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with marble.' Didst hear that chorus, sir?"

"Unto thy chosen ear alone it sounded."

"Nay, nay, it was not here. And yet Miriam, Miriam, my sister, my sweet sister, how thou wouldst weep, to know that which has happened, tears, tears of joy, girl! Where am I! This is not our fountain. Yet thou didst say, 'The fountain.' Think me not wild. I know thee, I know all. Thou art Jabaster; I am Alroy. But thou didst say, 'The fountain,' and it distracted me, and called back my memory to—"

"God of Israel, lo, I kneel before thee! Here, in the solitude of wildest nature, my only witness here this holy man, I kneel and vow. Lord! I will do thy bidding. I am young, I am very young, O God, and weak; but thou, Lord, art all-powerful. What God is like to thee! Doubt not my courage, Lord, and fill me with thy spirit; but remember, remember her, O Lord, remember Miriam. It is the only worldly thought I have, and it is pure."

"Still of his sister—calm thyself, my son."

"Holy master, thou dost remember when I was thy pupil in this cavern. Thou hast not forgotten those days of tranquil study, those sweet, long wandering nights of sacred science! I was dutiful, and hung upon each accent of thy lore with the devotion that must spring from love."

"I cannot weep, Alroy; but were it in my power, I would yield a tear of homage to the memory of those days."

"How calmly have we sat on some high brow, and gazed upon the stars."

"'Tis very true, sweet child."

"And if thou e'er didst chide me, 'twas half in jest, and only for my silence."

"What would he now infer? No matter, he grows calmer. How solemn is his visage in the moonlight! And yet not Solomon, upon his youthful throne, could look more beautiful."

"I never told thee an untruth, Jabaster."

"My life upon thy faith."

"Fear not the pledge and so believe me—on the mountain brow, watching the stary heavens with thyself, I was not calmer than I feel, sir, now."

"I do believe thee."

"Then, Jabaster, believe as fully I am the Lord's anointed."

"Tell me all, my child."

"Know, then, that sleeping on the couch within, my sleep was troubled. Many dreams I had indefinite and broken. I recall none of their images, except I feel a dim sensation 'twas my lot to live in brighter days than now rise on our race. Suddenly I stood upon a mountain tall and gray, and gazed upon the stars. And as I gazed, a trumpet sounded. Its notes thrilled through my soul. Never have I heard a sound so awful. The thunder, when it broke over the cavern here, and shivered the peak, whose ruins lie around us, was but a feeble worldly sound to this almighty music. My cheek grew pale, I panted even for breath. A flaming light spread over the sky, the stars melted away, and I beheld, advancing from the bursting radiancy, the foremost body of a mighty host.

"O! not when Saul led forth our fighting men against the Philistine, not when Joab numbered the warriors of my great ancestors, did human vision gaze upon a scene of so much martial splendour. Chariots and cavalry, and glittering trains of plumed warriors too robust to need a courser's solace; streams of shining spears, and banners like a sunset; reverend priests swinging their perfumed censers, and prophets hymning with their golden harps a most triumphant future.

"'Joy, joy,' they say, 'to Israel, for he cometh; he cometh in his splendour and his might, the great Messiah of our ancient hopes.'

"And, lo! a mighty chariot now appeared, drawn by strange beasts, whose forms were half obscured by the bright flames on which they seemed to float. In that glorious car a warrior stood, proud and immovable, his form, his countenance—hold my hand, Jabaster, while I speak—that chieftain was myself!"

"Proceed, proceed, my son."

"I started in my dream, and I awoke. I found myself upstirring on my couch. The pageantry had vanished. Naught was seen but the bright moonlight and the gloomy cave. And as I sighed to think I e'er had wakened, and mused upon the strangeness of my vision, a small still voice descended from above and called 'Alroy?' I started, but I answered not. Methought it was my fancy. Again my name was called, and now I murmured—'Lord, I am here, what wouldst thou?' Naught responded, and soon great dread came o'er me, and I rushed out and called to thee, my master."

"It was 'the Daughter of the Voice'* that

spake. Since the captivity 'tis the only mode by which the saints are summoned. Oft have I heard of it, but never in these sad degenerate days has its soft aspiration fallen upon us. These are strange tunes and tidings. The building of the temple is at hand. Son of David, my heart is full. Let us to prayer!"

III.

DAY dawned upon Jabaster, still musing in solitude among his rocks. Within the cavern Alroy remained in prayer.

Oft and anxiously the cabalist shot a glance at his companion, and then again relapsed into reverie.

"The time is come that I must to this youth reveal the secrets of my early life. Much will he hear of glory, much of shame. Naught must I conceal, and naught gloss over.

"I must tell how in the plains of Tigris I upraised the sacred standard of our chosen race, and called them from their bondage; how, despairing of his recreant fathers, and inspired by human power alone, I vainly claimed the mighty office for his sacred blood alone reserved. God of my fathers, grant that future service, the humble service of a contrite soul, may, in the coming glory that awaits us, atone for past presumption!"

"But for him great trials are impending. Not lightly must that votary be proved, who fain would free a people. The Lord is faithful to his promise, but the Lord will choose his season and his minister. Courage, and faith, and deep humility, and strong endurance, and the watchful soul temptation cannot sully: these are the fruits we lay upon his altar, and meekly watch if some descending flame will vouchsafe to accept and brightly bless them.

"It is written in the dread volume of our mystic lore, that not alone the Saviour shall spring from out our house of princes, but that none shall rise to free us until, alone and unassisted, he have gained the sceptre Solomon antequely wielded within his cedar palaces.

"That sceptre must he gain. This fragile youth, untried and delicate, unknowing in the ways of this strange world, where every step is danger. How much hardship, how much peril, what withering disappointment, what dull care, what long despondency, what never-ending lures, now lie in ambush for this gentle boy! O! my countrymen, is this thy hope? And I, with all my lore, and all my courage, and all my deep intelligence of man; unhappy Israel, why am I not thy prince!"

second temple for their utmost refuge of revelation. For when Urim and Thummim, the oracle, was ceased, and prophecy was decayed and gone, they had, as they say, certain strange and extraordinary voices upon certain extraordinary occasions, which were their warnings and advertisements in some special matters. Infinite instances of this might be adduced, if they might be believed. Now here it may be questioned, why they call it *Bath Kol*, the daughter of a voice, and not a voice itself? If the strictness of the Hebrew word *Bath* be to be stood upon, which always it is not, it may be answered, that it is called the *Daughter of a Voice* in relation to the oracles of Urim and Thummim. For whereas that was a voice given from off the mercy seat, within the veil, and this, upon the decay of that oracle, came as it were in its place, it might not unfully or improperly be called a *daughter* or successor of that voice."—*Lightfoot*, vol. i. p. 435, 436.

Consult also the learned doctor, vol. ii. p. 123, 129; "It was used for a testimony from heaven, but was indeed performed by magic art."

* "Both the Talmudic and the later rabbin," says Lightfoot, "make frequent mention of *Bath Kol*, or *Filia Vocis*, or an echoing voice which served under the

"I check the blasphemous thought. Did not his great ancestor, as young and as untried, a beardless stripling, but with a pebble, a small smooth stone, level a mailed giant to the ground, and save his people?"

"He is clearly summoned. The Lord is with him. Be he with the Lord, and we shall prosper."

IV.

It was sunset, on the third day after the arrival of Alroy at the cave of the cabalist, that the prince of the captivity commenced his pilgrimage in quest of the sceptre of Solomon.

Silently the pilgrim and his master took their way to the brink of the ravine, and there they stopped to part—perhaps forever.

"It is a bitter moment, Alroy. Human feelings are not for beings like us, yet they will have their way. Remember, remember all. Cherish the talisman as thy life—nay! welcome death with it pressing against thy heart, sooner than breathe without it. Be firm, be pious. Think of thy ancestors, think of thy God."

"Doubt me not, dear master; if I seem not full of that proud spirit, which was perhaps too much my wont, ascribe it not to fear, Jabaster, nor even to the pain of leaving thee, dear friend. But ever since that sweet and solemn voice summoned me so thrillingly,—I know not how it is,—but a change has come over my temper; yet I am firm, O! firmer far than when I struck down the Ishmaelite. Indeed, indeed, fear not for me. The Lord, that knoweth all things, knows full well I am prepared even to the death. Thy prayers, Jabaster, and——"

"Stop, stop. I do remember me. See this ring: 'tis a choice emerald. Thou mayst have wondered I should wear a bauble. Alroy, I had a brother once: still he may live. When we parted, this was the signal of his love: a love, my child, strong, though we greatly differed. Take it. The hour may come that thou mayst need his aid. It will command it. If he live, he prospers. I know his temper well. He was made for what the worldly deem prosperity. God be with thee, sacred boy: the God of our great fathers—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob."

They embraced.

"We linger," exclaimed the cabalist, "we linger. O! in vain we quell the feelings of our kind. God, God bless and be with thee. Art sure hast all? thy dagger and thy wallet? That staff has seen some service. I cut it on the Jordan. Ah! that I could be thy mate!" "Twould be nothing then. At the worst, to die together. Such a fate seems sweeter now than parting. I'll watch thy star, my child. Thou weepst! And I too. Why! what is this! Am I indeed Jabaster? One more embrace, and so—we'll not say farewell, but only think it."

PART IV.

I.

TRADITION delivered that the sceptre of Solomon could be found only in the unknown sepulchres of the ancient Hebrew monarchs, and that none might

dare to touch it but one of their descendants. Armed with the cabalistic talisman, which was to guide him in his awful and difficult researches, Alroy commenced his pilgrimage to the Holy City. At this time, the love of these sacred wanderings was a reigning passion among the Jews, as well as Christians.

The prince of the captivity was to direct his course to the heart of those great deserts which, in his flight to Hamadan, he had only skirted. Following the track of the caravan, he was to make his way to Babylon, or Bagdad. From the capital of the caliphs, his journey to Jerusalem was one comparatively easy; but to reach Bagdad he must encounter hardship and danger, the prospect of which would have divested any one of hope, who did not conceive himself the object of an omnipotent and particular Providence.

Clothed only in a coarse black frock, common among the Kourds, girded round his centre by a cord, which held his dagger, his head shaven, and covered with a large white turban, which screened him from the heat, his feet protected only by slippers, supported by his staff, and bearing on his shoulders a bag of dried meat and parched corn, and a leathern skin of water, behold a youth toiling over the glowing sands of Persia, whose life had hitherto been a long unbroken dream of domestic luxury and innocent indulgence.

He travelled during the warm night, or the early starlit morn. During the day he rested: happy if he could recline by the side of some charitable well, shaded by a palm tree, or frighten a gazelle from its resting-place among the rough bushes of some wild rocks. Were these resources wanting, he threw himself upon the sand, and made an awning with his staff and turban.

Three weeks had elapsed since he quitted the cavern of the cabalist. Hitherto he had met with no human being. The desert became less arid. A scanty vegetation sprang up from a more genial soil, the ground broke into gentle undulations, his senses were invigorated with the odour of wild plants, and his sight refreshed by the glancing form of some wandering bird, a pilgrim like himself, but more at ease.

Soon sprang up a grove of graceful palm trees, with their tall thin stems, and bending feathery crowns, languid and beautiful. Around, the verdant sod gleamed like an emerald: silver streams, flowing from a bubbling parent spring, wound their white forms within the bright green turf. From the grove arose the softening song of doves, and showers of gay and sparkling butterflies, borne on their tinted wings of shifting light, danced without danger in the liquid air. A fair and fresh oasis!

II.

ALROY reposed in this delicious retreat for two days, feeding on the living dates, and drinking of the fresh water. Fain would he have lingered, nor indeed until he rested had he been sufficiently conscious of his previous exertion. But the remembrance of his great mission made him restless, and steeled him to the suffering which yet awaited him.

At the dawn of the second day of his journey from the oasis, he beheld, to his astonishment, faintly but distinctly traced on the far horizon, the

walls and turrets of an extensive city.* Animated by this unexpected prospect, he continued his progress for several hours after sunrise. At length, utterly exhausted, he found refuge from the overpowering heat beneath the cupola of the ruined tomb of some Moslem saint. At sunset he continued his journey, and in the morning found himself within a few miles of the city. He halted and watched with anxiety for some evidence of its inhabitants. None was visible. No crowds or cavalcades issued from the gates. Not a single human being, not a solitary camel moved in the vicinity.

The day was too advanced for the pilgrim to proceed, but so great was his anxiety to reach this unknown settlement, and penetrate the mystery of its silence, that ere sunset Alroy entered the gates.

A magnificent city, of an architecture with which he was unacquainted, offered to his entranced vision its gorgeous ruins and deserted splendour; long streets of palaces, with their rich line of lessening pillars here and there broken by some fallen shaft, vast courts surrounded by ornate and solemn temples, and luxurious baths, adorned with rare mosaics, and yet bright with antique gilding: now an arch of triumph still haughty with its broken friezes, now a granite obelisk covered with strange characters, and proudly towering o'er a prostrate companion; sometimes a void and crumbling theatre, sometimes a long and elegant aqueduct, sometimes a porphyry column, once breathing with the heroic statue that now lies shivered at its base—all suffused with the warm twilight of an eastern eve.

He gazed with wonder and admiration upon the strange and fascinating scene. The more he beheld, the more his curiosity was excited. He breathed with difficulty; he advanced with a blended feeling of eagerness and hesitation. Fresh wonders successively unfolded themselves. Each turn developed a new scene of still and solemn splendour. The echo of his step filled him with awe. He looked around him with an amazed air, a fluttering heart, and changing countenance. All was silent: alone the Hebrew prince stood amid the regal creation of the Macedonian captains. Empires and dynasties flourish and pass away, the proud metropolis becomes a solitude, the conquering kingdom even a desert; but Israel still remains, still a descendant of the most ancient kings breathed amid these royal ruins, and still the eternal sun could never rise without gilding the towers of living Jerusalem. A word, a deed, a single day, a single man, and we might be a nation.

A shout; he turns, he is seized; four ferocious Kourdish bandits grapple and bind him.

III.

THE bandits hurried their captive through a street which appeared to have been the principal way of the city. Nearly at its termination they turned by a small Ionian temple, and clambering over some fallen pillars, they entered a quarter of the city of a more ruinous aspect than that which Alroy had hitherto visited. The path was narrow,

often obstructed, and around were signs of devastation for which the exterior of the city had not prepared him.

The brilliant but brief twilight of the orient was fast fading away; a sombre purple tint succeeded to the rosy flush, the distant towers rose black, although defined in the clear and shadowy air, and the moon, which, when he first entered, had studded the heavens like a small white cloud, now glittered with deceptive light.

Suddenly before them rose a huge pile. Oval in shape and formed by tiers of arches, it was evidently much dilapidated, and one enormous, irregular, and undulating rent, extending from the top nearly to the foundation, almost separated the side to which Alroy and his companions advanced.

Clambering up the remainder of this massy wall, the robbers and their prisoner descended into an immense amphitheatre, which seemed vaster in the shadowy and streaming moonlight. In it were groups of men, horses, and camels. In the extreme distance, reclining or squatting on mats and carpets, was a large assembly engaged in a rough but merry banquet. A fire blazed at their side, its red and uncertain flame mingling with the white and steady moonbeam, and throwing a flickering light over their ferocious countenances, their glistening armour, ample drapery, and shawled heads.

"A spy," exclaimed the captors, as they dragged Alroy before the leader of the band.

"Hang him, then," said the chieftain, without even looking up.

"This wine, great Scherirah, is excellent, or I am no true Moslem," said a principal robber; "but you are too cruel; I hate this summary punishment. Let us torture him a little, and extract some useful information."

"As you like, Kisloch," said Scherirah; "it may amuse us. Fellow, where do you come from? He cannot answer. Decidedly a spy. Hang him up."

The captors half untied the rope that bound Alroy, that it might serve him for another purpose; when another of the gentle companions of Scherirah interfered.

"Spies always answer, captain. He is more probably a merchant in disguise."

"And carries hidden treasure," added Kisloch; "these rough coats often cover jewels. We had better search him."

"Ay! search him," said Scherirah, with his rough brutal voice; "do what you like, only give me the bottle. This Greek wine is choice booty. Feed the fire, men. Are you asleep? And then Kisloch, who hates cruelty, can roast him, if he likes."

The robbers prepared to strip their captive. "Friends, friends!" exclaimed Alroy, "for there is no reason why you should not be friends, spare me, spare me. I am poor, I am young, I am innocent. I am neither a spy nor a merchant. I have no plots, no wealth. I am a pilgrim."

"A decided spy," exclaimed Scherirah; "they are ever pilgrims."

"He speaks too well to speak truth," exclaimed Kisloch.

"All talkers are liars," exclaimed Scherirah.

"That is why Kisloch is the most eloquent of the band."

"A jest at the banquet may prove a curse in the field," replied Kisloch.

"Pooh!" exclaimed Scherirah. "Fellows, why do you hesitate? Search the prisoner, I say!"

* In Persia, and the countries of the Tigris and Euphrates, the traveller sometimes arrives at deserted cities of great magnificence and antiquity. Such for instance, is the city of Anneh. I suppose Alroy to have entered one of the deserted capitals of the Seleucidæ. They are in general the haunt of bandits.

They advanced, they seized him. In vain he struggled.

"Captain," exclaimed one of the band, "he wears upon his breast a jewel!"

"I told you so," said the third robber.

"Give it me," said Scherirah.

But Alroy, in despair, at the thought of losing the talisman, remembering the injunction of Jabaster, and animated by supernatural courage, burst from his searchers, and seizing a brand from the fire, held them at bay.

"The fellow has spirit," said Scherirah, calmly.

"Tis pity, it will cost him his life."

"Bold man," exclaimed Alroy, "for a moment hear me! I am a pilgrim, poorer than a beggar. The jewel they talk of is a holy emblem, worthless to you, to me invaluable, and to be forfeited only by my life. You may be careless of that. Beware of your own. The first man who advances, dies. I pray you humbly, chieftain, let me go."

"Kill him!" said Scherirah.

"Stab him!" exclaimed Kisloch.

"Give me the jewel," said the third robber.

"God of David be my refuge, then!" exclaimed Alroy.

"He is a Hebrew, he is a Hebrew," exclaimed Scherirah, jumping up. "Spare him! spare him! my mother was a Jewess."

The assailants lowered their arms, and withdrew a few paces. Alroy still remained upon his guard.

"Valiant pilgrim," said Scherirah, advancing, with a softened voice, "are you for the holy city?"

"The city of my fathers."

"A perilous journey. And whence from?"

"Hamadan."

"A dreary way. You need repose. Your name?"

"David."

"David, you are among friends. Rest and repose in safety. You hesitate. Fear not! The memory of my mother is a charm that always changes me." Scherirah unsheathed his dagger, punctured his arm, and, throwing away his weapon, offered the bleeding member to Alroy. The prince of the captivity touched the open vein with his lips.

"My troth is pledged," said the bandit; "I can never betray him in whose veins my own blood is flowing.*" So saying, he led Alroy to his carpet.

IV.

"Eat, David," said Scherirah.

"I will eat bread," answered Alroy.

"What, have you had so much meat lately that you will refuse this delicate gazelle that I have brought down this morning with my own lance? 'Tis food for a caliph."

"I pray you give me bread."

"O! bread if you like. But that a man should prefer bread to meat, and such meat as this, 'tis miraculous."

"A thousand thanks, good Scherirah; but with our people the flesh of the gazelle is forbidden. It is unclean. Its foot is cloven."

"I have heard of these things," replied Scherirah, with a thoughtful air. "My mother was a

Jewess, and my father was a Kourid. Whichever be right, I hope to be saved."

"There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet!" exclaimed Kisloch; "though I drink wine. Your health, Hebrew."

"I will join you," said the third robber. "My father was a Guebre, and sacrificed his property to his faith; and the consequence is, his son has got neither."

"As for me," said a fourth robber, of very dark complexion and singularly small bright eyes, "I am an Indian, and I believe in the great golden figure with carbuncle eyes, in the temple of Delhi."

"I have no religion," said a tall negro, in a red turban, grinning with his white teeth; "they have none in my country, but if I had heard of your God before, Calidas, I would have believed in him."

"I almost wish I had been a Jew," exclaimed Scherirah, musing. "My mother was a good woman."

"The Jews are very rich," said the third robber.

"When you get to Jerusalem. David, you will see the Christians," continued Scherirah.

"The accursed Giaours," exclaimed Kisloch, "we are all against them."

"With their white faces," exclaimed the negro.

"And their blue eyes," said the Indian.

"What can you expect of men who live in a country without a sun!" observed the Guebre.

V.

ALROY awoke about two hours after midnight. His companions were in deep slumber. The moon had set, the fire had died away, a few red embers alone remaining; dark masses of shadow hung about the amphitheatre. He arose and cautiously stepped over the sleeping bandits. He was not, in strictness, a prisoner; but who could trust to the caprice of these lawless men? To-morrow might find him their slave, or their companion in some marauding expedition, which might make him almost retrace his steps to the Caucasus or to Hamadan. The temptation to ensure his freedom was irresistible. He clambered up the ruined wall, descended into the intricate windings that led to the Ionic fane, that served him as a beacon, hurried through the silent and starry streets, gained the great portal, and rushed once more into the desert.

A vague fear of pursuit made him continue his course many hours without resting. The desert again became sandy, the heat increased. The breeze that plays about the wilderness, and in early spring is often scented with the wild fragrance of aromatic plants, sank away. A lurid brightness suffused the heavens. An appalling stillness pervaded nature; even the insects were silent. For the first time in his pilgrimage, a feeling of deep despondency fell over the soul of Alroy. His energy appeared suddenly to have deserted him. A low hot wind began to rise, and fan his cheeks with pestiferous kisses, and enervate his frame with its poisonous embrace. His head and limbs ached with a dull sensation, more terrible than pain; his sight was dizzy, his tongue swollen. Vainly he looked around for aid, vainly he extended his forlorn arms, and wrung them to the remorseless heaven. Almost frantic with thirst, the boundless horizon of the desert disappeared, and the unhappy victim, in the midst of his torture, found himself apparently surrounded by

* From a story told by an Arab.

bright and running streams, the fleeting waters of the false mirage!

The sun became blood-red, the sky darker, the sand rose in fierce eddies, the moaning wind burst into shrieks and respired a more ardent and still more malignant breath. The pilgrim could no longer sustain himself. * Faith, courage, devotion, deserted him with his failing energies. He strove no longer with his destiny, he delivered himself up to despair and death. He fell upon one knee with drooping head, supporting himself by one quivering hand, and then, full of the anguish of baffled purposes and lost affections, raising his face and arm to heaven, thus to the elements he poured his passionate farewell.

"O life, once vainly deemed a gloomy toil, I feel thy sweetness now; farewell, O life, farewell my high resolves and proud conviction of almighty fame. My days, my short unprofitable days, melt into the past; and death, with which I struggle, horrible death, arrests me in this wildness. O my sister, could thy voice, thy sweet voice but murmur in my ear one single sigh of love; could thine eye with its soft radiance but an instant blend with my dim fading vision, the pang were nothing. Farewell, Miriam! my heart is with thee by thy fountain's side. Fatal blast, bear her my dying words, my blessing. And ye, too, friends, whose too neglected love I think of now, farewell! Farewell my uncle, farewell, pleasant home, and Hamadan's serene and shadowy bowers! Farewell, Jabaster, and the mighty lore of which thou wert the priest and I the pupil! Thy talisman throbs on my faithful heart. Green earth and golden sun, and all the beautiful and glorious sights ye fondly lavish on unthinking man, farewell, farewell! I die in the desert, 'tis bitter. No more, O! never more, for me the hopeful day shall break, and its fresh breeze rise on its cheering wings of health and joy. Heaven and earth, water and air, my chosen country, and my antique creed, farewell, farewell! And thou, too, city of my soul, I cannot name thee, unseen Jerusalem—"

Amid the roar of the wind, the bosom of the earth heaved and opened, swift columns of sand sprang up to the lurid sky, and hurried towards their victim. With the elang of universal chaos, impenetrable darkness descended on the desert.

PART V.

I.

"Now our dreary way is o'er, now the desert's toil is past. Soon the river broadly flowing through its green and palmy banks, to our wearied limbs shall offer baths which caliphs cannot buy. Allah-illah, Allah-hu. Allah-illah, Allah-hu."

"Blessed the man who now may bear a relic from our prophet's tomb, blessed the man who now unfolds the treasures of a distant mart, jewels of the dusky east, and silks of farthest Samarcand. Allah-illah, Allah-hu. Allah-illah, Allah-hu."

"Him the sacred mosque shall greet with a

reverence grave and low; him the busy Bezestein shall welcome with confiding smile. Holy merchant, now receive the double triumph of thy toil. Allah-illah, Allah-hu. Allah-illah, Allah-hu."

"The camel jibs, Abdallah! See, there is something in the track."

"By the holy stone,* a dead man. Poor devil! One should never make a pilgrimage on foot. I hate your humble piety. Prick the beast and he will pass the corpse."

"The prophet preaches charity, Abdallah. He has favoured my enterprise, and I will practise his precept. See if he be utterly dead."

It was the Mecca caravan returning to Bagdad. The pilgrims were within a day's journey of the Euphrates, and welcomed their approach to fertile earth with a triumphant chorus. Far as the eye could reach, the long line of their straggling procession stretched across the wilderness, thousands of camels in strings, laden with bales of merchandise, and each company headed by an animal of superior size, leading, with tinkling bells, groups of horsemen, clusters of litters; all the pilgrims armed to their teeth, the van formed by a strong division of Seljukian cavalry, and the rear protected by a Kourdish clan, who guaranteed the security of the pious travellers through their country.

Abdallah was the favourite slave of the charitable merchant Ali. In obedience to his master's orders, he unwillingly descended from his camel, and examined the body of the apparently lifeless Aloy.

"A Kourid, by his dress," exclaimed Abdallah, with a sneer, "what does he here?"

"It is not the face of a Kourid," replied Ali, "perchance a pilgrim from the mountains?"

"Whatever he be, he is dead," answered the slave: "I doubt not an accursed Giaour."

"God is great," exclaimed Ali, "he breathes; the breast of his caftan heaved."

"'Twas the wind," said Abdallah.

"'Twas the sigh of a human heart," answered Ali.

Several pilgrims who were on foot had now gathered round the group.

"I am a hakim,"† observed a dignified Armenian. "I will feel his pulse; 'tis dull, but it beats."

"There is but one God," exclaimed Ali.

"And Mohammed is his prophet," responded Abdallah. "You do not believe in him, you Armenian infidel."

"I am a hakim," replied the dignified Armenian. "Although an infidel, God has granted me skill to cure true believers. Worthy Ali, believe, the boy may yet live."

"Hakim, you shall count your own dirhems if he breathe in my divan in Bagdad," answered Ali; "I have taken a fancy to the boy. God has sent him to me. He shall carry my slippers."

"Give me a camel, and I will save his life."

"We have none," said the servant.

"Walk, Abdallah," said the master.

"Is a true believer to walk to save the life of a Kourid? Master slipper-bearer shall answer for

* The Caaba.—The Caaba is the same to the Mohammedan as the holy sepulchre to the Christian. It is the most unseemly, but the most sacred, part of the mosque at Mecca, and is a small, square stone building.

† *i. e.* Physician, an almost sacred character in the east. As all Englishmen travel with medicine chests, the Turks are not to be wondered at for considering us physicians.

* I have endeavoured to paint the simoom as I myself experienced it in the deserts of Upper Egypt. My friend and fellow traveller, Mr. Clay, has, I venture to state, not forgotten the awful day.

this, if there be any sweetness in the bastinado," murmured Abdallah.

The Armenian blooded Alroy; the blood flowed slowly but surely. The prince of the captivity opened his eyes.

"There is but one God!" exclaimed Ali.

"The evil eye fall on him!"* muttered Abdallah.

The Armenian took a cordial from his vest, and poured it down his patient's throat. The blood flowed more freely.

"He will live, worthy merchant," said the physician.

"And Mohammed is his prophet," continued Ali.

"By the stone of Mecca, I believe it is a Jew," shouted Abdallah.

"The dog!" exclaimed Ali.

"Pah!" said a negro slave, drawing back with disgust.

"He will die," said the Christian physician, not even binding up the vein.

"And be damned," said Abdallah, jumping again on his camel.

The party rode on, the caravan proceeded. A Kourdish horseman galloped forward. He curbed his steed as he passed Alroy bleeding to death.

"What accursed slave has wounded one of my clan?"

The Kourid jumped off his horse, stripped off a slip of his blue shirt, stanching the wound, and carried the unhappy Alroy to the rear.

The desert ceased, the caravan entered upon a vast but fruitful plain. In the extreme distance might be detected a long undulating line of palm trees. The vanguard gave a shout, shook their tall lances in the air, and rattled their cimeters in rude chorus against their small round iron shields. All eyes sparkled, all hands were raised, all voices sounded, save those that were breathless from overpowering joy. After months' wandering in the sultry wilderness they beheld the great Euphrates.

Broad, and fresh, and magnificent, and serene, the mighty waters rolled through the beautiful and fertile earth. A vital breeze rose from their bosom. Every being responded to their genial influence. The sick were cured, the desponding became sanguine, the healthy and light-hearted broke into shouts of laughter, jumped from their camels, and embraced the fragrant earth, or, wild in their renovated strength, galloped over the plain, and threw their wanton jerreds in the air,† as if to show their suffering and labour had not deprived them of that skill and strength, without which it were vain again to enter the haunts of their less adventurous brethren.

The caravan halted on the banks of the broad river glowing in the cool sunset. The camp was pitched, the plain glittered with tents. The camels falling on their knees, crouched in groups, the merchandise piled up in masses by their sides. The unharnessed horses rushed neighing about the plain, tossing their glad heads, and rolling in the unaccustomed pasture. Spreading their mats, and

kneeling towards Mecca, the pilgrims performed their evening orisons. Never was thanksgiving more sincere. They arose; some rushed into the river, some lighted lamps, some pounded coffee.* Troops of smiling villagers arrived with fresh provisions, eager to prey upon such light hearts and heavy purses. It was one of those occasions when the accustomed gravity of the orient disappears. Long through the night the sounds of music and the shouts of laughter were heard on the banks of that starry river, long through the night you might have listened with enchantment to the wild tales of the storier, or gazed with fascination on the wilder gestures of the dancing girls.†

II.

THE great bazaar of Bagdad afforded a very animated and sumptuous spectacle on the day after the arrival of the caravan. All the rare and costly products of the world were collected in that celebrated mart—the shawls of Cashmere and the silks of Syria, the ivory, and plumes, and gold of Africa, the jewels of Ind, the talismans of Egypt, the perfumes and manuscripts of Persia, the spices and gums of Araby, beautiful horses, more beautiful slaves, cloaks of sable, pelisses of ermine, armour alike magnificent in ornament and temper, rare animals, still rarer birds, blue apes in silver collars, white gazelles bound by a golden chain, grayhounds, peacocks, paroquets. And everywhere strange, and busy, and excited groups; men of all nations, creeds, and climes—the sumptuous and haughty Turk, the graceful and subtle Arab, the Hebrew with his black cap and anxious countenance; the Armenian Christian, with his dark flowing robes, and mild demeanour, and serene visage. Here strutted the lively, affected, and superfluous Persian; and there the Circassian stalked with his long hair and chain cuirass. The fair Georgian jostled the ebony form of the merchant of Dongola or Sennaar.

Through the long, narrow, arched, and winding streets of the bazaar, lined on each side with loaded stalls, all was bustle, bargaining, and barter. A passenger approached, apparently of no common rank. Two pages preceded him, beautiful Georgian boys, clothed in crimson cloth, and caps of the

* The origin of the use of coffee is obscure; but there is great reason to believe that it had not been introduced in the time of Alroy. When we consider that the life of an oriental at the present day mainly consists in drinking coffee and smoking tobacco, we cannot resist from asking ourselves, "What did he do before either of these comparatively modern inventions was discovered?" For a long time, I was inclined to suspect that tobacco might have been in use in Asia before it was introduced into Europe; but a passage in old Sandys, in which he mentions the wretched tobacco smoked in Turkey, and accounts for it by that country being supplied by "the dregs of our markets," demonstrates, that in his time, there was no native growth in Asia. Yet the choicest tobaccos are now grown on the coast of Syria, the real Levant. But did the Asiatics smoke any other plant or substance before tobacco? In Syria, at the present day, they smoke a plant called *timbac*; the Chinese smoke opium; the artificial preparations for the hookah are known to all Indians. I believe, however, that these are all refinements, and for this reason, that in the classic writers, who were as well acquainted with the oriental nations as ourselves, we find no allusion to the practice of smoking. The anachronism of the pipe I have not therefore ventured to commit, and that of coffee will, I trust, be pardoned. See a short Essay on Oriental Smoking, in the New Monthly Magazine for September, 1832, for an account of the eastern tobaccos.

† These dancing girls abound throughout Asia. The most famous are the Alwyn of Egypt, and the Nautch of India. These last are a caste, the first only a profession.

* The superstition of the evil eye is well known, and is prevalent throughout the Levant.

† The Persians are more famous for throwing the jerred than any other nation. A Persian gentleman, while riding quietly by your side, will suddenly dash off at full gallop, then suddenly check his horse, and take a long aim with his lance with admirable precision. I should doubt, however, whether he could hurl a lance a greater distance, or with greater force and effect, than a Nubian, who will fix a mark at sixty yards with his javelin.

same material, setting tight to their heads, with long golden tassels. One bore a blue velvet bag, and the other a clasped and richly bound volume. Four footmen, armed, followed their master, who rode behind the pages on a milk-white mule. He was a man of middle age, eminently handsome. His ample robes concealed the only fault in his appearance, a figure which indulgence had rendered somewhat ample. His eyes were large, and soft, and dark; his nose aquiline, but delicately moulded; his mouth small, and beautifully proportioned; his lip full and red; his teeth regular and dazzling white. His ebony beard flowed, but not at too great a length, in graceful and natural curls, and was richly perfumed; a delicate mustachio shaded his upper lip, but no whisker was permitted to screen the form and shroud the lustre of his oval countenance and brilliant complexion. Altogether, the animal, perhaps, predominated too much in the expression of the stranger's countenance; but genius beamed from his passionate eye, and craft lay concealed in that subtle lip. The dress of the rider was sumptuous. His turban, formed by a scarlet Cashmere shawl, was of great breadth, and, concealing half of his white forehead, increased by the contrast the radiant height of the other. His under vest was of white Damascus silk, stiff with silver embroidery, and confined by a girdle formed by a Brusca scarf of gold stuff, and holding a dagger, whose hilt appeared blazing with brilliants and rubies. His loose and exterior robe was of crimson cloth. His white hands sparkled with rings, and his ears glittered with pendulous gems.

"Who is this?" asked an Egyptian merchant, in a low whisper, of the dealer whose stuffs he was examining.

"Tis the Lord Honain," replied the dealer.

"And who may he be?" continued the Egyptian. "Is he the caliph's son?"

"Poh! a much greater man—his physician."

The white mule stopped at the very stall where this conversation was taking place. The pages halted, and stood on each side of their master—the footmen kept off the crowd.

"Merchant," said Honain, with a gracious smile of condescension, and with a voice musical as a flute, "Merchant, did you obtain me my wish?"

"There is but one God," replied the dealer, who was the charitable Ali, "and Mohammed is his prophet. I succeeded, please your highness, in seeing at Aleppo the accursed Giaour of whom I spoke, and, behold, that which you desired is here." So saying, Ali produced several Greek manuscripts, and offered them to his visiter.

"Hah!" said Honain, with a sparkling eye, "'tis well—their cost?"

"The infidel would not part with them under five hundred dirhems," replied Ali.

"Ibrahim, see that this worthy merchant receive a thousand."

"As many thanks, my Lord Honain."

The caliph's physician bowed gracefully.

"Advance, pages," continued Honain. "Why this stoppage? Ibrahim, see that our way be cleared. What is all this?"

A crowd of men advanced, pulling along a youth, who, almost exhausted, still singly struggled with his ungenerous adversaries.

"The cadi, the cadi," cried the foremost of them, who was Abdallah, "drag him to the cadi."

"Noble lord," cried the youth, extricating him-

self by a sudden struggle from the grasp of his captors, and seizing the robe of Honain, "I am innocent and injured. I pray thy help."

"The cadi, the cadi," exclaimed Abdallah; "the knave has stolen my ring—the ring given me by my faithful Fatima on our marriage day, and which I would not part with for my master's stores."

The youth still clung to the robe of Honain and, mute from exhaustion, fixed upon him his beautiful and imploring eye.

"Silence!" proclaimed Honain; "I will judge this cause."

"The Lord Honain, the Lord Honain—listen to the Lord Honain."

"Speak, thou brawler; of what hast thou to complain?" said Honain to Abdallah.

"May it please your highness," said Abdallah, in a whining voice, "I am the slave of your faithful servant, Ali. Often have I had the honour of waiting on your highness. This young knave here, a beggar, has robbed me, while slumbering in a coffee-house, of a ring—I have my witnesses to prove my slumbering. 'Tis a fine emerald, may it please your highness, and doubly valuable to me as a love-token from my Fatima. No consideration in the world could induce me to part with it; and so, being asleep—here are three honest men who will prove the sleep—comes this little vagabond, may it please your highness, who, while he pretends to offer me my coffee, takes him my finger, and slips off this precious ring, which he now wears upon his own beggarly paw, and will not restore to me without the bastinado."

"Abdallah is a faithful slave, may it please your highness, and a Hadgee," said Ali, his master.

"And what sayest thou, boy?" inquired Honain.

"That this is a false knave, who lies as slaves ever will."

"Pithy, and perhaps true," said Honain.

"You call me a slave, you young scoundrel!" exclaimed Abdallah; "shall I tell you what you are? Why, your highness, do not listen to him a moment. It is a shame to bring such a creature into your presence; for, by the holy stone, and I am a Hadgee, I doubt little he is a Jew."

Honain grew somewhat pale, and bit his lip. He was perhaps annoyed that he had interfered so publicly in behalf of so unpopular a character as a Hebrew; but he was unwilling to desert one whom a moment before he had resolved to befriend, and he inquired of the youth where he had obtained the ring.

"The ring was given to me by my dearest friend when I first set out upon an arduous pilgrimage not yet completed. There is but one person in the world, except the donor, to whom I would part with it, and with that person I am unacquainted. All this may seem improbable, but all this is true, I have truth alone to support me. I am destitute and friendless; but I am not a beggar, nor will any suffering induce me to become one. Feeling, from various circumstances, utterly exhausted, I entered a coffee-house and laid down, it may have been to die. I could not sleep, although my eyes were shut, and nothing would have aroused me from a tremulous trance which I thought was dying, but this plunderer here, who would not wait until death had permitted him quietly to possess himself of a jewel I value more than life."

"Show me the jewel."

The youth held up his hand to Honain, who felt his pulse, and then took off the ring.

"O, my Fatima!" exclaimed Abdallah.

"Silence, sir!" said Honain. "Page, call a jeweller."

Honain examined the ring very attentively. Whether he were near-sighted, or whether the deceptive light of the covered bazaar prevented him from examining it with ease, he certainly raised his hand to his brow, and for some moments his countenance was invisible.

The jeweller arrived, and pressing his hand to his heart, bowed before Honain.

"Value this ring," said Honain, in a low voice.

The jeweller took the ring, viewed it in all directions with a scrutinizing glance, held it to the light, pressed it to his tongue, turned it over and over, and finally declared he could not sell such a ring under a thousand dirhems.

"Whatever be the justice of the case," said Honain to Abdallah, "art thou ready to part with this ring for a thousand dirhems?"

"Most certainly," said Abdallah.

"And thou, lad, if the decision be in thy favour, wilt thou take for the ring double the worth at which the jeweller prizes it?"

"My lord, I have spoken the truth. I cannot part with that ring for the palace of the caliph."

"The truth for once is triumphant," said Honain. "Boy, the ring is thine; and for thee, thou knave," turning to Abdallah, "liar, thief, and slanderer! for thee the *bastinado** thou destined for this innocent youth. Ibrahim, see that he receives five hundred. Young pilgrim, thou art no longer destitute or friendless. Follow me to my palace."

III.

THE arched chamber was of great size and beautiful proportion. The ceiling, encrusted with green fretwork, and studded with silver stars, rested upon clustered columns of white and green marble. In the centre of a variegated pavement of the same material, a fountain rose and fell into a green porphyry basin, and by the side of the fountain, upon a couch of silver, reposed Honain.

He raised his eyes from the illuminated volume on which he had been long intent, he clapped his hands, and a Nubian slave advanced, and folding his arms upon his breast, bowed in silence before his lord.

"How fares the Hebrew boy, Alnaschar?"

"Master, the fever has not returned. We gave him the potion; he slumbered for many hours, and has now wakened, weak but well."

"Let him rise and attend me."

The Nubian disappeared.

"There is nothing stranger than sympathy," soliloquized the physician of the caliph, with a meditative air; "all resolves itself into this principle, and I confess this learned doctor treats it deeply and well. An erudite spirit truly, and an eloquent pen; yet he refines too much. 'Tis too scholastic. Observation will teach us more than dogma. Meditating upon my passionate youth, I gathered wisdom. I have seen so much that I have ceased to

wonder. However we doubt, there is a mystery beyond our penetration. And yet 'tis near our grasp. I sometimes deem a step, a single step would launch us into light. Here comes my patient. The rose has left his cheek, and his deep brow is wan and melancholy. Yet 'tis a glorious visage—meditation's throne; and passion lingers in that languid eye. I know not why, a strong attraction draws me to this lone child.

"Gentle stranger, how fares it with thee?"

"Very well, my lord. I come to thank thee for all thy goodness. My only thanks are words, and those too weak ones; and yet the orphan's blessing is a treasure."

"You are an orphan, then?"

"I have no parent but my father's God."

"And that God is—"

"The God of Israel."

"So I deemed. He is a Deity we all must honour, if he be the great Creator, whom we all allow."

"He is what he is, and we are what we are—a fallen people, but faithful still."

"Fidelity is strength."

"Thy words are truth, and strength must triumph."

"A prophecy!"

"Many a prophet is little honoured, till the future proves his inspiration."

"You are young and sanguine."

"So was my ancestor within the vale of Elah. But I speak unto a Moslem, and this is foolishness."

"I have read something, and can take your drift. As for my faith, I believe in truth, and wish all men to do the same. By-the-by, might I inquire the name of him who is the inmate of my house?"

"They call me David."

"David, you have a ring, an emerald cut with curious characters, Hebrew, I believe."

"'Tis here."

"A fine stone, and this inscription means—"

"A simple legend—'*Parted, but one,*'—the kind memorial of a brother's love."

"Your brother?"

"I never had a brother."

"I have a silly fancy for this ring: you hesitate. Search my palace, and choose the treasure that you deem its match."

"Noble sir, the gem is little worth; but were it such might deck a caliph's brow, 'twere a poor recompense for all thy goodness. This ring is a trust rather than a possession, and strange to say, although I cannot offer it to thee who may command, as thou hast saved, the life of its unhappy wearer, some stranger may cross my path to-morrow, and almost claim it as his own."

"And that stranger is—"

"The brother of the donor."

"The brother of Jabaster?"

"Jabaster!"

"Even so. I am that parted brother."

"Great is the God of Israel! Take the ring. But what is this! the brother of Jabaster a turbaned chieftain!—a Moslem! Say, O! but say that thou hast not assumed their base belief,—say, O! but say, that thou hast not become a traitor to our covenant, and I will bless the fortunes of this hour."

"I am false to no God. Calm thyself, sweet youth. These are higher questions than thy faint

* The *bastinado* is the common punishment of the east, and an effective and dreadful one. It is administered on the soles of the feet, the instrument a long cane or palm branch. Public executions are very rare.

strength can master now. Another time we'll talk of this, my boy. At present of my brother and thyself. He lives and prospers?"

"He lives in faith; the pious ever prosper."

"A glorious dreamer! Though our moods are different, I ever loved him. And thyself! Thou art not what thou seemest. Tell me all. Jabaster's friend can be no common mind. Thy form has heralded thy fame. Trust me."

"I am Alroy."

"What! the prince of our captivity?"

"Even so."

"The slayer of Alschiroch?"

"Ay!"

"My sympathy was prophetic. I loved thee from the first. And what dost thou here? A price is set upon thy head: thou knowest it?"

"For the first time; but I am neither astonished nor alarmed. I am upon the Lord's business."

"What wouldst thou?"

"Free his people."

"The pupil of Jabaster: I see it all. Another victim to his reveries. I'll save this boy. David, for thy name must not be sounded within this city, the sun is dying. Let us to the terrace and seek the solace of the twilight breeze."

IV.

"WHAT is the hour, David?"

"Near at midnight. I marvel if thy brother may read in the stars our happy meeting."

"Men read that which they wish. He is a learned cabalist."

"But what we wish comes from above."

"So they say. We make our fortunes, and we call them fate."

"Yet the Voice sounded—the Daughter of the Voice that summoned Samuel."

"You have told me strange things; I have heard stranger solved."

"My faith is a rock."

"On which you may split."

"Art thou a Sadducee?"

"I am a man who knows men."

"You are learned, but different from Jabaster."

"We are the same, though different. Day and night are both portions of time."

"And thy portion is—"

"Truth."

"That is, light."

"Yes; so dazzling that it sometimes seems dark."

"Like thy meaning."

"You are young."

"Is youth a defect?"

"No, the reverse. But we cannot eat the fruit while the tree is in blossom."

"What fruit?"

"Knowledge."

"I have studied."

"What?"

"All sacred things."

"How know you that they are sacred?"

"They come from God."

"So does every thing. Is every thing sacred?"

"They are the deep expression of his will."

"According to Jabaster. Ask the man who prays in yonder mosque, and he will tell you that Jabaster's wrong."

"After all, thou art a Moslem?"

"No."

"What then?"

"I have told you—a man."

"But what dost thou worship?"

"What is worship?"

"Adoration due from the creature to the Creator."

"Which is he?"

"Our God."

"The God of Israel?"

"Even so."

"A frail minority, then, burn him incense."

"We are the chosen people."

"Chosen for scoffs, and scorns, and contumelies. Commend me to such choice."

"We forgot him, before he chastened us."

"Why did we?"

"Thou knowest the records of our holy race."

"Yes, I know them: like all records, annals of blood."

"Annals of victory, that will dawn again."

"If redemption be but another name for carnage, I envy no Messiah."

"Art thou Jabaster's brother?"

"So our mother was wont to say: a meek and blessed woman."

"Lord Honain, thou art rich, and wise, and powerful. Thy fellow-men speak of thee only with praise or fear, and both are cheering. Thou hast quitted our antique ark; why—no matter. We'll not discuss it. 'Tis something, if a stranger, at least thou art not a renegade. The world goes well with thee, my lord Honain. But if instead of bows and blessings, thou, like thy brethren, wert greeted only with the cuff and curse; if thou didst rise each morning only to feel existence was dishonour, and to find thyself marked out among surrounding men as something foul and fatal: if it were thy lot, like theirs, at best to drag on a mean and dull career, hopeless and aimless, or with no other hope or aim but that which is degrading, and all this too with a keen sense of thy intrinsic worth, and deep conviction of superior race; why then perchance Honain might even discover 'twere worth a struggle to be free and honoured."

"I pray your pardon, sir, I thought you were Jabaster's pupil, a dreaming student. I see you have a deep ambition."

"I am a prince; and I fain would be a prince without my fetters."

"Listen to me, Alroy," said Honain in a low voice, and he placed his arm round his waist, "I am your friend. Our acquaintance is very brief: no matter, I love you. I rescued you in injury, I tended you in sickness, even now your life is in my power; I would protect it with my own. You cannot doubt me. Our affections are not under our own control; and mine are yours. The sympathy between us is entire. You see me, you see what I am: a Hebrew, though unknown, one of that despised, rejected, persecuted people, of whom you are the chief. I too would be free and honoured. Freedom and honour are mine, but I was my own Messiah. I quitted in good time our desperate cause, but I gave it a trial. Ask Jabaster how I fought. Youth could be my only excuse for such indiscretion. I left this country, I studied, and resided among the Greeks. I returned from Constantinople with all their learning, some of their craft. No one knew me. I assumed their turban, and I am the Lord Honain. Take my experience, child, and save

yourself much sorrow. Turn your late adventure to good account. No one can recognise you here. I will introduce you among the highest as my child, by some fair Greek. The world is before you. You may fight, you may love, you may revel. War and women, and luxury, are all at your command. With your person and talents you may be grand vizier. Clear your head of nonsense. In the present disordered state of the empire, you may even carve yourself out a kingdom, infinitely more delightful than the barren land of milk and honey. I have seen it, child; a rocky wilderness, where I would not let my courser graze."

He bent down, and fixed his eyes upon his companion with a scrutinizing glance. The moonlight fell upon the resolved visage of the prince of the captivity.

"Honain," he replied, pressing his hand, "I thank thee. Thou knowest not me, but still I thank thee."

"You are resolved then on destruction."

"On glory, eternal glory."

"Is it possible to succeed?"

"Is it possible to fail?"

"You are mad!"

"I am a believer."

"Enough. Not another word. You have yet one chance. My brother has saddled your enterprise with a condition, and an impossible one. Gain the sceptre of Solomon, and I will agree to be your subject. You will waste a year in this frolic. You are young, and can afford it. I trust you will experience nothing worse than a loss of time, which is, however, very valuable. My duty will be, after all your sufferings, to send you forth on your adventures in good condition, and to provide you means for a less toilsome pilgrimage than has hitherto been your lot. Trust me, you will return to Bagdad to accept my offers. At present, the dews are descending, and we will return to our divan, and take some coffee."

V.

SOME few days after this conversation on the terrace, as Alroy was reclining in a bower, in the beautiful garden of his host, meditating on the future, some one touched him on the back. He looked up. It was Honain.

"Follow me," said the brother of Jabaster.

The prince rose, and followed him in silence. They entered the house, and passing through the saloon already described, they proceeded down a long gallery, which terminated in an arched flight of broad steps, leading to the river. A boat was fastened to the end of the stairs, floating on the blue line of the Tigris bright in the sun.

Honain now gave to Alroy a velvet bag, which he requested him to carry, and then they descended the steps and entered the covered boat; and, without any directions to the rower, they were soon skimming over the water. By the sound of passing vessels and occasional shouts of the boatmen, Alroy, although he could observe nothing, was conscious that for some time their course lay through a principal thoroughfare of the city; but by degrees the sounds became less frequent, and in time entirely died away, and all that caught his ear was the regular and monotonous stroke of their own oar.

At length, after the lapse of nearly an hour from their entrance, the boat stopped, and was moored

against a quay. The curtains were withdrawn, and Honain and his companion disembarked.

A low but very extensive building, painted in white and gold arabesque, and irregular but picturesque in form, with many small domes, and tall thin towers, rose amid groves of eypress on the banks of the broad and silent river. The rapid stream had carried them far from the city, which was visible, but distant. Around was no habitation, no human being. The opposite bank was occupied by enclosed gardens. Not even a boat passed.

Honain, beckoning to Alroy to accompany him, but still silent, advanced to a small portal, and knocked. It was instantly opened by a single Nubian, who bowed reverently as the visitors passed him. They proceeded along a low and gloomy passage, covered with arches of fretwork, until they arrived at a door of tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl.* Here Honain, who was in advance, turned round to Alroy, and said, "Whatever happen, and whoever may address you, as you value your life and mine, do not speak."

The door opened, and they found themselves in a vast and gorgeous hall. Pillars of many-coloured marbles rose from a red and blue pavement of the same material, and supported a vaulted, circular, and highly-embossed roof of purple, scarlet and gold.† Around a fountain, which rose fifty-feet in height from an immense basin of lapis-lazuli, and reclining on small yellow Barbary mats, was a group of Nubian eunuchs dressed in rich habits of scarlet and gold,‡ and armed with ivory battle-axes, the white handles worked in precious arabesque, finely contrasting with the blue and brilliant blades.

The commander of the eunuch-guard rose on seeing Honain, and pressing his hand to his head, mouth and heart, saluted him. The physician of the caliph motioning Alroy to remain, advanced some paces in front of him, and entered into a whispering conversation with the eunuch. After a few minutes, this officer resumed his seat, and Honain, beckoning to Alroy to rejoin him, crossed the hall.

Passing through an open arch, they entered a quadrangular court of roses,§ each bed of flowers surrounded by a stream of sparkling water, and floating like an enchanted islet upon a fairy ocean. The sound of the water and the sweetness of the flowers blended together, and produced a lulling sensation which nothing but his strong and strange curiosity might have enabled Alroy to resist. Proceeding along a cloister of light airy workmanship which connected the hall with the remainder of the buildings, they stood before a lofty and sumptuous portal.

It was a monolite gate, thirty feet in height, formed of one block of green and red jasper, and cut into the fanciful undulating arch of the Saracens. The consummate artist had seized the

* This elegant mode of inlay is common in oriental palaces, and may be observed also in Allahimtra, at Granada.

† In the very first style of Saracenic architecture. See the hall of the ambassadors in Allahimtra, and many other chambers in that exquisite creation.

‡ Thus the guard of Nubian eunuchs of the present pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, or rather caliph, a title which he wishes to assume. They ride upon white horses.

§ So in Allahimtra, "THE COURT OF MYRTLES," leading to the court of columns, wherein is the famous fountain of lions.

advantage afforded to him by the ruddy veins of the precious stone, and had formed them in bold relief into two vast and sinuous serpents, which shot forth from their crested heads and glittering eyes at Honain and his companion.

The physician of the caliph taking his dagger from his girdle, struck one of the heads of the serpents thrice. The massy portal opened with a whirl and a roar, and before them stood an Abyssinian giant,* holding in his leash a roaring lion.

"Hush! Haroun," said Honain to the animal, raising at the same time his arm, and the beast crouched in silence. "Worthy Morgargon, I bring you a remembrance." The Abyssinian showed his tusks, larger and whiter than the lion's, as he grinningly received the tribute of the courtly Honain; and he uttered a few uncouth sounds, but he could not speak, for he was a mute.

The jasper portal introduced the companions to a long and lofty and arched chamber, lighted by high windows of stained glass, hung with tapestry of silk and silver, covered with prodigious carpets, and surrounded by immense couches. And thus through similar chambers they proceeded, in some of which were signs of recent habitation, until they arrived at another quadrangle nearly filled by a most singular fountain which rose from a basin of gold encrusted with pearls, and which was surrounded by figures of every rare quadruped† in the most costly materials. Here a golden tiger with flaming eyes of ruby, and flowing stripes of opal, stole, after some bloody banquet, to the refreshing brink; a camelopard raised its slender neck of silver from the centre of a group of every inhabitant of the forest, and brilliant bands of monkeys glittering with precious stones, rested, in every variety of fantastic posture, on the margin of the basin.

The fountain itself was a tree of gold and silver,‡ spreading into innumerable branches, covered with every variety of curious birds, their plumage appropriately imitated by the corresponding tints of precious stones, and which warbled in beautiful melody as they poured forth from their bills the musical and refreshing element.

It was with difficulty that Aloy could refrain from an admiring exclamation, but Honain, ever quick, turned to him, with his finger pressed on his mouth, and quitting the quadrangle, they entered the gardens.

Lofty terraces, dark masses of cypress, winding walks of acacia, in the distance an interminable paradise, and here and there a glittering pavilion and bright kiosk! Its appearance on the river had not prepared Aloy for the extent of the palace itself. It seemed infinite, and it was evident that he had only viewed a very small portion of it.

* A giant is still a common appendage to an oriental court even at the present day. See a very amusing story in the picturesque "Persian Sketches" of that famous echee, Sir John Malcolm.

† "The hall of audience," says Gibbon, from Cardonne, speaking of the magnificence of the Saracen of Cordova, "was encrusted with gold and pearls, and a great basin in the centre was surrounded with the curious and costly figures of birds and quadrupeds."—*Decline and Fall*, vol. x. p. 39.

‡ Among the other spectacles of rare and stupendous luxury, was a tree of gold and silver, spreading into eighteen large branches, on which, and on the lesser boughs, sat a variety of birds made of the same precious metals, as well as the leaves of the tree. While the machinery effected spontaneous motions, the several birds warbled their natural harmony."—*Gibbon*, vol. x. p. 38, from Abulfeda describing the court of the caliphs of Bagdad in the decline of their power.

While they were moving on, there suddenly arose the sound of trumpets. The sound grew nearer and nearer, louder and louder: soon was heard the tramp of an approaching troop. Honain drew Aloy aside. A procession appeared advancing from a dark grove of cypress. Four hundred men led as many white bloodhounds with collars of gold and rubies.* Then came one hundred men, each with a hooded hawk. Then six horsemen in rich dresses. After them a single horseman, mounted on a steed, marked on its forehead with a star.† The rider was middle aged, handsome, and dignified. He was plainly dressed, but the staff of his hunting spear was entirely of diamonds, and the blade of gold. He was followed by a company of Nubian eunuchs, with their scarlet dresses and ivory battle-axes, and the procession closed.

"The caliph," whispered Honain, when they passed, placing at the same time his finger on his lip, to prevent any inquiry. This was the first intimation that had reached Aloy of what he had already suspected, that he was a visiter to the palace of the commander of the faithful.

The companions turned down a wild and winding walk, which, after some time, brought them to a small and gently sloping lawn, surrounded by cedar trees of great size. Upon the lawn was a kiosk, a long and many-windowed building, covered with blinds, and further screened by an overhanging roof. The kiosk was built of white and green marble, and ascended by a flight of steps the length of the building, alternately of white and green marble, and nearly covered with rose trees. Honain ascended these steps alone, and entered the kiosk. After a few minutes, he looked out from the blinds and beckoned to Aloy. David advanced, but Honain, fearful of some indiscretion, met him, and said to him in a low whisper between his teeth, "remember you are deaf, a mute, and a eunuch." Aloy could scarcely refrain from smiling, and the prince of the captivity and the physician of the caliph entered the kiosk together. Two women, veiled, and two eunuchs of the guard received them in an antechamber. And then they passed into a room which ran nearly the whole length of the kiosk, opening on one side to the gardens, and on the other supported by an ivory wall with niches painted in green fresco, and in each niche a rose tree. Each niche, also, was covered with an almost invisible golden grate, which confined a nightingale and made him constant to the rose he loved. At the foot of each niche was a fountain, but instead of water, each basin was replenished with the purest quicksilver.‡ The roof of the kiosk was of mother-of-pearl, inlaid with tortoise shell; the pavement, a mosaic of rare marbles and precious stones, representing the most delicious fruits, and the most beautiful flowers. Over this pavement a Georgian page flung at intervals refreshing perfumes. At the end of this elegant chamber was a divan of light green silk, embroidered with pearls, and covered with cushions of white satin and gold. Upon one of these cushions, in the middle of the divan, sat a lady, her eyes fixed in abstraction upon a

* I have somewhere read of an Indian or Persian monarch whose coursing was conducted in this gorgeous style: if I remember right, it was Mahmoud the Gaznevide.

† The sacred steed of Solomon.

‡ In a lofty pavilion of the gardens, one of those basins and fountains so delightful in a sultry climate, was replenished, not with water, but with the purest quicksilver."—*Gibbon*, vol. x. from Cardonne.

volume of Persian poesy reclining on her knees, one hand playing with a rosary of pearls and emeralds,* and the other holding a long gold chain, which imprisoned a white gazelle.

The lady looked up as Honain and his companion entered. She was very young, as youthful as Alroy. Her long light brown hair, drawn off a high white forehead covered with blue veins, fell braided with pearls over each other. Her eyes were very large, and deeply blue. Her nose small, but high and aquiline. The fairness of her face was dazzling, and when she looked up and greeted Honain, her lustrous cheeks broke into dimples, which was more fascinating from their contrast with the general expression of her countenance, which was haughty and derisive. The lady was dressed in a robe of crimson silk, girded round her waist by a green shawl, from which peeped forth the diamond hilt of a very small poniard.† Her round white arms looked infinitely small, as they occasionally flashed forth from their large loose hanging sleeves. One was covered with jewels, and the right arm was quite bare.

Honain advanced, and bending, kissed the lady's proffered hand. Alroy fell into the background.

"They told me that the Rose of the World drooped this morning," said the physician, bending again as he smiled, "and her slave hastened at her command to tend her."

"It was a south wind. The wind has changed, and the Rose of the World is better," replied the lady, laughing.

Honain touched her pulse.

"Irregular," said the physician.

"Like myself," said the lady. "Is that a new slave?"

"A recent purchase, and a great bargain. He is good-looking, has the advantage of being deaf and dumb, and is harmless in every respect."

"'Tis a pity," replied the lady; "it seems that all good-looking people are born to be useless. I, for instance."

"Yet rumour whispers the reverse," remarked the physician.

"How so?" inquired the lady.

"The young King of Karasme."

"Poh! I have made up my mind to detest him. A barbarian!"

"A hero!"

"Did you ever see him?"

"I have."

"Handsome?"

"An archangel."

"And sumptuous?"

"Is he not a conqueror? All the plunder of the world will be yours."

"I am tired of magnificence. I built this kiosk to forget it."

"It is not in the least degree splendid," said Honain, looking round with a smile.

"No," answered the lady, with a self-satisfied air; "here at least one can forget one has the misfortune to be a princess."

"It is certainly a great misfortune," said the physician.

"And yet it must be the only tolerable lot," replied the lady.

"Assuredly," replied Honain.

"For our unhappy sex, at least."

"Very unhappy."

"If I were only a man!"

"What a hero you would be!"

"I should like to live in endless confusion."

"I have not the least doubt of it."

"Have you got me the books?" eagerly inquired the princess.

"My slave bears them," replied Honain.

"Let me see them directly."

Honain took the bag from Alroy, and unfolded its contents—the very volumes of Greek romances which Ali, the merchant, had obtained for him.

"I am tired of poetry," said the princess, glancing over the costly volumes and tossing them away. "I long to see the world."

"You would soon be tired of that," replied the physician.

"I suppose common people are never tired," said the princess.

"Except with labour," said the physician; "care keeps them alive."

"What is care?" asked the princess, with a smile.

"It is a god," replied the physician, "invisible, but omnipotent. It steals the bloom from the cheek and lightness from the pulse—it takes away the appetite, and turns the hair gray."

"It is no true divinity, then," replied the princess, "but an idol we make ourselves. I am a sincere Moslem, and will not worship it. Tell me some news, Honain."

"The young King of Karasme—"

"Again! the barbarian! You are in his pay. I'll none of him. To leave one prison, and to be shut up in another—why do you remind me of it? No, my dear hakim, if I marry at all, I will marry to be free."

"An impossibility," said Honain.

"My mother was free till she was a queen and a slave. I intend to end as she began. You know what she was."

Honain knew well, but he was too politic not to affect ignorance.

"The daughter of a bandit," continued the princess, "who fought by the side of her father. That is existence! I must be a robber. 'Tis in the blood. I want my fate foretold, Honain. You are an astrologer; do it."

"I have already cast your nativity. Your star is a comet."

"That augurs well; brilliant confusion and erratic splendour. I wish I were a star," added the princess in a deep rich voice, and with a pensive air; "a star in the clear blue sky, beautiful and free. Honain, Honain, the gazelle has broken her chain, and is eating my roses."

Alroy rushed forward and seized the graceful truant. Honain shot him an anxious look; the princess received the chain from the hand of Alroy, and cast at him a scrutinizing glance.

"What splendid eyes the poor beast has got!" exclaimed the princess.

"The gazelle?" inquired the physician.

"No, your slave," replied the princess. "Why, he blushes! Were he not deaf as well as dumb, I could almost believe he understood me."

"He is very modest," replied Honain, rather

* Moslem of rank are never without the rosary, sometimes of amber and rare woods, sometimes of jewels. The most esteemed, is of that peculiar substance called Mecca wood.

† The ensignia of a royal female.

alarmed; "and is frightened at the liberty he has taken."

"I like modesty," said the princess; "it is so interesting. I am modest; don't you think so?"

"Certainly," said Honain.

"And interesting?"

"Very."

"I detest an interesting person. After all, there is nothing like plain dulness."

"Nothing," said Honain.

"The day flows on so serenely in such society."

"It does," said Honain.

"No confusion; no scenes."

"None."

"I make it a rule only to have ugly slaves."

"You are quite right."

"Honain, will you ever contradict me? You know very well I have the handsomest slaves in the world."

"Every one knows it."

"And do you know I have taken a very great fancy to your new purchase, who, according to your account, is eminently qualified for the post. Why, you don't agree with me!"

"Why, yes; I doubt not your highness would find him eminently qualified, and certainly few things would give me greater pleasure than offering him for your acceptance; but I got into such disgrace by that late affair of the Circassian, that—"

"O! leave it to me, leave it to me," said the princess.

"Certainly," said the physician, turning the conversation; "and when the young King of Karsame arrives at Bagdad, you can offer him to his majesty as a present."

"Delightful! and the king is really handsome and young as well as brave; but has he any taste?"

"You have enough for both."

"If he would but make war against the Greeks!"

"Why so violent against the poor Greeks?"

"You know they are Giaours. Besides, they might beat him, and then I should have the pleasure of being taken prisoner."

"Delightful!"

"Charming! to see Constantinople and marry the emperor!"

"Marry the emperor!"

"To be sure. Of course he would fall in love with me."

"Of course."

"And then—and then, I might conquer Paris!"

"Paris!"

"You have been at Paris?"*

"Yes."

"The men are shut up there," said the princess, with a smile, "are they not? and the women do what they like?"

"You will always do what you like," said Honain, rising.

"You are going?"

"My visits must not be too long."

"Farewell, dear Honain!" said the princess with a melancholy air. "You are the only person who has an idea in all Bagdad, and you leave me.

A miserable lot is mine, to feel every thing, and be nothing. These books and flowers, these sweet birds, and this fair gazelle—ah! poets may feign as they please, but how cheerfully would I resign all these elegant consolations of a captive life for one hour of freedom. I wrote some verses on myself yesterday; take them, and get them blazoned for me by the finest scribe in the city; letters of silver on a violet ground with a fine flowing border; I leave the design to you. Adieu! Come hither, mute." Alroy advanced to her beckon, and knelt. "There, take that rosary for thy master's sake, and those dark eyes of thine."

The companions withdrew and reached their boat in silence. It was sunset. The musical and sonorous voice of the muezzin resounded from the innumerable minarets of the splendid city. Honain drew back the curtains of the barque. Bagdad rose before them in the huge masses of sumptuous dwellings, seated amid groves and gardens. An infinite population, summoned by the invigorating twilight, poured forth in all directions. The glowing river was covered with sparkling caïques, the glittering terraces with showy groups. Splendour, and power, and luxury, and beauty, were arrayed before them in their most captivating forms, and the heart of Alroy responded to their magnificence.

"A glorious vision!" said the prince of the captivity.

"Very different to Hamadan," said the physician of the caliph.

"To-day I have seen wonders," said Alroy.

"The world is opening to you," said Honain.

Alroy did not reply; but, after some minutes, he said, in a hesitating voice, "Who was that lady?"

"The Princess Schirene," replied Honain, "the favourite daughter of the caliph. Her mother was a Georgian and a Giaour."

II.

THE moonlight fell upon the figure of Alroy lying on a couch; his countenance was hidden in his arm. He was motionless, but did not sleep.

He rose and paced the chamber with agitated steps; sometimes he stopped, and gazed on the pavement, fixed in abstraction. He advanced to the window, and cooled his feverish brow in the midnight air.

An hour passed away, and the young prince of the captivity remained fixed in the same position. Suddenly he turned, dashed to a tripod of porphyry, and seizing a rosary of jewels, pressed it to his lips.

"The spirit of my dreams, she comes at last, the form for which I have sighed and wept, the form which rose upon my radiant vision when I shut my eyes against the jarring shadows of this gloomy world.

"Schirene! Schirene! here in this solitude I pour to thee the passion long stored up—the passion of my life, no common life, a life full of deep feeling and creative thought. O! beautiful, O, more than beautiful, for thou to me art as a dream unbroken—why art thou not mine, why lose a moment in our glorious lives, and balk our destiny of half its bliss?

"Fool, fool, hast thou forgotten? The rapture of a prisoner in his cell, whose wild fancy for a moment belies his fetters! The daughter of the caliph and a—Jew!

* Paris was known to the orientals at this time as a city of considerable luxury and importance. The embassy from Haroun Attraschid to Charlemagne at an earlier date, is of course recollected.

"Give me my father's sceptre!

"A plague on talismans! O! I need no inspiration but her memory, no magic but her name. By heavens, I'll enter this glorious city a conqueror, or I'll die.

"Why, what is life, for meditation mingles ever with my passion—why, what is life! Throw accidents to the dogs, and tear off the painted mask of false society! Here am I a hero; with a mind that can divide all things, and a heart of superhuman daring, with youth, with vigour, with a glorious lineage, with a form that has made full many a lovely maiden of our tribe droop her fair head by Hamadan's sweet fount, and I am—nothing.

"Out on society; 'twas not made for me. I'll form my own, and be the deity I sometimes feel.

"We make our fortunes and we call them fate. Thou saidst well, Honain. Most subtle Sadducee! The saintly blood flowed in my father's veins, and they did nothing; but I have an arm formed to wield a sceptre, and I will win one.

"I cannot doubt my triumph. Triumph is a part of my existence. I am born for glory, as a tree is born to bear its fruit, or to expand its flowers. The deed is done. 'Tis thought of, and 'tis done. I'll confront the greatest of my diademed ancestors, and in his tomb. Mighty Solomon! he wedded Pharaoh's daughter. Hah! what a future dawns upon my hope. An omen, a choice omen!

"Heaven and earth are mingling to form my fortunes. My mournful youth I have so often cursed, I hail thee—thou wert a glorious preparation; and when, feeling no sympathy with the life around me, I deemed myself a fool, I find I was a most peculiar being. By heavens, I am joyful; for the first time in my life I am joyful. I could laugh, and fight, and drink. I am new-born; I am another being; I am mad!

"O! time, great time, the world belies thy fame. It calls thee swift. Methinks thou art coming slow. Fly on, great time, and on thy coming wings bear me my sceptre!

"All is to be. It is a lowering thought. My fancy, like a bright and wearied bird, will sometimes flag and fall, and then I am lost. The young King of Karasme, a youthful hero! Would he had been Alschiroch! My heart is sick even at the very name. Alas! my trials have not yet begun. Jabaster warned me; good, sincere Jabaster! His talisman presses on my frantic heart, and seems to warn me. I am in danger. Braggart to stand here, filling the careless air with idle words, while all is unaccomplished. I grow dull. The young King of Karasme! Why, what am I compared to this same prince! Nothing, but in my thoughts. In the full bazaar, they would not deem me worthy even to hold his stirrup or his slipper—O! this contest, this constant, bitter, never-ending contest between my fortune and my fancy! Why do I exist? or, if existing, why am I not recognised as I would be?

"Sweet voice, that in Jabaster's distant cave descended from thy holy home above, and whispered consolation, breathe again! Again breathe thy still summons to my lonely ear, and chase away the thoughts that hover round me. Thoughts dark and doubtful, like fell birds of prey hovering round an expected hero's fall, and gloating on their triumph o'er the brave. There is something fatal in these crowded cities. Faith flourishes in solitude."

He threw himself upon the couch, and, leaning down his head, seemed lost in meditation. He started up, and, seizing his tablets, wrote upon them these words:—

"Honain, I have been the whole night like David in the wilderness of Ziph; but, by the aid of the Lord, I have conquered. I fly from this dangerous city upon his business, which I have too much neglected. Attempt not to discover me, and accept my gratitude."

PART VI.

I.

A SCORCHING sun, a blue and burning sky, on every side lofty ranges of black and barren mountains, dark ravines, deep caverns, unfathomable gorges!

A solitary being moved in the distance. Faint and toiling, a pilgrim slowly clambered up the steep and stony track.

The sultry hours moved on, the pilgrim at length gained the summit of the mountain, a small and rugged table-land strewn with huge masses of loose and heated rock. All around was desolation: no spring, no herbage; the bird and the insect were alike mute. Yet still it was the summit; no loftier peaks frowned in the distance; the pilgrim stopped, and breathed with more facility, and a faint smile played over his worn and solemn countenance.

He rested a few minutes, he took from his wallet some locusts and wild honey, and a small skin of water. His meal was short as well as simple. An ardent desire to reach his place of destination before nightfall urged him to proceed. He soon passed over the table-land, and commenced the descent of the mountain. A straggling olive tree occasionally appeared, and then a group, and soon the groups swell into a grove. His way wound through the grateful and unaccustomed shade. He emerged from the grove, and found that he had proceeded down more than half the side of the mountain. It ended precipitously in a very dark and narrow ravine, formed on the side by an opposite mountain; the lofty steep of which was crested by a city gently rising on a very gradual slope.

Nothing could be conceived more barren, wild, and terrible, than the surrounding scenery, unilluminated by a single trace of culture. The city stood like the last gladiator in an amphitheatre of desolation.

It was surrounded by a lofty turreted wall, of an architecture to which the pilgrim was unaccustomed: gates with drawbridge and portcullis, square towers, and loopholes for the archer. Sentinels, clothed in steel and shining in the sunset, paced, at regular intervals, the cautious wall, and on a lofty tower a standard waved, a snowy standard, with a red, red cross!

The prince of the captivity at length beheld the lost capital of his fathers.*

* The finest view of Jerusalem is from the Mount of Olives. It is little altered since the period when David Atroy is supposed to have gazed upon it, but it is enriched by the splendid mosque of Omar, built by the Moslem conquerors on the supposed site of the temple, and which, with its gardens, and arcades, and courts, and fountains, may fairly

II.

A FEW months back and such a spectacle would have called forth all the latent passion of Aloy; but time and suffering, and sharp experience, had already somewhat curbed the fiery spirit of the Hebrew prince. He gazed upon Jerusalem; he beheld the city of David garrisoned by the puissant warriors of Christendom, and threatened by the innumerable armies of the crescent. The two great divisions of the world seemed contending for a prize, which he, a lonely wanderer, had crossed the desert to rescue. If his faith restrained him from doubting the possibility of his enterprise, he was at least deeply conscious that the world was a very different existence to what he had fancied amid the gardens of Hamadan and the rocks of Caucasus, and that if his purpose could be accomplished, it could only be effected by one means. Calm, perhaps somewhat depressed, but full of pious humiliation, and not deserted by holy hope, he descended into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and so, slacking his thirst at Siloa, and mounting the opposite height, David Aloy entered Jerusalem by the gate of Zion.*

He had been instructed that the quarter of his people was portioned near this entrance. He inquired the direction of the sentinel, who did not condescend to answer him. An old man in very shabby robes, who was passing, beckoned to him.

"What want you, friend?" inquired Aloy.

"You were asking for the quarter of our people. You must be a stranger indeed in Jerusalem, to suppose that a Frank would speak to a Jew. You were lucky to get neither kicked nor cursed."

"Kicked and cursed! Why, these dogs—"

"Hush! hush! for the love of God," said his new companion, very much alarmed. "Have you lent money to their captain, that you speak thus? In Jerusalem our people speak only in a whisper."

"No matter; the cure is not by words. Where is our quarter?"

"Was the like ever seen! Why, he speaks as if he were a Frank. I saved him from having his head broken by a gauntlet, and—"

"My friend, I am tired. Our quarter?"

"Whom may you want?"

"The chief rabbi."

"You bear letters to him?"

"What is that to you?"

"Hush! hush! You don't know what Jerusalem is, young man. You must not think of going on in this way. Where do you come from?"

"Bagdad."

"Bagdad! Jerusalem is not Bagdad. A Turk is a brute, but a Christian a demon."

"But our quarter, our quarter?"

"Hush! hush! You want the chief rabbi?"

"Ay! ay!"

"Rabbi Zimri?"

"It may be so. I neither know nor care."

"Neither knows nor cares! This will never do, you must not go on in this way at Jerusalem. You must not think of it."

"Fellow, I see thou art a miserable prattler. Show me to our quarter, and I will pay thee well—or be off."

"Be off! Art thou a Hebrew? to say 'be off' to any one. You come from Bagdad! I'll tell you what—go back to Bagdad. You will never do for Jerusalem."

"Your grizzled beard protects you. Old fool, I am a pilgrim just arrived, wearied beyond expression, and you keep me here listening to your flat talk!"

"Flat talk! Why! what would you?"

"Lead me to the Rabbi Zimri—if that be his name."

"If that be his name! Why, every one knows Rabbi Zimri, the chief rabbi of Jerusalem, the successor of Aaron. We have our temple yet, say what they like. A very learned doctor is Rabbi Zimri."

"Wretched driveller. I am ashamed to lose my patience with such a dotard."

"Driveller! dotard! Why, who are you?"

"One you cannot comprehend. Without another word, lead me to your chief."

"Chief! you have not far to go. I know no one of the nation who holds his head higher than I do here, and they call me Zimri."

"What, the chief rabbi—the very learned doctor!"

"No less; I thought you had heard of him."

"Let us forget the past, good Zimri. When great men play the incognito they must sometimes hear rough phrases. It is the caliph's lot as well as yours. I am glad to make the acquaintance of so great a doctor. Though young, and roughly habited, I have seen the world a little, and may offer next Sabbath in the synagogue more dirhems than you would perhaps suppose. Good and learned Zimri, I would be your guest."

"A very worshipful young man! And he speaks low and soft now! But it was lucky I was at hand. Good—what's your name?"

"David."

"A very honest name—good David. It was lucky I was at hand when you spoke to the sentinel though. A Jew speak to a Frank, and a sentinel too! Hah! hah! hah! that is very good. How Rabbi Maimon will laugh! Faith, it was very lucky, now, was it not?"

"Indeed, most fortunate."

"Well, that is candid! Here! this way. 'Tis not far. We number few, sir, of our brethren here, but a better time will come—a better time will come."

"I think so. This is your door?"

"An humble one. Jerusalem is not Bagdad, but you are welcome."

III.

"KING PIRGANDICUS* entered them," said Rabbi Maimon; "but no one since."

be described as the most imposing of Moslem fanes. I endeavoured to enter it at the hazard of my life. I was detected, and surrounded by a crowd of turbaned fanatics, and escaped with difficulty; but I saw enough to feel that minute inspection would not belie the general character I formed of it from the Mount of Olives. I caught a glorious glimpse of splendid courts, and light airy gates of Saracenic triumph, flights of noble steps, long arcades, and interior gardens, where silver fountains spouted their tall streams amid the taller cypress.

* The gate of Zion still remains, and from it you descend into the valley of Siloa

* According to a Talmudical story, however, of which I find a note, this monarch was not a Hebrew, but a Gentile, and a very wicked one. He once invited eleven famous doctors of the holy nation to supper. They were received in the most magnificent style, and were then invited, under pain of death, either to eat pork, to accept a pagan mistress,

"And when did he live?" inquired Alroy.

"His reign is recorded in the Talmud," answered Rabbi Zimri, "but in the Talmud there are no dates."

"A long while ago!" said Alroy.

"Since the captivity," answered Rabbi Maimon.

"I doubt that," said Rabbi Zimri, "or why should he be called king?"

"Was he of the house of David?" said Alroy.

"Without doubt," said Rabbi Maimon; "he was one of our greatest kings, and conquered Julius Cæsar.*"

"His kingdom was in the northernmost parts of Africa," said Rabbi Zimri, "and exists to this day, if we could but find it."

"Ay, truly," added Rabbi Maimon, "the sceptre has never departed out of Judah; and he rode always upon a white elephant."

"Covered with cloth of gold," added Rabbi Zimri.

"And he visited the tombs of the kings?†" inquired Alroy.

"Without doubt," said Rabbi Maimon.

"The whole account is in the Talmud."

"And no one can now find them?"

"No one," replied Rabbi Zimri: "but according to the learned Doctor Moses Hallevy, they are in a valley in the mountains of Lebanon, which was sealed up by the archangel Michael."

"The illustrious Doctor Abarbanel, of Babylon,"

or to drink wine consecrated to idols. After long consultation, the doctors, in great tribulation, agreed to save their heads by accepting the last alternative, since the two first were forbidden by the law of Moses, and the last only by the rabbin. The king assented, the doctors drank the impure wine, and, as it was exceedingly good, drank freely. The wine, as will sometimes happen, created a terrible appetite; the table was covered with dishes, and the doctors, heated by the grape, were not sufficiently careful of what they partook. In short, the wicked king Pargandicus contrived that they should sup off pork, and being carried from the table quite tipsy, each of the eleven had the mortification of finding himself next morning in the arms of a pagan mistress.

In the course of the year all the eleven died sudden deaths; and this visitation occurred to them, not because they had violated the law of Moses, but because they had believed that the precepts of the rabbin could be outraged with more impunity than the word of God.

* This classic hero often figures in the erratic pages of the Talmud.

† The present pilgrim to Jerusalem will have less trouble than Alroy in discovering the tombs of the kings, though he probably would not as easily obtain the sceptre of Solomon. The tombs that bear this title are of the time of the Asmonean princes, and of a more ambitious character than any other of the remains. An open court about fifty feet in breadth, and extremely deep, is excavated out of the rock. One side is formed by a portico, the frieze of which is sculptured in a good Syro-Greek style. There is no grand portal; you crawl into the tombs by a small opening on one of the sides. There are a few small chambers with niches, recesses, and sarcophagi, some sculptured in the same flowing style as the frieze. This is the most important monument at Jerusalem: and Dr. Clarke, who has lavished wonder and admiration on the tombs of Zachariah and Absalom, has announced the tombs of the kings as one of the marvellous productions of antiquity. But the truth is, all that we see of art in Jerusalem is of the most mean and contemptible character, exhibiting not the slightest feeling for the beautiful or the grand, and not for a moment to be mentioned with the creation of a neighbouring country. It is of course out of the question to speak of the pyramids of Memphis, and the obelisk of Heliopolis, the temples of Karnak, and the palaces of Luxor, the gigantic cavern fanes of Ipsambul, the imaginative Benders, and the refined Philæ; but it is not too much to say, that there are in many Egyptian towns, to which the satiated traveller cannot spare a parting glance, more surprising monuments than in all Jerusalem together; ranges of painted sepulchres, infinitely more striking from their extent and beauty than the tombs of the kings; and relics of temples which must have cost more time and treasure than the whole valley of Jehoshaphat.

said Rabbi Maimon, "gives one hundred and twenty reasons in his commentary on the Gemara to prove that they sunk under the earth at the taking of the temple."

"No one reasons like Abarbanel of Babylon," said Rabbi Zimri.

"The great Rabbi Akiba, of Pundebita, has answered them all," said Rabbi Maimon, "and holds that they were taken up to heaven."

"And which is right?" inquired Rabbi Zimri.

"Neither," said Rabbi Maimon.

"One hundred and twenty reasons are strong proof," said Rabbi Zimri.

"The most learned and illustrious Doctor Aaron Mendola, of Granada," said Rabbi Maimon, "has shown that we must look for the tombs of the kings in the south of Spain."

"All that Mendola writes is worth attention," said Rabbi Zimri.

"Rabbi Hillel,* of Samaria, is worth two Mendolas any day," said Rabbi Maimon.

"'Tis a most learned doctor," said Rabbi Zimri; "and what thinks he?"

"Hillel proves that there are two tombs of the kings," said Rabbi Maimon, "and that neither of them are the right ones."

"What a learned doctor!" exclaimed Rabbi Zimri.

"And very satisfactory," remarked Alroy.

"These are high subjects," continued Alroy, his clear eyes twinkling with complacency. "Your guest, Rabbi Zimri, must read the treatise of the learned Shimci, of Damascus, on 'Elicting Impossibilities.'"

"That is a work!" exclaimed Zimri.

"I never slept for three nights after reading that work," said Rabbi Maimon. "It contains twelve thousand five hundred and thirty-seven quotations from the Pentateuch, and not a single original observation."

"There were giants in those days," said Zimri "we are children now."

"The first chapter makes equal sense, read backward or forward," continued Rabbi Maimon.

"Ichabod!" exclaimed Rabbi Zimri.

"And the initial letter of every section is a cabalistical type of a king of Judah!"

"The temple will yet be built," said Rabbi Zimri.

"Ay, ay! that is learning!" exclaimed Rabbi

* "Rabbi Hillel was one of the eminentest that ever was among the Jewish doctors, both for birth, learning, rule, and children. He was of the seed of David by his mother's side, being of the posterity of Shephathai, the son of Abitai, David's wife. He was brought up in Babel, from whence he came up to Jerusalem at forty years old, and there studied the law forty years more under Shemaiah and Abtalion, and after them he was president of the sanhedrim forty years more. The beginning of his presidency is generally concluded upon to have been just one hundred years before the temple was destroyed; by which account he began eight-and-twenty years before our Saviour was born, and died when he was about twelve years old. He is renowned for his fourscore scholars."—*Lightfoot*, vol. ii. p. 2003.

The great rival of Hillel was Shammai. Their controversies, and the fierceness of their partisans, are a principal feature of rabbinical history. They were the same as the Scotists and Thomists. At last the Bath Kol interfered, and decided for Hillel, but in a spirit of conciliatory dexterity. "The Bath Kol came forward and spake thus:—'The words both of the one party and the other are the words of the living God, but the certain decision of the matter is according to the decrees of the school of Hillel. And from henceforth, whoever shall transgress the decrees of the school of Hillel is guilty of death.'"

Maimon; "but what is the great treatise on Effecting Impossibilities to that profound, admirable, and——"

"Holy rabbi!" said a youthful reader of the synagogue, who now entered, "the hour is at hand."

"You don't say so! Learned Maimon, I must to the synagogue. I could sit here all day listening to you. Come, David, the people await us."

Zimri and Alroy quitted the house, and proceeded along the narrow hilly streets to the chief temple of the Hebrews.

"It grieves the venerable Maimon much that he cannot join us," said Rabbi Zimri. "You have doubtless heard of him at Bagdad; a most learned doctor."

Alroy bowed in silence.

"He bears his years well. You would hardly believe that he was my master."

"I perceive that you inherit much of his erudition."

"You are kind. If he have breathed one year, Rabbi Maimon will be a hundred and ten next Passover."

"I doubt it not."

"When he is gathered to his fathers, a great light will be extinguished in Israel. You wanted to know something about the tombs of the kings; I told you he was your man. How full he was! His mind, sir, is an egg."

"A somewhat ancient one. I fear his guidance will hardly bring me the enviable fortune of King Pircandicus."

"Between ourselves, good David, talking of King Pircandicus, I cannot help fancying that the learned Maimon made a slight mistake. I hold Pircandicus was only a prince. It was after the captivity, and I know no authority for any of our rulers since the destruction, assuming a higher title. Clearly a prince, eh? But, though I would whisper to no one but you, I think our worthy friend grows a little old. We should remember his years, sir. A hundred and ten, next Passover. 'Tis a great burden."

"Ay! with his learning added, a very fearful burden indeed!"

"You have been a week in Jerusalem, and have not yet visited our synagogue. It is not of cedar and ivory, but it is still a temple. This way. Is it only a week that you have been here? Why, you look another man! I shall never forget our first meeting: you did not know me. That was good, eh? And when I told you I was the chief Rabbi Zimri, how you changed! You have quite regained your appetite. Ah! 'tis pleasant to mix once more with our own people. To the left. So! we must descend a little. We hold our meetings in an ancient cemetery. You have a finer temple, I warrant me, in Bagdad. Jerusalem is not Bagdad, but this has its conveniences. 'Tis safe, and we are not very rich, nor wish to seem so."

IV.

A LONG passage brought them to a number of small square low chambers leading into each other.* They were lighted by brass lamps, placed at intervals in vacant niches, that once held corpses, and

* These excavated cemeteries which abound in Palestine and Egypt were often converted into places of worship by the Jews and early Christians. Sandys thus describes the synagogue at Jerusalem in his time.

which were now soiled by the smoky flame. Between two and three hundred individuals were assembled in these chambers, at first scarcely distinguishable by those who descended from the broad daylight: but by degrees the eyesight became accustomed to the dim and vaporous atmosphere, and Alroy recognised in the final and more illumined chamber a high cedar cabinet, the type of the ark, and which held the sacred vessels, and the sanctified copy of the law.

Standing in lines, with their heads mystically covered,[†] the forlorn remnant of Israel, captives in their ancient city, avowed, in spite of all their suffering, their fidelity to their God, and notwithstanding all the bitterness of hope delayed, their faith in the fulfilment of his promises. Their simple service was completed, their prayers were read, their responses made, their law exhibited, and their charitable offerings announced by their high priest. After the service, the venerable Zimri, opening a volume of the Talmud, and fortified by the opinions of all these illustrious and learned doctors, the heroes of his erudite conversations with the aged Maimon, expounded the law to the congregation of the people.‡

"It is written," said the rabbi, "Thou shalt have none other God but me.' Now know ye, what our father Abraham said when Nimrod ordered him to worship fire? 'Why not water,' answered Abraham, 'which can put out fire? why not the clouds, which can pour forth water? why not the winds, which can produce clouds? why not God, which can create winds?'"

A murmur of approbation sounded throughout the congregation.

"Eli ezer," said Zimri, addressing himself to a young rabbi, "it is written, that He took a rib from Adam when he was asleep. Is God then a robber?"

The young rabbi looked puzzled, and cast his eyes on the ground. The congregation was very perplexed and a little alarmed.

"Is there no answer?" said Zimri.

"Rabbi," said a stranger, a tall, swarthy African pilgrim, standing in a corner, and enveloped in a red mantle, over which a lamp threw a flickering light. "Rabbi, some robbers broke into my house last night, and stole an earthen pipkin, but they left a golden vase in its stead."

"It is well said, it is well said," exclaimed the congregation. The applause was loud.

"Learned Zimri," continued the African, "it is written in the Gemara, that there was a youth in Jerusalem who fell in love with a beautiful damsel, and she scorned him. And the youth was so stricken with his passion that he could not speak; but when he beheld her, he looked at her imploringly, and she laughed. And one day the youth, not knowing what to do with himself, went out into the desert; and towards night he returned home, but the gates of the city were shut. And he went down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and entered the tomb of Absalom and slept;§ and

* The Hebrews cover their heads during their prayers with a sacred shawl.

† The custom, I believe, even to the present day among the Hebrews, a remnant of their old academies, once so famous.

‡ In the vale of Jehoshaphat, among many other tombs, are two of considerable size, and which, although of a corrupt Grecian architecture, are dignified by the titles of tombs of Zachariah and Absalom.

he dreamed a dream: and next morning he came into the city smiling. And the maiden met him, and she said, 'Is that thou; art thou a laugher?' And he answered, 'Behold, yesterday being disconsolate, I went out of the city into the desert, and I returned home, and the gates of the city were shut, and I went down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and I entered the tomb of Absalom, and I slept, and I dreamed a dream, and ever since then I have laughed.' And the damsel said, 'Tell me thy dream.' And he answered and said, 'I may not tell my dream only to my wife, for it regards her honour.' And the maiden grew sad curious, and said, 'I am thy wife, tell me thy dream.' And straightforth they went and were married, and ever after they both laughed. Now, learned Zimri, what means this tale, an idle jest for a master of the law, yet it is written by the greatest doer of the captivity?"

"It passeth my comprehension," said the chief rabbi.

Rabbi Eliezer was silent; the congregation groaned.

"Now hear the interpretation," said the African. "The youth is our people, and the damsel is our lost Sion, and the tomb of Absalom proves that salvation can only come from the house of David. Dost thou hear this, young man?" said the African, coming forward, and laying his hand on Alroy, "I speak to thee, because I have observed a deep attention in thy conduct."

The prince of the captivity started, and shot a glance at the dark visage before him, but the glance read nothing. The upper part of the countenance of the African was half concealed by masses of dark matted hair, and the lower by his uncouth robes. A flashing eye was its only characteristic, which darted forth like lightning out of a black cloud.

"Is my attention the only reason that induces you to address me?" inquired Alroy.

"Who ever gave all his reasons?" replied the African with a laughing sneer.

"I seek not to learn them. Suffice it, stranger, that how much soever you may mean, as much I can understand."

"Tis well—learned Zimri, is this thy pupil? I congratulate thee, I will match him against the hopeful Eliezer." So saying, the lofty African stalked out of the chamber. The assembly also broke up. Alroy would willingly have immediately followed the African, and held some further and more private conversation with him; but some minutes elapsed, owing to the officious attentions of Zimri, before he could escape; and when he did, his search after the stranger was vain. He inquired among the congregation, but no one knew the African. He was no man's guest, and no man's debtor, and apparently had never before been seen.

He wandered among the mountains for some time, beholding Jerusalem from a hundred different points of view, and watching the single planets and clustering constellations that gradually burst into beauty or gathered into light. At length, somewhat exhausted, he descended into the vale. The scanty rill of Siloah* looked like a thread of silver winding in the moonlight. Some houseless wretches were slumbering under the arch of its fountain. Several isolated tombs of considerable size † rose at the base of Olivet, and into the largest of these Alroy entered. He entered through a narrow passage into a small square chamber. On each side was an empty sarcophagus of granite, one with its lid broken. Between these the prince of the captivity laid his robe, and, wearied by his ramble, soon soundly slept.

After some hours he awoke. He fancied that he had been awakened by the sound of voices. The chamber was not quite dark. A straggling moonbeam fought its way through an open fret-work pattern in the top of the tomb, and just revealed the dim interior. Suddenly a voice spoke—a strange and singular voice.

"Brother, brother, the sounds of the night begin."

Another voice answered,

"Brother, brother, I hear them, too."

"The woman in labour!"

"The thief at his craft!"

"The sentinel's challenge!"

"The murderer's step!"

"O! the merry sounds of the night!"

"Brother, brother, let us come forth and wander about the world."

"We have seen all things. I'll lie here and listen to the baying hound. 'Tis music for a tomb."

"Choice and rare. You are idle. I like to sport in the starry air. Our hours are few—they should be fair."

"What shall we see—heaven or earth?"

"Hell for me—'tis more amusing."

"As for me, I am sick of Hades."

"Let us visit Solomon!"

"In his unknown metropolis?"

"That will be rare."

"But, where, O! where?"

"Even a spirit cannot tell. But they say, but they say—I dare not whisper what they say."

"Who told you?"

"No one. I overheard an Afrite whispering to a female Ghoul he wanted to seduce."

"Hah! hah! hah! halt! choice pair! choice pair! We are more ethereal."

"She was a beauty in her way. Her eyes were luminous, though somewhat dank, and her cheek tinged with carnation caught from infant blood."

"O! gay, O! gay—what said they?"

"He was a deserter without leave from Solo-

The trumpet was sounding to close the gates, as Alroy passed the Sion entrance. The temptation was irresistible. He rushed out, and ran for more than one hundred yards without looking back, and when he did, he had the satisfaction of ascertaining that he was fairly shut out for the night. The sun had set, still the mount of Olives was flushed with the reflection of his dying beams, but Jehoshaphat at its feet was in deep shadow.

* The sublime Siloah is now a muddy rill; you descend by steps to the fountain which is its source, and which is covered with an arch. Here the blind man received his sight: and singular enough, to this very day the healing reputation of its waters prevails, and summons to its brink all those neighbouring Arabs who suffer from the ophthalmic affections not uncommon in this part of the world.

† There are no remains of ancient Jerusalem, or the ancient Jews. Some tombs there are which may be ascribed to the Assmolean princes; but all the monuments of David and Solomon, and their long posterity, have utterly disappeared.

mon's body-guard. The trull wriggled the secret out."

"Tell me, kind brother."

"I'll show, not tell."

"I pr'ythee tell me."

"Well, then, well. In Gentesma's gloomy cave there is a river none has reached, and you must sail, and you must sail——Brother!"

"Ay."

"Methinks I smell something too earthly."

"What's that?"

"The breath of man."

"Scent more fatal than the morning air! Away, away!"

VI.

IN the range of mountains that lead from Olivet to the river Jordan is the great cavern of Gentesma, a mighty excavation formed by the combined and immemorial work of nature and of art. For on the high basaltic columns are cut strange characters and unearthly forms,* and in many places the natural ornaments have been completed by the hands of the sculptor into symmetrical entablatures and fanciful capitals. The work, they say, of captive Dives and conquered Afrites, for the great king.

It was midnight; the cold full moon showered its brilliancy upon this narrow valley, shut in on all sides by black and barren mountains. A single being stood at the entrance of the cave.

It was Alroy. Desperate and determined, after listening to the two spirits in the tomb, he was resolved to penetrate the mysteries of Gentesma. He took from his girdle a flint and steel, with which he lighted a torch, and then he entered.

The cavern narrowed as he cautiously advanced, and soon he found himself at the head of an evidently artificial gallery. A crowd of bats rushed forward and extinguished his torch.† He leaned down to relight it, and in so doing observed that he trod upon an artificial pavement.

The gallery was of great extent, with a gradual declination.‡ Being in a straight line with the mouth of the cavern, the moonlit scene was long visible; but Alroy, on looking round, now perceived that the exterior was shut out by the eminence that he had left behind him. The sides of the gallery were covered with strange and sculptured forms.

The prince of the captivity proceeded along this gallery for nearly two hours. A distant murmur of falling water, which might have been distinguished nearly from the first, increased in sound as he advanced, and now, from the loud roar and dash at hand, he felt that he was on the brink of some cataract. It was very dark. His heart trembled. He felt his footing ere he ventured to advance. The spray suddenly leaped forward, and extinguished his torch. His imminent danger filled him with terror, and he receded some paces, but in vain endeavoured to reillumine his torch, which was soaked with the water.

His courage deserted him. Energy and exertion seemed hopeless. He was about to deliver him-

self up to despair, when an expanding lustre attracted his attention in the opposing gloom.

A small and bright red cloud seemed sailing towards him. It opened, discharged from its bosom a silvery star, and dissolved again into darkness. But the star remained, the silvery star, and threw a long line of tremulous light upon the vast and raging rapid, which now, fleet and foaming, revealed itself on all sides to the eye of Alroy.

The beautiful interposition in his favour reanimated the adventurous pilgrim. A dark shadow in the foreground, breaking the line of light shed by the star upon the waters, attracted his attention. He advanced, regained his former footing, and more nearly examined it. It was a boat, and in the boat, mute and immovable, sat one of those vast, singular, and hideous forms, which he had observed sculptured on the walls of the gallery.

David Alroy, committing his fortunes to the God of Israel, leaped into the boat.

VII.

AND at the same moment the Afrite,* for it was one of those dread beings, raised the oars, and the boat moved. The falling waters suddenly parted in the long line of the star's reflection, and the bark glided through their high and severed masses.

In this wise they proceeded for a few minutes, until they entered a beautiful and moonlit lake. In the distance was a mountainous country. Alroy examined his companion with a feeling of curiosity not unmixed with terror. It was remarkable that Alroy could never succeed in any way attracting his notice. The Afrite seemed totally unconscious of the presence of his passenger. At length the boat reached the opposite shore of the lake, and the prince of the captivity disembarked.

He disembarked at the head of an avenue of colossal lions of red granite,† which extended far as the eye could reach, and which ascended the side of the mountain, which was cut into a flight of magnificent steps. The easy ascent was in consequence soon accomplished, and Alroy, proceeding along the avenue of lions, soon gained the summit of the mountain.

To his infinite astonishment, he beheld Jerusalem. That strongly marked locality could not be mistaken: at his feet was Jehoshaphat, Kedron, Siloa: he stood upon Olivet; before him was Sion. But in all other respects, how different was the landscape to the one he had gazed upon a few days back, for the first time! The surrounding hills sparkled with vineyards, and glowed with summer palaces, and voluptuous pavilions, and glorious gardens of pleasure. The city, extending all over Mount Sion, was encompassed with a wall of white marble, with battlements of gold, a gorgeous mass of gates and pillars, and gardened terraces, lofty piles of rarest materials, cedar, and ivory, and precious stones, and costly columns of the richest workmanship, and the most fanciful orders, capitals of the lotus and the palm, and flowing friezes of the olive and the vine.

* Beings of a monstrous form, the most terrible of all the orders of the Dives.

† An avenue of sphinxes more than a mile in length connected the quarters of Luxor and Carnac in Egyptian Thebes. Its fragments remain. Many other avenues of sphinxes and lion-headed kings may be observed in various parts of Upper Egypt.

* As at Benihassan, and many other of the sculptured catacombs of Egypt.

† In entering the temple of Dendera, our torches were extinguished by a crowd of bats.

‡ So, in the great Egyptian tombs.

And in the front a mighty temple rose, with inspiration in its very form, a temple so vast, so sumptuous, there required no priest to tell us that no human hand planned that sublime magnificence!

"God of my fathers!" said Alroy, "I am a poor, weak thing, and my life has been a life of dreams and visions, and I have sometimes thought my brain lacked a sufficient master—where am I? Do I keep or live? Am I a slumberer or a ghost? This trial is too much." He sank down and hid his face in his hands: his over-exerted mind appeared to desert him; he wept hysterically.

Many minutes elapsed before Alroy grew composed. His wild bursts of weeping sank into sobs, and the sobs died off into sighs. And at length, calm from exhaustion, he again looked up, and lo! the glorious city was no more! Before him was a moonlit plain, over which the avenue of lions still advanced, and appeared to terminate only in the mountainous distance.

This limit, the prince of the captivity at length reached, and stood before a stupendous portal, cut out of the solid rock, four hundred feet in height, and supported by clusters of colossal caryatides.* Upon the portals were engraven some Hebrew characters, which, upon examination, proved to be the same as those upon the talisman of Jabaster. And so taking from his bosom that all-precious and long-cherished deposit, David Alroy, in obedience to his instructions, pressed the signet against the gigantic portal.

The portal opened with a crash of thunder louder than an earthquake. Pale, panting, and staggering, the prince of the captivity entered an illimitable hall, illumined by pendulous and stupendous balls of glowing metal. On each side of the hall, sitting on golden thrones, was ranged a line of kings, and as the pilgrim entered, the monarchs rose, and took of their diadems, and waved them thrice, and thrice repeated, in solemn chorus, "All hail, Alroy! Hail to thee, brother king. Thy crown awaits thee!"

The prince of the captivity stood trembling, with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and leaning breathless against a column. And when at length, he had a little recovered himself, and dared again to look up, he found the monarchs were reseated; and, from their still and vacant visages, apparently unconscious of his presence. And this emboldened him, and so staring alternately at each side of the hall, but with a firm, perhaps desperate step, Alroy advanced.

And he came to two thrones which were set apart from the others in the middle of the hall. On one was seated a noble figure, far above the common stature, with arms folded and downcast eyes. His feet rested upon a broken sword, and a shivered sceptre, which told he was a monarch, in spite of his disrowned head.

And on the opposite throne was a venerable personage, with a long flowing beard, and dressed in white raiment. His countenance was beautiful, although ancient. Age had stole on without its imperfections, and time had only invested it with a sweet dignity and solemn grace. The countenance of the king was upraised with a seraphic gaze, and

as he thus looked up on high, with eyes full of love, and thanksgiving, and praise, his consecrated fingers seemed to touch the trembling wires of a golden harp.

And further on, and far above the rest, upon a throne that stretched across the hall, a most imperial presence straightway flashed upon the startled vision of Alroy. Fifty steps of ivory, and each step guarded by golden lions,* led to a throne of jasper. A dazzling light blazed forth from the glittering diadem and radiant countenance of him who sat upon the throne—one beautiful as a woman, but with the majesty of a god. And in one hand he held a seal, and in the other a sceptre.

And when Alroy had reached the foot of the throne, he stopped, and his heart misgave him. And he prayed for some minutes in silent devotion, and without daring to look up, he mounted the first step of the throne, and the second, and the third, and so on, with slow and faltering feet, until he reached the forty-ninth step.

The prince of the captivity raised his eyes. He stood before the monarch face to face. In vain Alroy attempted to attract his attention, or to fix his gaze. The large black eyes, full of supernatural lustre, appeared capable of piercing all things, and illuminating all things, but they flashed on without shedding a ray upon Alroy.

Pale as a spectre, the pilgrim, whose pilgrimage seemed now on the point of completion, stood cold and trembling before the object of all his desires, and all his labours. But he thought of his country, his people, and his God, and while his noiseless lips breathed the name of Jehovah, solemnly he put forth his arm, and with a gentle firmness grasped the unresisting sceptre of his great ancestor.

And as he seized it, the whole scene vanished from his sight.

VIII.

Hours or years might have passed away, as far as the sufferer was concerned, when Alroy again returned to self-consciousness. His eyes slowly opened, he cast round a vacant stare, he was lying in the cavern of Gentesma. The moon had set, but the morn had not broken. A single star glittered over the brow of the black mountains. He faintly moved his limbs, he would have raised his hand to his bewildered brain, but found that it grasped a sceptre. The memory of the past returned to him. He tried to rise, and found that he was reposing in the arms of a human being. He turned his head—he met the anxious gaze of Jabaster!

PART VII.

I.

"Your pace is troubled, uncle."

"So is my mind."

"All may go well."

"Miriam, we have seen the best. Prepare yourself for sorrow, gentle girl. I care not for myself, for I am old, and age makes heroes of us all. I

* See the great rock temple of Ipsambul in Lower Nubia. The sitting colossi are nearly seventy feet in height. But there is a torso of a statue of Rameses the Second at Thebes, vulgarly called the great Memnon, which measures upwards of sixty feet round the shoulders.

* See 1st Kings, chap. x. 13—20.

have endured, and can endure more. As we approach our limit it would appear our minds grow callous. I have seen my wealth, raised with the labours of a thoughtful life, vanish in the morn; my people, a fragile remnant, nevertheless a people dispersed, or what is worse. I have wept for them, although no tear of selfish grief has tinged this withered cheek. And were I but alone—ay! there's the pang. The solace of my days is now my sorrow."

"Weep not for me, dear uncle. Rather let us pray our God will not desert us."

"We know not when we are well. Our hours stole tranquilly along, and then we murmured; prospering, we murmured, and now we are rightly stricken. The legend of the past is Israel's bane. The past is a dream; and in the waking present we should discard the enervating shadow. Why would we be free? We murmured against captivity. This *is* captivity: this damp, dim cell, where we are brought to die.

"O! youth, rash youth, thy being is destruction. But yesterday a child—it seems but yesterday I nursed him in these arms, a thoughtless child—and now our house has fallen by his deeds. I'll not think of it; 'twill make me mad."

"Uncle, dearest, dearest uncle, we have lived together, and we will die together, and both in love: but, but, I pray you,—speak no harsh word of David."

"Shall I praise him?"

"Say nothing. What he has done, if done in grief, has been done all in honour. Would you that he had spared Alschiroch?"

"Never! I would have struck him myself. Brave boy, he did his duty, and I—I, Miriam, thy uncle, at whom they wink behind his back and call him niggard, was I wanting in that hour of trial? Was my treasure spared to save my people? Did I shrink from all the toil and trouble of that time? A trying time, my Miriam, but compared with this, the building of the temple."

"You were then, what you have ever been, the best and wisest. And since our father's God did not desert us, even in that wilderness of wildest woe, I offer gratitude in present faith, and pay him for past mercies by my prayers for more."

"Well, well; life must end. The hour approaches when we must meet our rulers and mock trial; precious justice that begins in threats and ends in torture. You are silent, Miriam."

"I am speaking to my God."

"What is that noise? A figure moves behind the dusky grate. Our jailer. No, no, it is Caleb! Faithful child, I fear you have perilled much."

"I enter with authority, my lord, and bear good tidings."

"He smiles! Is't possible? Speak on, speak on!"

"Aloy has captured the harem of our governor, as they journeyed from Bagdad to this city, guarded by his choicest troops. And he has sent to offer that they shall be exchanged for you and for your household. And Hassan has answered that his women shall owe their freedom to nothing but his sword. But in the mean time it is agreed between him and the messenger of your nephew, that both companies of prisoners shall be treated with all becoming courtesy. You, therefore, are remanded to your palace, and the trumpet is now sounding before the great mosque to summon all the host against

Aloy, whom Hassan has vowed to bring to Hamadan dead or alive."

"The harem of the governor, guarded too by his choicest troops. 'Tis a great deed. He did remember us. Faithful boy! The harem of the governor!—his choicest troops! 'Tis a very great deed. Methinks the Lord is with him. He has his great father's heart. Only think of David—a child! I nursed him—often. Caleb! Can this be David, our David, a child, a girl! Yet he struck Alschiroch! Miriam! where is she? Worthy Caleb, look to your mistress; she has fallen. Dead, quite dead. Fetch water. 'Tis not very pure—but we shall be in our palace soon. The harem of the governor! I can't believe it. Sprinkle, sprinkle. David take them prisoners! Why, when they pass, we are obliged to turn our heads, and dare not look. More water: I'll rub her hands. 'Tis warmer! Her eyes are open! Miriam, choicest news, my darling! The harem of the governor!—I'll not believe it!"

II.

"ONCE more within our walls, Caleb. Life is a miracle. I feel young again. This is home; and yet I am a prisoner. You said the host were assembling; he can have no chance. Think you, Caleb, he has any chance? I hope he will die. I would not have him taken. I fear their tortures. We will die too; we will all die. Now I am out of that dungeon, methinks I even could fight. Is it true that he has joined with robbers?"

"I saw the messenger, and learned that he first repaired to some bandits in the ruins in the desert. He had become acquainted with them in his pilgrimage. They say their leader is one of our people."

"I am glad of that. He can eat with him. I would not have him eat unclean things with the Ishmaelites."

"Lord, sir! our people gather to him from all quarters. 'Tis said Jabaster, the great cabalist, has joined him from the mountains with ten thousand men."

"The great Jabaster! then there is some chance. I know Jabaster well. He is too wise to join a desperate cause. Art sure about Jabaster? 'Tis a great name, a very potent spirit. I have heard such things of that Jabaster, sir, would make you stare like Saul before the spirit! Only think of our David, Caleb, making all this noise! I am full of hope. I feel not like a prisoner. He beat the harem guard, and now he has got Jabaster, he will beat them all."

"The messenger told me he captured the harem only to free his uncle and his sister."

"He ever loved me; I have done my duty to him. I think I have. Jabaster! why, man, the name is a spell! There are men at Bagdad who will get up in the night to join Jabaster. I hope David will follow his counsels in all things. I would I had seen his servant, I could have sent him a message."

"Lord, sir! the Prince Aloy has no great need of counsellors, I can tell you. 'Tis said he bears the sceptre of great Solomon, which he himself obtained in the unknown tombs of Palestine."

"The sceptre of Solomon!—could I but believe it! 'Tis an age of wonders! Where are we! Call for Miriam, I'll tell her this. Only think of David—a mere child—our David with the sceptre of Solomon! and Jabaster too! I have great faith. The Lord confound his enemies!"

III.

"GENTLE Rachel, I fear I trouble you; sweet Beruna. I thank you for your zeal. I am better now; the shock was great. These are strange tidings, maidens."

"Yes, dear lady! who would have thought of our brother turning out a captain?"

"I am sure I always thought he was the quietest person in the world," said Beruna, "though he did kill Alschiroch."

"One never could get a word out of him," said Rachel.

"He was always moping alone," said Beruna.

"And when one spoke to him he always turned away," said Leah.

"Or blushed," added Imra.

"Well, for my part," said the beautiful Bathsheba, "I always thought Prince David was a genius. He had such beautiful eyes!"

"I hope he will conquer Hassan," said Rachel.

"So do I," said Beruna.

"I wonder what he has done with the harem," said Leah.

"I don't think he will dare to speak to them," said Imra.

"You are very much mistaken," said Bathsheba.

"Hark!" said Miriam.

"'Tis Hassan," said Bathsheba; "may he never return!"

The wild drum of the Seljuks sounded, then a flourish of their fierce trumpets, and soon the tramp of horse. Behind the blinds of their chamber, Miriam and her maidens beheld the magnificent troop of turbaned horsemen, who, glittering with splendid armour and bright shawls, and proudly bounding on their fiery steeds, now went forth to crush and conquer the only hope of Israel. Upon an Arab, darker than night, rode the superb Hassan, and as he passed the dwelling of his late prisoners, whether from the exulting anticipation of coming triumph, or from a soft suspicion that, behind that lattice, bright eyes and brilliant faces were gazing on his state, the haughty but handsome Seljuk flourished his cimeter over his head, as he threw his managed steed into attitudes that developed the skill of its rider.

"He is handsomer than Alschiroch," said Rachel.

"What a shawl!" said Beruna.

"His cimeter was like lightning," said Leah.

"And his steed like thunder," said Imra.

"The evil eye fall on him!" said Bathsheba.

"Lord, remember David!" said Miriam, "and all his afflictions!"

IV.

THE deserted city of the wilderness presented a very different appearance to that which met the astonished gaze of Alroy when he first beheld its noble turrets, and wandered in its silent streets of palaces.

Without the gates was pitched a numerous camp of those low black tents common among the Kourds and Turkmans; the principal street was full of busy groups engaged in all the preparations of warfare, and all the bustling expedients of an irregular and adventurous life; steeds were stalled in ruined chambers, and tall camels raised their still visages

among the clustering columns, or crouched in kneeling tranquillity amid fallen statues and prostrate obelisks.

Two months had scarcely elapsed since Alroy and Jabaster had sought Scherirah in his haunt, and announced to him their sacred mission. The callous heart of him, "whose mother was a Jewess," had yielded to their inspired annunciations. He embraced their cause with all the fervour of conversion, and his motley band were not long skeptical of a creed which, while it assuredly offered danger and adventure, held out the prospects of wealth and even empire. From the city of the wilderness the new Messiah sent forth his messengers to the neighbouring cities to announce his advent to his brethren in captivity. The Hebrews, a proud and stiff-necked race, ever prone to rebellion, received the announcement of their favourite prince with transport. The descendant of David, and the slayer of Alschiroch, had double claims upon their confidence and allegiance, and the flower of the Hebrew youth in the neighbouring cities of the caliphate repaired in crowds to pay their homage to the recovered sceptre of Solomon.

The affair was at first treated by the government with contempt, and the sultan of the Seljuks contented himself with setting a price upon the head of the murderer of his brother; but when several cities had been placed under contribution, and more than one Moslem caravan stopped and plundered in the name of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, orders were despatched from Bagdad to the new Governor of Hamadan, Hassan Subah, to suppress the robbers, or the rebels, and to send David Alroy dead or alive to the capital.

The Hebrew malcontents were well apprized by their less adventurous, but still sympathizing brethren, of every thing that took place at the headquarters of the enemy. Spies arrived on the same day at the city of the wilderness, who informed Alroy that his uncle was thrown into a dungeon at Hamadan, and that a body of chosen troops were about to escort a royal harem of Bagdad into Persia.

Alroy attacked the escort in person, utterly discomfited them, and captured their charge. It proved to be the harem of the Governor of Hamadan, and if, for a moment, the too sanguine fancy of the captor experienced a passing pang of disappointment, the prize at least obtained, as we have seen, the freedom and security of his dear, though distant friends. This exploit precipitated the expedition which was preparing at Hamadan for his destruction. The enraged Hassan Subah started from his divan, seized his cimeter, and without waiting for the auxiliaries he had summoned from the neighbouring chieftains, called to horse, and at the head of two thousand of the splendid Seljukian cavalry, hurried to vindicate his love, and satiate his revenge.

Within the amphitheatre which he first entered as a prisoner, Alroy sat in council. On his right was Jabaster; Scherirah on his left. A youth, little his senior, but tall as a palm tree, and strong as a young lion, was the fourth captain. In the distance, some standing, some reclining, were about fifty men completely armed.

"Are the people numbered, Abner?" inquired Alroy of the youth.

"Even so; three hundred effective horsemen, and two thousand footmen; but the footmen lack arms."

"The Lord will send them in good time," said Jabaster, "meanwhile let them continue to make javelins."

"Trust in the Lord," murmured Scherirah, bending his head, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

A loud shout was heard throughout the city. Alroy started from his carpet. The messenger had returned. Pale and haggard, covered with sweat and sand, the faithful envoy was borne into the amphitheatre almost upon the shoulders of the people. In vain the guard endeavoured to stem the passage of the multitude. They clambered up the tiers of arches, they filled the void and crumbling seats of the antique circus, they supported themselves upon each other's shoulders, they clung to the capitals of the lofty columns. The whole multitude had assembled to hear the intelligence; the scene recalled the ancient purpose of the building, and Alroy and his fellow-warriors seemed like the gladiators of some old spectacle.

"Speak," said Alroy, "speak the worst. No news can be bitter to those whom the Lord will avenge."

"Ruler of Israel! thus saith Hassan Subah," answered the messenger; "My harem shall owe their freedom to nothing but my sword. I treat not with rebels, but I war not with age or woman; and between Bostenay and his household on one side, and the prisoners of thy master on the other, let there be peace. Go tell Alroy, I will seal it in his best blood. And lo! thy uncle and thy sister are again in their palace."

Alroy placed his hand for a moment to his eyes, and then instantly resuming his self-possession, he inquired as to the movements of the enemy.

"I have crossed the desert on a swift dromedary* lent to me by Shelomi of the Gate, whose heart is with our cause. I have not tarried, neither have I slept. Ere to-morrow's sunset, the Philistines will be here, led by Hassan Subah himself. The Lord of Hosts be with us! Since we conquered Canaan, Israel hath not struggled with such a power!"

A murmur ran through the assembly. Men exchanged inquiring glances, and involuntarily pressed each other's arms.

"The trial has come," said a middle-aged Hebrew, who had fought twenty years ago with Jabaster.

"Let me die for the ark!" said a young enthusiast of the band of Abner.

"I thought we should get into a scrape," whispered Kisloch, the Kourid, to Calidas, the Indian. "What could have ever induced us to give up robbing in a quiet manner?"

"And turn Jews!" said the Guebre, with a sneer.

"Look at Scherirah," said the Negro, grinning. "If he is not kissing the sceptre of Solomon!"

"I wish to heaven he had only hung Alroy the first time he met him," said Calidas.

"Sons of the Covenant!" exclaimed Alroy, "the Lord hath delivered them into our hands. To-morrow eve we march to Hamadan!"

A cheer followed this exclamation.

"It is written," said Jabaster, opening a volume, "Lo! I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the

Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand. And when they arose early in the morning, behold! they were all dead corpses."

"Now, as I was gazing upon the stars this morn, reading that celestial alphabet* known to the true cabalist, behold! the star of the house of David and seven other stars moved and met together, and formed into a circle. And the world they formed was a mystery to me; but lo! I have opened the book, and each star is the initial letter of each line of the targum that I have now read to you. Therefore the fate of Sennacherib is the fate of Hassan Subah!

"Trust in him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah!"

Suddenly a female form appeared upon the very top of the amphitheatre, upon the slight remains of the uppermost tier, of which a solitary arch alone was left. The chorus instantly died away, every tongue was silent, every eye fixed. Hushed, mute, and immovable, even Kisloch and his companions were appalled as they gazed upon Esther the prophetess.

Her eminent position, her imposing action, the flashing of her immense eyes, her beautiful but awful countenance, her black hair, that hung almost to her knees, and the white light of the moon, just rising over the opposite side of the amphitheatre, and which threw a silvery flash upon her form, and seemed to invest her with some miraculous emanation, while all beneath her were in deep gloom, all these circumstances combined, rendered her an object of universal interest and attention, while in a powerful, but very high voice, she thus addressed them.

"They come, they come! But will they go? Lo! hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah! I hear their drum in the desert, and the voice of their trumpets is like the wind of eve, but a decree hath gone forth, and it says, that a mortal shall be more precious than fine gold, yea, a man than the rich ore of Ophir.

"They come, they come! But will they go? I see the flash of their cimeters, I mark the prancing of their cruel steeds; but a decree hath gone forth, and it says, a gleaning shall be left among them, as in the shaking of the olive tree; two or three berries on the top of the uppermost bough; four or five on the straggling branches.

"They come, they come! But will they go? Lo! a decree hath gone forth, and it says, Hamadan shall be to thee for a spoil, and desolation shall fall upon Babylon. And there shall the wild beasts of the desert lodge, and howling monsters shall fill their houses, and there shall the daughters of the ostrich dwell, and there shall the screech-owl pitch her tent, and there shall the night-raven lay her eggs, and there shall the satyrs hold their revels, and wolves shall howl to one another in their palaces, and dragons in their voluptuous pavilions. Her time is near at hand, her days shall not be prolonged, the reed and the lotus shall wither in her rivers, and the meadows by her canals shall be as the sands of the desert. For is it a light thing that the Lord should send his servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of

* The difference between a camel and a dromedary is the difference between a hack and a thorough-bred horse. ere is no other.

* See a former note.

Israel! Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains, for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted!"

She ceased, she descended the precipitous side of the amphitheatre, with rapid steps, vaulting from tier to tier, and bounding with wonderful agility from one mass of ruin to another. At length she reached the level; and then, foaming and panting, she rushed to Aloy, threw herself upon the ground, embraced his feet, and wiped off the dust from his sandals with her hair.

The assembly broke into long and loud acclamations of supernatural confidence, and sanguine enthusiasm. They beheld their Messiah wave his miraculous sceptre. They thought of Hassan Subah and his Seljuks only as of victims, and of tomorrow only as of a day which was to commence a new era of triumph, freedom and empire!

V.

HASSAN SUBAH, after five days of forced marches, pitched his sumptuous pavilion in that beautiful oasis, which had afforded such delightful refreshment to Aloy when a solitary pilgrim. Around, for nearly half a mile, were the tents of his warriors, and of the numerous caravans that had accompanied him, laden with water and provisions for his troops. Here, while he reposed, he also sought information as to the position of his enemy.

A party of observation, which he had immediately despatched, returned almost instantly with a small caravan that had been recently plundered by the robbers. The merchant, a venerable and pious Moslem, was ushered into the presence of the governor of Hamadan.

"From the robbers" haunt?" inquired Hassan.

"Unfortunately so," answered the merchant.

"Is it far?"

"A day's journey."

"And you quitted it?"

"Yesterday morn."

"What is their force?"

The merchant hesitated.

"Do they not make prisoners?" inquired the governor, casting a scrutinizing glance at his companion.

"Holy prophet! what a miserable wretch am I!" exclaimed the venerable merchant, bursting into tears. "A faithful subject of the caliph, I am obliged to serve rebels—a devout Moslem, I am forced to aid Jews! Order me to be hanged at once, my lord," continued the unfortunate merchant, wringing his hands. "Order me to be hanged at once. I have lived long enough."

"What is all this?" inquired Hassan; "speak, friend, without fear."

"I am a faithful subject of the caliph," answered the merchant; "I am a devout Moslem, but I have lost ten thousand dirhems."

"I am sorry for you, sir; I also have lost something, but my losses are nothing to you, nor yours to me."

"Accursed be the hour when these dogs tempted me! Tell me, is it a sin to break faith with a Jew?"

"On the contrary, I could find you many reverend mollahs, who will tell you that such a breach is the highest virtue. Come, come, I see how it is: you have received your freedom on condition of

not betraying your merciful plunderers. Promises exacted by terror are the bugbears of fools. Speak, man, all you know. Where are they? What is their force? Are we supposed at hand?"

"I am a faithful subject of the caliph, and I am bound to serve him," replied the merchant; "I am a devout Moslem, and 'tis my duty to destroy all Giaours, but I am also a man, and I must look after my own interest. Noble governor, the long and the short is, these scoundrels have robbed me of ten thousand dirhems, as my slaves will tell you; at least, goods to that amount. No one can prove that they be worth less. It is true that I include in that calculation the fifty per cent. I was to make on my shawls at Hamadan, but still to me it is as good as ten thousand dirhems. Ask my slaves if such an assortment of shawls was ever yet beheld."

"To the point, to the point. The robbers?"

"I am at the point. The shawls is the point. For when I talked of the shawls and the heaviness of my loss, you must know that the captain of the robbers—"

"Aloy?"

"A very fierce young gentleman; I don't know how they call him. Says the captain to me, 'Merchant, you look gloomy.' 'Gloomy,' says I, 'you would look gloomy if you were a prisoner, and had lost ten thousand dirhems.' 'What, is this trash worth ten thousand dirhems?' says he. 'With the fifty per cent, I was to make at Hamadan,' says I. 'Fifty per cent,' says he, 'you are an old knave.' 'Knave,' said I, 'I should like to hear any one call me a knave at Bagdad.' 'Well, knave or not,' says he, 'you may get out of this scrape.' 'How?' says I. 'Why you are a very respectable looking man,' says he, 'and are a good Moslem in the bargain, I warrant.' 'That I am,' says I 'although you be a Jew: but how the faith is to serve me here I am sure I do not know, unless the angel Gabriel, as in the fifty-fifth verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of the Koran—'"

"Hush, hush, hush!" exclaimed Hassan; "to the point!—to the point!"

"I always am at the point, only you put me out. However, to make it as short as possible, the captain knows all about your coming, and is frightened out of his wits, although he did talk big; I could easily see that. And he let me go, you see, with some of my slaves, and gave me an order for five thousand dirhems on one Bostenay, of Hamadan, (perhaps you know him, I don't; is he a good man?) on condition that I would fall in with you, and, Mohammed forgive me, tell you a lie!"

"A lie!"

"Yes! a lie; but these Jewish dogs don't understand what a truly religious man is, and when I began to tell the lie, I was soon put out. Now, noble Hassan, if a promise to a Jew be not binding on a true believer, and you will see me straight with the five thousand dirhems, I will betray every thing at once.

"Be easy about the five thousand dirhems, good man, and tell me all."

"You will see me paid?"

"My honour upon it."

"'Tis well! Know then, the infamous dogs are very weak, and terrified at the news of your progress: one, whom I think they call Jabaster, has departed with the great majority of the people into the interior of the desert, about seven hun-

dred strong. I heard so; but mind, I don't know it. The young man, whom you call Alroy, being wounded in a recent conflict, could not depart with them, but remains among the ruins with some female prisoners, some treasure, and about a hundred companions hidden in sepulchres. He gave me my freedom on condition I fell in with you, and assured you that the dogs, full five thousand strong, had given you the go by in the night, and marched towards Hamadan. They wanted me to frighten you; it was a lie, and I could not tell it. And now you know the plain truth; and if it be a sin to break faith with an infidel, you are responsible for it, as well as for the five thousand dirhems, which, by-the-by, ought to have been ten."

"Where is your order?"

"'Tis here," said the merchant, drawing it from his vest, "a very business-like document, drawn upon one Bostenay, whom they described as very rich, and who is here enjoined to pay me five thousand dirhems, if, in consequence of my information, Hassan Subah, that is, yourself, return forthwith to Hamadan without attacking them."

"Old Bostenay's head shall answer for this."

"I'm glad of it. But were I you, I would make him pay me first."

"Merchant," said Hassan, "have you any objection to pay another visit to your friend Alroy?"

"Allah forbid!"

"In my company?"

"That makes a difference."

"Be our guide. The dirhems shall be doubled."

"That will make up for the fifty per cent. I hardly like it; but in your company, that makes a difference. Lose no time. If you push on, Alroy must be captured. Now or never! The Jewish dogs, to rifle a true believer!"

"Oglu," said Hassan to one of his officers. "To horse! You need not strike the tents. Can we reach the city by sunset, merchant?"

"An hour before, if you be off' at once."

"Sound the drums. To horse, to horse!"

VI.

The Seljuks halted before the walls of the deserted city. Their commander ordered a detachment to enter and reconnoitre. They returned and reported its apparent desolation. Hassan Subah, then directing that a guard should surround the walls to prevent any of the enemy from escaping, passed with his warriors through the vast portal into the silent street.

The still magnificence of the strange and splendid scene influenced the temper even of this ferocious cavalry. They gazed around them with awe and admiration. The fierceness of their visages was softened, the ardour of their impulse stilled. A supernatural feeling of repose stole over their senses. No one brandished his cimeter, the fiery courser seemed as subdued as his lord, and no sound was heard but the melancholy, mechanical tramp of the disciplined march, unrelieved by martial music, inviolate by oath or jest, and unbroken even by the ostentatious caraoeling of any showy steed.

It was sunset: the star of eve glittered over the white Ionian fane that rose serene and delicate in the flashing and purple sky.

"This way, my lord," said the merchant guide, turning round to Hassan Subah, who, surrounded by his officers, led the van. The whole of the

great way of the city was filled with the Seljukian warriors. Their ebon steeds, their snowy turbans, adorned with plumes of the black eagle and the red heron, their dazzling shawls, the blaze of their armour in the sunset, and the long undulating perspective of beautiful forms and brilliant colours,—this regiment of heroes in a street of palaces,—war had seldom afforded a more imposing, or a more picturesque spectacle.

"This way, my lord," said the merchant, pointing to the narrow turning that, at the foot of the temple, led, through ruined streets, to the amphitheatre.

"Halt!" exclaimed a wild, shrill voice.

Each warrior suddenly arrested his horse.

"Who spoke?" exclaimed Hassan Subah.

"I!" answered a voice. A female form stood in the portico of the temple, with uplifted arms.

"And who art thou?" inquired Hassan Subah, not a little disconcerted.

"Thy evil genius, Seljuk!"

Hassan Subah, pale as his ivory battle-axe, did not answer; every man within hearing shuddered; still the dread woman remained immovable within the porch of the temple.

"Woman, witch, or goddess," at length exclaimed Hassan Subah, "what wouldst thou here?"

"Seljuk! behold this star. 'Tis a single drop of light, yet who even of thy wild band can look upon it without awe. And yet thou, worse than Sisera, thou comest to combat against those, for whom even 'the stars in courses fought.'"

"A Jewish witch!" exclaimed the Seljuk.

"A Jewish witch! Be it so; behold then my spell falls upon thee, and that spell is Destruction.

"Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song; arise, Bōrak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam!"

Immediately the sky appeared to darken, a cloud of arrows and javelins broke from all sides upon the devoted Seljuks: immense masses of stone and marble were hurled from all directions, horses were stabbed by spears impelled by invisible hands, and riders fell to the ground without a struggle, and were trampled upon by their disordered and affrighted brethren.

"We are betrayed," exclaimed Hassan Subah, hurling a javelin at the merchant, but the merchant was gone. The Seljuks raised their famous war-ery.

"Oglu, regain the desert," ordered the chieftain.

But no sooner had the guard without the walls heard the war-ery of their companions, than, alarmed for their safety, they rushed to their assistance. The retreating forces of Subah, each instant diminishing as they retreated, were baffled in their project by the very eagerness of their auxiliaries. The unwilling contention of the two parties increased the confusion; and when the Seljuks, recently arrived, having at length formed into some order, had regained the gate, they found to their dismay that the portal was barricaded and garrisoned by the enemy. Uninspired by the presence of their commander, who was in the rear, the puzzled soldiers were seized with a panic, and, spurring their horses, dispersed in all directions of the city. In vain Hassan Subah endeavoured to recall order. The moment was past. Dashing with about thirty men to an open ground, which his quick eye had observed in his progress down the street, and dealing destruction with every blow

the dreaded Governor of Hamadan, like a true soldier, awaited an inevitable fate, not wholly desperate that some chance might yet turn up to extricate him from his forlorn situation.

And now, as it were by enchantment, wild armed men seemed to arise from every part of the city. From every mass of ruin, from every crumbling temple and mouldering mansion, from every catacomb and cellar, from behind every column and every obelisk, upstarted some desperate warrior with a bloody weapon. The massacre of the Seljuks was universal. The horsemen dashed wildly about the ruined streets, pursued by crowds of footmen; sometimes formed in small companies, the Seljuks frequently charged and fought desperately; but however stout might be their resistance to the open foe, it was impossible to withstand their secret enemies. They had no place of refuge, no power of gaining even a moment's breathing time. If they retreated to a wall, it instantly bristled with spears; if they endeavoured to form in a court, they sank under the falling masses which were showered upon them from all directions. Strange shouts of denunciation blended with the harsh crying of horns, and the clang and clash of cymbals and tambours sounded in every quarter of the city.

"If we could only mount the walls, Ibrahim, and leap into the desert," exclaimed Hassan Subah to one of his few remaining comrades. "'Tis our only chance. We die here like dogs! Could I but meet Alroy!"

Three of the Seljuks dashed swiftly across the open ground in front, followed by several Hebrew horsemen.

"Smite all, Abner. Spare none, remember Amalek!" exclaimed their youthful leader, waving his bloody cimier.

"They are down,—one, two,—there goes the third. My javelin has done for him."

"Your horse bleeds freely. Where's Jabaster?"

"At the gates: my arm aches with slaughter. The Lord hath delivered them into our hands. Could I but meet their chieftain!"

"Turn, bloodhound, he is here," exclaimed Hassan Subah.

"Away, Abner, this affair is mine."

"Prince, you have already slain your thousands."

"And Abner his tens of thousands. Is it so? This business is for me only. Come on, Turk."

"Art thou Alroy?"

"The same."

"The slayer of Alschiroch?"

"Even so."

"A rebel and a murderer."

"What you please. Look to yourself."

The Hebrew prince flung a javelin at the Seljuk. It glanced from the breast-plate; but Hassan Subah staggered in his seat. Recovering, he charged Alroy with great force. Their cimeters crossed, and the blade of Hassan shivered.

"He who sold me that blade, told me it was charmed, and could be broken only by a caliph," said Hassan Subah. "He was a liar!"

"As it may be," said Alroy, and he cut the Seljuk to the ground. Abner had dispersed his comrades. Alroy leaped from his fainting steed, and mounting the ebony courser of his late enemy, dashed again into the thickest of the fight.

The shades of night descended, the clamour gradually decreased, the struggle died away. A few

unhappy Moslem, who had quitted their saddles and sought concealment among the ruins, were occasionally hunted out, and brought forward and massacred. Long ere midnight the last of the Seljuks had expired.*

The moon shed a broad light upon the street of palaces crowded with the accumulated slain and the living victors. Fires were lit, torches illumined, the conquerors prepared the eager meal as they sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

A procession approached. Esther, the prophetess, clashing her cymbals, danced before the Messiah of Israel, who leaned upon his victorious cimier, surrounded by Jabaster, Abner, Scherirah and his chosen chieftains. Who could now doubt the validity of his mission? The wide and silent desert rang with the acclamations of his enthusiastic votaries.

VII.

HEAVILY the anxious hours crept on in the Jewish quarter of Hamadan. Again and again the venerable Bostenay discussed the chances of success with the sympathizing but desponding elders. Miriam was buried in constant prayer. Their most sanguine hopes did not extend beyond the escape of their prince.

A fortnight had elapsed, and no news had been received of the progress of the expedition, when suddenly towards sunset, a sentinel on a watch-tower announced the appearance of an armed force in the distance. The walls were instantly lined with the anxious inhabitants, the streets and squares filled with curious crowds. Exultation sat on the triumphant brow of the Moslem: a cold tremor stole over the fluttering heart of the Hebrew.

"There is but one God," said the captain of the gate.

"And Mohammed is his prophet," responded a sentinel.

"To-morrow we will cut off the noses of all these Jewish dogs."

"The sceptre has departed," exclaimed the despairing Bostenay.

"Lord, remember David!" whispered Miriam, as she threw herself upon the court of the palace, and buried her face in ashes.

The mollahs in solemn procession advanced to the ramparts to shed their benediction on the victorious Hassan Subah. The muzzin ascended the minarets to watch the setting sun, and proclaim the power of Allah with renewed enthusiasm.

"I wonder if Alroy be dead or alive," said the captain of the gate.

"If he be alive, he will be impaled," responded a sentinel.

"If dead, the carcass will be given to the dogs," rejoined the captain; "that is the practice."

"Bostenay will be hung," said the sentinel.

"And his niece, too," answered the captain.

"Hem!" said the sentinel. "Hassan Subah loves a black eye."

"I hope a true Moslem will not touch a Jewess," exclaimed an indignant black eunuch.

* The orientals are famous for their massacres: that of the Mamlook by the present Pasha of Egypt, and of the Janissaries by the sultan, are notorious. But one of the most terrible, and effected under the most difficult and dangerous circumstances, was the massacre of the Albanian boys by the present grand vizier in the autumn of 1830. I was in Albania at the time.

"They approach. What a dust!" said the captain of the gate.

"I see Hassan Subah!" said the sentinel.

"So do I," said the eunuch, "I know his black horse."

"I wonder how many dirhems old Bostenay is worth," said the captain.

"Immense!" said the sentinel.

"No plunder, I suppose?" said the eunuch.

"We shall see," said the captain; "at any rate, I owe a thousand to old Shelomi. We need not pay now, you know."

"Certainly not," said the black eunuch. "The rebels!"

A body of horsemen dashed forward. Their leader in advance reined in his fiery charger beneath the walls.

"In the name of the prophet, who is that?" exclaimed the captain of the gate, a little confused.

"I never saw him before," said the sentinel, "although he is in the Seljuk dress. 'Tis some one from Bagdad, I guess."

A trumpet sounded.

"Who keeps the gate?" called out the warrior.

"I am the captain of the gate," answered our friend.

"Open it then to the King of Israel."

"To whom?" inquired the astonished captain.

"To King David. The Lord hath delivered Hassan Subah and his host into our hands, and of all thy proud Seljuks none remaineth. Open thy gates, I say, and lose no time. I am Jabaster, a lieutenant of the Lord; this cimeter is my commission. Open thy gates, and thou and thy people shall have that mercy which they have never shown; but if thou delayest one instant, thus saith the king, our master—I will burst open your portal, and smite, and utterly destroy all that you have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

"Call forth the venerable Lord Bostenay," said the captain of the gate, with chattering teeth. "He will intercede for us."

"And the gentle Lady Miriam," said the sentinel. "She is ever charitable."

"I will head the procession," said the black eunuch; "I am accustomed to women."

The procession of mollahs shuffled back to their college with most profane precipitation; the sun set, and the astounded muzzin stood with their mouths open, and quite forgot to announce the power of their deity, and the validity of their prophet. The people all called out for the venerable Lord Bostenay and the gentle Lady Miriam, and ran in crowds to see who could first kiss the hem of their garments.

The principal gate of Hamadan opened into the square of the great mosque. Here the whole population of the city appeared assembled. The gates were thrown open; Jabaster and his companions mounted guard. The short twilight died away, the shades of night descended. The minarets were illumined,* the houses hung with garlands, the ramparts covered with tapestry and carpets.

A clang of drums, trumpets, and cymbals announced the arrival of the Hebrew army. The people shouted, the troops without responded with

a long cheer of triumph. Amid the blaze of torches a youth, waving his cimeter, upon a coal-black steed, bounded into the city, at the head of his guards. The people fell upon their knees, and shouted, "Long live Alroy!"

A venerable man, leading a beautiful maiden, with downcast eyes, advanced. They headed a deputation of the chief inhabitants of the city. They came to solicit mercy and protection. At their sight the youthful warrior leaped from his horse, flung away his cimeter, and clasping the maiden in his arms, exclaimed, "Miriam, my sister, this, this indeed is triumph!"

VIII.

"DRINK," said Kisloch the Kourid, to Calidas the Indian; "you forget, comrade, we are no longer Moslem."

"Wine, methinks, has a peculiarly pleasant flavour in a golden cup," said the Guebre. "I got this little trifle to-day in the bazaar," he added, holding up a magnificent vase studded with gems.

"I thought plunder was forbidden," grinned the negro.

"So it is," replied the Guebre: "but we may purchase what we please—upon credit."

"Well, for my part, I am a moderate man," exclaimed Calidas the Indian, "and would not injure even those accursed dogs of Turks. I have not cut my host's throat, but only turned him into my porter, and content myself with his harem, his baths, his fine horses, and other little trifles."

"What quarters we are in! there is nothing like a true Messiah!" exclaimed Kisloch, very devoutly.

"Nothing," said Calidas; "though, to speak truth, I did not much believe in the efficacy of Solomon's sceptre, till his majesty clove the head of the valiant Seljuk with it."

"But now there's no doubt of it!" said the Guebre.

"We should indeed be infidels if we doubted now," replied the Indian.

"How lucky," grinned the negro, "as I had no religion before, that I have now fixed upon the right one!"

"Most fortunate!" said the Guebre. "What shall we do to amuse ourselves to-night?"

"Let's go to the coffee-house and make the Turks drink wine," said Calidas the Indian.

"What say you to burning down a mosque?" said Kisloch the Kourid.

"I had great fun with some dervishes this morning," said the Guebre.

"I met one asking alms with a wire run through his check,* so I caught another, bored his nose, and tied them both together!"

"Hah! hah! hah!" burst the negro.

IX.

ASIA resounded with the insurrection of the Jews, and the massacre of the Seljuks. Crowds of Hebrews, from the rich cities of Persia, and the populous settlements on the Tigris and the Euphrates, hourly poured into Hamadan.

The irritated Moslem persecuted the brethren of the successful rebel, and this impolicy precipitated

* So, I remember, at Constantinople, at the commencement of 1831, at the departure of the Mecca caravan, and also at the annual feast of Ramadan.

* Not uncommon. These dervishes frequent the bazaars

their flight. The wealth of Bagdad flowed into the Hebrew capital. Seated on the divan of Hassan Subah, and wielding the sceptre of Solomon, the King of Israel received the homage of his devoted subjects, and despatched his envoys to Syria and to Egypt. The well-stored magazines and arsenals of Hamadan soon converted the pilgrims into warriors. The city was unable to accommodate the increased and increasing population. An extensive camp, under the command of Abner, was formed without the walls, where the troops were daily disciplined, and where they were prepared for greater exploits than a skirmish in the desert.

Within a month after the surrender of Hamadan, the congregation of the people assembled in the square of the great mosque, now converted into a synagogue. The multitude was disposed in ordered ranks, and the terrace of every house was crowded. In the centre of the square was an immense altar of cedar and brass, and on each side stood a company of priests, guarding the victims, one young bullock and two rams without blemish.

Amid the flourish of trumpets, the gates of the synagogue opened, and displayed to the wondering eyes of the Hebrews a vast and variegated pavilion, planted in the court. The holy remnant, no longer forlorn, beheld that tabernacle, of which they had so long dreamed, once more shining in the sun, with its purple and scarlet hangings, its curtains of rare skins, and its furniture of silver and of gold.

A procession of priests advanced, bearing, with staves of cedar, run through rings of gold, a gorgeous ark, the work of the most cunning artificers of Persia. Night and day had they laboured, under the direction of Jabaster, to produce this wondrous spectacle. Once more the children of Israel beheld the cherubim. They burst into a triumphant hymn of thanksgiving, and many drew their swords, and cried aloud to be led against the Canaanites.

From the mysterious curtains of the tabernacle, Alroy came forward, leading Jabaster. They approached the altar. And Alroy took robes from the surrounding priests, and put them upon Jabaster, and a girdle, and a breast-plate of jewels. And Alroy took a mitre, and placed it upon the head of Jabaster, and upon the mitre he placed a crown; and, pouring oil upon his head, the pupil anointed the master, high priest of Israel.

The victims were slain, the sin-offerings burnt. Amid clouds of incense, bursts of music, and the shouts of a devoted people; amid odour, and melody, and enthusiasm, Alroy mounted his charger, and at the head of twenty thousand men, departed to conquer Media.

X.

THE extensive and important province of Aderbajan, of which Hamadan was the capital, was formed of the ancient Media. Its fate was decided by one battle. On the plain of Nehauend, Alroy met the hastily-raised levies of the Atabek of Kermanshah, and entirely routed them. In the course of a month, every city of the province had acknowledged the supremacy of the new Hebrew monarch, and, leaving Abner to complete the conquest of Louristan, Alroy entered Persia.

The incredible and irresistible progress of Alroy roused Togrul, the Turkish Sultan of Persia, from the luxurious indolence of the palaces of Nishapur. He summoned his emirs to meet him at the im-

perial city of Rhey, and crush, by one overwhelming effort, the insolent rebel.

Religion, valour, and genius alike inspired the arms of Alroy, but he was, doubtless, not a little assisted by the strong national sympathy of his singular and scattered people, which ever insured him prompt information on all the movements of his enemy. Without any preparation, he found agents in every court, and camp, and cabinet, and by their assistance he anticipated the designs of his adversaries, and turned even their ingenuity to their confusion. The imperial city of Rhey was surprised in the night, sacked and burnt to the ground. The sacred and baffled emirs who escaped, fled to the Sultan Togrul, tearing their beards, and prophesying the approaching termination of the world.

The palaces of Nishapur resounded with the imprecations of their master, who, cursing the Jewish dogs, and vowing a pilgrimage to Mecca, placed himself at the head of a motley multitude of warriors, and rushed upon the plains of Irak, to exterminate Alroy.

The Persian force exceeded the Hebrew at least five times in number. Besides a large division of Seljuks, the Caucasus had poured forth its strange inhabitants to swell the ranks of the faithful. The wild tribes of the Bactiari were even enlisted with their fatal bows, and the savage Turkmans, tempted by the sultan's gold, for a moment yielded their liberty, and shook their tall lances in his ranks.

But what is a wild Bactiari, and what is a savage Turkman, and what even a disciplined and imperious Seljuk, to the warriors of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob? At the first onset, Alroy succeeded in dividing the extended centre of Togrul, and separating the greater part of the Turks from their less disciplined comrades. At the head of his Median cavalry the Messiah charged and utterly routed the warriors of the Caucasus. The wild tribes of the Bactiari shot their arrows and fled, and the savage Turkmans plundered the baggage of their own commander.

The Turks themselves fought desperately; but, deserted by their allies, and surrounded by an inspired foe, their efforts were unavailing, and their slaughter terrible. Togrul was slain while heading a desperate and fruitless charge, and after his fall, the battle resembled a massacre rather than a combat.

The plain was clotted with Seljukian gore. No quarter was given or asked. Twenty thousand chosen troops fell on the side of the Turks; the rest dispersed and gained the mountains. Leaving Scherirah to restore order, Alroy the next morning pushed on to Nishapur at the head of three thousand horsemen, and summoned the city ere the inhabitants were apprized of the defeat and death of the sultan.

The capital of Persia escaped the fate of Rhey by an inglorious treaty, and a lavish tribute. The treasures of the Chosroes and the Gasnevides were despatched to Hamadan, on which city day dawned, only to bring intelligence of a victory or a conquest.

While Alroy dictated peace on his own terms in the palaces of Nishapur, Abner, having reduced Louristan, crossed the mountains, and entered Persia with the reinforcements he had received from Jabaster. Leaving the government and garrisoning of his new conquests to this valiant captain, Alroy, at the head of the conquerors of Persia, in consequence of intelligence received from Hamadan, returned by forced marches to that city.

XI.

LEAVING the army within a day's march of the capital, Alroy, accompanied only by his staff, entered Hamadan in the evening, and immediately repairing to the citadel, summoned Jabaster to council. The night was passed by the king and the high priest in deep consultation. The next morning a decree apprized the inhabitants of the return of their monarch, of the creation of the new "kingdom of the Medes and Persians," of which Hamadan was appointed the capital, and Abner the viceroy, and of the intended and immediate invasion of Syria, and reconquest of the land of promise.

The plan of this expedition had been long matured, and the preparations to effect it were considerably advanced. Jabaster had not been idle during the absence of his pupil. One hundred thousand warriors were now assembled* at the capital of the "kingdom of the Medes and Persians;" of these the greater part were Hebrews, but many Arabs, wearied of the Turkish yoke, and many gallant adventurers from the Caspian, easily converted from a vague idolatry to a religion of conquest, swelled the ranks of the army of the "Lord of Hosts."

The plain of Hamadan was covered with tents, the streets were filled with passing troops, the bazaars loaded with military stores; long caravans of camels laden with supplies every day arrived from the neighbouring towns; each instant some high-capped Tartar with his despatches rushed into the city and galloped his steed up the steep of the citadel.† The clang of arms, the prance of horses, the flourish of warlike music, resounded from all quarters. The business and the treasures of the world seemed, as it were in an instant, to have become concentrated in Hamadan. Every man had some great object; gold glittered in every hand. All great impulses were stirring; all the causes of human energy were in lively action. Every eye sparkled, every foot stood firm and fast. Each man acted as if the universal fate depended on his exertions; as if the universal will sympathized with his particular desire. A vast population influenced by a high degree of excitement is the most sublime of spectacles.

The commander of the faithful raised the standard of the prophet on the banks of the Tigris. It was the secret intelligence of this intended event that had recalled Alroy so suddenly from Persia. The latent enthusiasm of the Moslem in was excited by the rare and mystic ceremony, and its effects were anticipated by previous and judicious preparations. The Seljuks of Bagdad alone amounted to fifty thousand men: the Sultan of Syria contributed the warriors who had conquered the Arabian princes of Damascus and Aleppo, while the ancient provinces of Asia Minor, which formed the rich and powerful kingdom of Seljukian Roum, poured forth a myriad of that matchless cavalry which had so often baffled the armies of the

Cæsars. Never had so imposing a force been collected on the banks of the Tigris since the reign of Haroun Alraschid. Each day some warlike Atabek* at the head of his armed train poured into the capital of the caliphs, or pitched his pavilion on the banks of the river; each day the proud emir of some remote principality astonished or affrighted the luxurious Babylonians by the strange or uncouth warriors that had gathered round his standard in the deserts of Arabia, or on the shores of the Euxine. For the space of twenty miles, the banks of the river were, on either side, far as the eye could reach, covered with the variegated pavilions, the glittering standards, the flowing streamers and twinkling pennons of the mighty host, of which Malek, the Grand Sultan of the Seljuks, and governor of the caliph's palace, was chief commander.

Such was the power assembled on the plains of Asia to arrest the progress of the Hebrew prince, and to prevent the conquest of the memorable land promised to the faith of his fathers, and forfeited by their infidelity. Before the walls of Hamadan, Alroy reviewed the army of Israel—sixty thousand heavy armed footmen, thirty thousand archers and light troops, and twenty thousand cavalry. Besides these, a body of ten thousand picked horsemen had been formed, all of whom had served in the Persian campaign, styled "the sacred guard." In their centre, shrouded in a case of wrought gold, studded with carbuncles, and carried on a lusty lance of cedar, a giant—for the height of Elnebar exceeded that of common men by three feet—bore the sceptre of Solomon. The sacred guard was commanded by Asriel, the brother of Abner.

The army was formed into three divisions. All marched in solemn order before the throne of Alroy, raised upon the ramparts, and drooped their standards and lances as they passed their heroic leader. Bostenay, and Miriam, and the whole population of the city, witnessed the inspiring spectacle from the walls. That same eve, Scherirah, at the head of forty thousand men, pushed on towards Bagdad, by Kermanshah; and Jabaster, who commanded in his holy robes, and who had vowed not to give up his sword until the rebuilding of the temple, conducted his division over the victorious plain of Nehauend. They were to concentrate at the pass of Kerrund, which conducted into the province of Bagdad, and await the arrival of the king.

At dawn of day, the royal division and the sacred guard, the whole under the command of Asriel, quitted the capital. Alroy still lingered, and for some hours the warriors of his staff might have been observed lounging about the citadel, or practising their skill in throwing the jerrreed as they exercised their impatient chargers before the gates. The king was with the Lady Miriam.

The king was with the Lady Miriam, walking in the garden of their uncle. His arm was wound round her delicate waist, and with the other he clasped her soft and graceful hand. The heavy tears burst from her downcast eyes, and stole along her pale and pensive cheek. They walked in silence, the brother and the sister, before the purity of whose surpassing love even ambition vanished. He

* In countries where the whole population are armed, a vast military force is soon assembled. Barchochebas was speedily at the head of two hundred thousand fighting men, and held the Romans long in check under one of their most powerful emperors.

† I have availed myself of a familiar character in oriental life, but the use of a Tartar as a courier in the time of Alroy is, I fear, an anachronism.

* I was at Yanina, the capital of Albania, when the grand vizier summoned the chieftains of the country, and was struck by their magnificent arrays each day pouring into the city.

opened the lattice gate. They entered into the valley small and green; before them was the marble fountain with its columns and cupola, and, in the distance, the charger of Alroy and his single attendant.

They stopped, and Alroy gathered flowers, and placed them in the hair of Miriam. He would have softened, the bitterness of parting with a smile. Gently he relaxed his embracing arm—almost insensibly he dropped her quivering hand.

"Sister of my soul," he whispered, "when we last parted here, I was a fugitive, and now I quit you a conqueror."

She turned, she threw herself upon his neck, and buried her face in his breast.

"My beautiful, restrain yourself—we shall meet at Bagdad."

He beckoned to her distant maidens—they advanced—he delivered Miriam into their arms. He seized her hand and pressed it to his mouth, and rushing to his horse, mounted and disappeared.

XII.

A **BOY** of irregular cavalry feebly defended the pass of Kerrund. It was carried with slight loss by the vanguard of Scherirah, and the fugitives prepared the host of the caliph for the approach of the Hebrew army.

Upon the plain of the Tigris, the enemy formed into battle array. The centre was commanded by Malek, the Grand Sultan of the Seljuks himself; the right wing, headed by the Sultan of Syria, was protected by the river; and the left, under the Sultan of Roum, was posted upon the advantageous position of some irregular and rising ground. Thus, proud in the number, valour, discipline, and disposition of his forces, Malek awaited the conqueror of Persia.

The glittering columns of the Hebrews might even now be perceived defiling from the mountains, and forming at the extremity of the plain. Before nightfall the camp of the invaders was pitched within hearing of that of Malek. The moving lights in the respective tents might plainly be distinguished; and ever and anon the flourish of hostile music fell with an ominous sound upon the ears of the opposed foemen. A few miles only separated those mighty hosts. Upon to-morrow deputed, perhaps, the fortunes of ages. How awful is the eve of battle!

Alroy, attended by a few chieftains, personally visited the tents of the soldiery, promising them on the morrow a triumph, before which the victories of Nehanend and Nishabur would sink into insignificance. Their fiery and excited visages proved at once their courage and their faith. The sceptre of Solomon was paraded throughout the camp in solemn procession. On the summit of a huge tumulus, perhaps the sepulchre of some classic hero, Esther the prophetess, surrounded by the chief zealots of the host, poured forth her inspiring inspiration. It was a grand picture, that beautiful wild girl, the groups of stern devoted warriors, the red flame of the watch-fires mixing with the silver shadows of the moon as they illumined the variegated turbans and gleaming armour of her votaries.

In the pavilion of Alroy, Jabaster consulted with his pupil on the conduct of the morrow.

"This is a different scene from the cavern of the

Caucasus," said Alroy, as the high priest rose to retire.

"It has one great resemblance, sire; the God of our fathers is with us."

"Ay! the Lord of Hosts. Moses was a great man. There is no career except conquest."

"You muse!"

"Of the past. The present is prepared. Too much thought will mar it."

"The past is for wisdom, the present for action, but for joy the future. The feeling that the building of the temple is at hand that the Lord's anointed will once again live in the house of David, absorbs my spirit; and when I muse over our coming glory, in my fond ecstasy I almost lose the gravity that doth besem my sacred office."

"Jerusalem—I have seen it. How many hours to dawn?"

"Some three."

"'Tis strange—I could sleep. I remember, on the eve of battle I was ever anxious. How is this, Jabaster?"

"Your faith, sire, is profound."

"Yes, I have no fear. My destiny is not complete. Good night, Jabaster. See Asriel, valiant priest. Pharez!"

"My lord."

"Rouse me at the second watch. Good night, boy."

"Good night, my lord."

"Pharez!"

"Be sure you rouse me at my second watch. Think you it wants three hours to dawn?"

"About three hours, my lord."

"Well! at the second watch, remember—good night."

XIII.

"It is the second watch, my lord."

"So soon! Have I slept! I feel fresh as an eagle. Call Scherirah, boy."

"'Tis strange, I never dream now. Before my flight, my sleep was ever troubled. Say what they like, man is made for action. My life is now harmonious, and sleep has now become what nature willed it, a solace, not a contest. Before, it was a struggle of dark passions and bright dreams, in whose creative fancy and fair vision my soul sought refuge from the dreary bale of daily reality.

"I will withdraw the curtains of my tent. O! most majestic vision! And have I raised this host! O'er the wide plain, far as my eye can range, the snowy tents studding the purple landscape, embattled legions gather round their flags, to struggle for my fate. It is the agony of Asia.

"A year ago, upon this very spot, I laid me down to die, an unknown thing, and known and recognised only to be despised; and now the sultans of the world come forth to meet me. I have no fear. My destiny is not complete. And whither tends it? Let that power decide that hitherto has fashioned all my course.

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem—ever harping on Jerusalem. With all his lore, he is a narrow-minded zealot, whose dreaming memory would fondly make a future like the past. O! Bagdad, Bagdad, within thy glittering halls there is a charm worth all his cabala!

"Hah! Scherirah! The dawn is near at hand—the stars still shining. The air is very pleasant,

To-morrow will be a great day, Scherirah, for Israel and for you. You lead the attack. A moment in my tent, my brave Scherirah!"

XIV.

THE dawn broke—a strong column of Hebrews, commanded by Scherirah, poured down upon the centre of the army of the caliph. Another column, commanded by Jabaster, attacked the left wing, headed by the Sultan of Roum. No sooner had Alroy perceived that the onset of Scherirah had succeeded in penetrating the centre of the Turks, than he placed himself at the head of the sacred guard, and by an irresistible charge completed their disorder and confusion. The division of the Sultan of Syria, and a great part of the centre were entirely routed and driven into the river, and the remainder of the division of Malek was effectually separated from his left wing.

But while to Alroy the victory seemed already decided, a far different fate awaited the division of Jabaster. The Sultan of Roum, posted in an extremely advantageous position, and commanding troops accustomed to the discipline of the Romans of Constantinople, received the onset of Jabaster without yielding, and not only repelled his attack, but finally made a charge which completely disordered and dispersed the column of the Hebrews. In vain Jabaster endeavoured to rally his troops, in vain he performed prodigies of valour, in vain he himself struck down the standard-bearer of the sultan, and once even penetrated to the pavilion of the monarch. His division was fairly routed. The eagerness of the Sultan of Roum to effect the annihilation of his antagonists prevented him from observing the forlorn condition of the Turkish centre. Had he, after routing the division of Jabaster, only attacked Alroy in the rear, the fortune of the day might have been widely different. As it was, the eagle eye of Alroy soon detected his inadvertence, and profited by his indiscretion. Leaving Ithamar to keep the centre in check, he charged the Sultan of Roum with the sacred guard, and afforded Jabaster an opportunity of rallying some part of his forces. The Sultan of Roum, perceiving that the day was lost by the ill-conduct of his colleagues, withdrew his troops, retreated in haste, but in good order, to Bagdad, carried off the caliph, his harem, and some of his treasure, and effected his escape into Syria. In the mean time the discomfiture of the remaining Turkish army was complete. The Tigris was dyed with their blood, and the towns through which the river flowed were apprized of the triumph of Alroy by the floating corpses of his enemies. Thirty thousand Turks were slain in battle: among them the Sultans of Bagdad and Syria, and a vast number of atabeks, emirs, and chieftains. A whole division finding themselves surrounded, surrendered on terms, and delivered up their arms. The camps and the treasure of the three sultans were alike captured, and the troops that escaped so completely dispersed, that they did not attempt to rally, but, disbanded and desperate, prowled over and plundered the adjoining provinces. The loss of the division of Jabaster was also severe, but the rest of the army suffered little. Alroy himself was slightly wounded. The battle lasted barely three hours. Its results were immense. David Alroy was now master of the East.

XV.

THE plain was covered with the corpses of men and horses, arms and standards, and prostrate tents. Returning from the pursuit of the Sultan of Roum, Alroy ordered the trumpets to sound to arms, and covered with gore and dust dismounted from his charger, and stood before the pavilion of Malek, leaning upon his bloody cimier, and surrounded by his victorious generals.

"Ah, Jabaster!" said the conqueror, giving his hand to the pontif, "'twas well your troops had such a leader. No one but you could have rallied them. You must drill your lads a little before they meet again the Cappadocian cavalry. Brave Scherirah, we shall not forget our charge. Asriel, tell the guard, for me, that the victory of the Tigris was owing to their cimiers. Ithamar, what are our freshest troops?"

"The legion of Aderbijan, sire."

"How strong can they muster?"

"It counts twelve thousand men: we might collect two-thirds."

"Valiant Ithamar, take the Aderbijans, and a division of the guard, push on towards Bagdad, and summon the city. If his sultanship of Roum offer battle, take up a position, and he shall quickly have his desire. For the present, after these hasty marches and sharp fighting, the troops must rest. I guess he will not tarry. Summon the city, and say that if any resistance be offered, I will make it as desolate as old Babylon. Treat with no armed force. Where is the soldier that saved me a cracked scull—his name Benaiah!"

"I wait your bidding, sire."

"You're a captain. Join the division of Ithamar, and win fresh laurels ere we meet again. Gentle Asriel, let your brother know our fortune."

"Sire, several Tartars have already been despatched to Hamadan."

"'Tis well. Send another with these tablets to the Lady Miriam. Despatch the pavilion of Malek as a trophy for the town. Elnebar, Goliath of the Hebrews, you bore our sacred standard like a hero! How fares the prophetess? I saw her charging in our ranks, waving a sabre with her snowy arm, her long dark hair streaming like a storm, from whence her eyes flashed lightning."

"The king bleeds," said Jabaster.

"Slightly. It will do me service. I am somewhat feverish. A kingdom for a draught of water! And now for our wounded friends. Asriel, do you marshal the camp. It is Sabbath eve.* Time presses."

* "They began their Sabbath from sunset, and the same time of day they ended it."—*Talm. Hierosolym in Sheveith.* fol. 33. col. 1.

"The eve of the Sabbath, or the day before, was called the day of preparation for the Sabbath."—*Luke* xxxiii. 54.

"And from the time of the evening sacrifice and forward, they began to fit themselves for the Sabbath, and to cease from their works, so as not to go to the barber, not to sit in judgment, &c.; nay, thenceforward they would not set things on working which being set a-work, would complete their business of themselves, unless it would be completed before the Sabbath came—as wool was not put to dye, unless it could take colour while it was yet day," &c.—*Talm. in Sab.* par. 1; *Lightfoot*, vol. i. p. 218.

"Towards sun-setting, when the Sabbath was now approaching, they lighted up the Sabbath lamp. Men and women were bound to have a lamp lighted up in their houses on the Sabbath though they were never so poor—nay, though they were forced to go a begging for oil for this purpose: and the lighting up of this lamp was a part of making the Sabbath a delight: and women were especially commanded to look to this business."—*Maimonides in Sab.* par. 36.

XVI.

THE dead were plundered, and thrown into the river, the encampment of the Hebrews completed. Alroy, with his principal officers, visited the wounded, and praised the valiant. The bustle which always succeeds a victory, was increased in the present instance by the anxiety of the army to observe with grateful strictness the impending Sabbath.

When the sun set, the Sabbath was to commence. The undulating horizon rendered it difficult to ascertain the precise moment of his fall. The crimson orb sunk behind the purple mountains, the sky was flushed with a rich and rosy glow. Then might be perceived the zealots, proud in their Talmudical lore, holding a skein of white silk in their hands, and announcing the approach of the Sabbath by their observation of its shifting tints. While the skein was yet golden, the forge of the armourer still sounded, the fire of the cook still blazed, still the cavalry led their steeds to the river, and still the busy footmen braced up their tents, and hammered at their pallisades. The skein of silk became rosy, the armourer worked with renewed energy, the cook puffed with increased zeal, the horsemen scampered from the river, the footmen cast an anxious glance at the fading twilight.

The skein of silk became blue; a dim, dull, sepulchral, leaden tinge fell over its purity. The hum of gnats arose, the bat flew in circling whirls over the tents, horns sounded from all quarters, the sun had set, the Sabbath had commenced. The forge was mute, the fire extinguished, the pranees of horses and the bustle of men in a moment ceased. A deep, a sudden, and all-pervading stillness dropped over that mighty host. It was night; the sacred lamp of the Sabbath sparkled in every tent of the camp, which vied in silence and in brilliancy with the mute and glowing heavens.

Morn came; the warriors assembled around the altar and the sacrifice. The high priest and his attendant Levites proclaimed the unity of the omnipotence of the God of Israel, and the sympathetic responses of his conquering and chosen people re-echoed over the plain. They retired again to their tents, to listen to the expounding of the law; even the distance of a Sabbath walk was not to exceed that space that lies between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. This was the distance between the temple and the tabernacle; it had been nicely measured, and every Hebrew who ventured forth from the camp this day might be observed counting the steps of a Sabbath-day's journey. At length the sun again set, and on a sudden fires blazed, voices sounded, men stirred, in the same enchanted and instantaneous manner that had characterized the stillness of the preceding eve. Shouts of laughter, bursts of music, announced the festivity of the coming night; supplies poured in from all the neighbouring villages, and soon the pious conquerors commemorated their late triumph in a round of banqueting.

On the morrow, a Tartar arrived from Idhamar, informing Alroy that the Sultan of Roum had retreated into Syria, that Bagdad was undefended, but that he had acceded to the request of the inhabitants that a deputation should wait upon Alroy before the troops entered the city, and had accorded a safe conduct for their passage.

XVII.

ON the morrow messengers announced the approach of the deputation. All the troops were under arms. Alroy directed that the suppliants should be conducted through the whole camp before they arrived at the royal pavilion, on each side of which the sacred guard was mustered in array. The curtains of his tent withdrawn displayed the conqueror himself seated on a sumptuous divan. On his right hand stood Jabaster in his priestly robes, on his left Scherirah. Behind him, the giant Elnebar supported the sacred sceptre. A crowd of chieftains was ranged on each side of the pavilion.

Cymbals sounded, muffled kettle-drums, and the faint flourish of trumpets; the commencement of the procession might be detected in the long perspective of the tented avenue. First came a company of beauteous youths, walking two by two, and strewing flowers, then a band of musicians in flowing robes of cloth of gold, plaintively sounding their silver trumpets. After these followed slaves of all climes, bearing a tribute of the most rare and costly production of their countries: negroes with tusks and teeth of the elephant, plumes of ostrich feathers, and caskets of gold dust; Syrians with rich armour; Persians with vases of atar-gul, and Indians with panniers of pearls of Ormuz, and soft shawls of Cashmere. Encircled by his children, each of whom held alternately a white or fawn-coloured gazelle, an Arab, clothed in his blue bonnuz, led by a thick cord of crimson silk a tall and tawny giraffe. Fifty stout men succeeded two by two, carrying in company a silver shield laden with golden coin, or chased goblets studded with gems.

The clash of cymbals announced the presence of the robes of honour,* culled from the wardrobe of the commander of the faithful; the silk of Aleppo and the brocades of Damascus, lined with the furs of the sable and the ermine, down from the breast of the swan, and the skins of white foxes.

After these followed two gray dromedaries with furniture of silver, and many caparisoned horses, each led by a groom in rich attire. The last of these was a snow-white steed, upon whose front was the likeness of a ruby star, a courser of the sacred stud of Solomon, and crossed only by the descendants of the prophet.

The muffled kettle-drums heralded the company of black eunuchs, with their scarlet vests and ivory battle-axes. They surrounded, and shrouded from the vulgar gaze, fourteen beautiful Circassian girls, whose brilliant visages and perfect forms were otherwise concealed by their long veils and ample drapery.

The gorgeous procession, as they approached the conqueror, bowed humbly to Alroy, and formed in order on each side of the broad avenue. The deputation appeared: twelve of the principal citizens of Bagdad, with folded arms, and downcast eyes, and disordered raiment. Meekly and mutely each touched the earth with his hand, and kissed it in token of submission, and then moving aside, made way for the chief envoy and orator of the company—Hoinan!

* These are ever carried in procession, and their number denotes the rank and quality of the chief, or of the individual to whom they are offered.

XVIII.

HUMBLY, but gracefully, the physician of the caliph bowed before the conqueror of the East. His appearance and demeanour afforded a contrast to the aspect of his brother envoys; not less calm or contented his countenance; not less sumptuous or studied his attire, than when he first rescued Alroy in the bazaar of Bagdad from the gripe of the false Abdallah.

He spoke, and every sound was hushed before the music of his voice.

"Conqueror of the world, that destiny with which it is in vain to struggle, has placed our lives and fortunes in your power. Your slaves offer for your approbation specimens of their riches; not as tribute, for all is yours: but to show you the products of security and peace, and to induce you to believe that mercy may be a policy as profitable to the conqueror as to the conquered; that it may be better to preserve than to destroy; and wiser to enjoy than to extirpate.

"Fate ordained that we should be born the slaves of the caliph; that same fate has delivered his sceptre into your hands. We offer you the same devotion we yielded to him, and we entreat the same protection he accorded to us.

"Whatever may be your decision we must bow to your decree with the humility that recognises superior force. Yet we are not without hope. We cannot forget that it is our good fortune not to be addressing a barbarous chieftain unable to sympathize with the claims of civilization, the creation of art, and the finer impulses of humanity. We acknowledge your irresistible power, but we dare to hope every thing from a prince whose genius all acknowledge and admire, who has spared some portion of his youth from the cares of government and the pursuits of arms, for the ennobling claims of learning, whose morality has been moulded by a pure and sublime faith, and who draws his lineage from a sacred and celebrated race, whose unrivalled antiquity even the prophet acknowledges."

He ceased; a buzz of approbation sounded throughout the pavilion which was hushed instantly as the lips of the conqueror moved.

"Noble emir," replied Alroy, "return to Bagdad, and tell your fellow-subjects that the King of Israel grants protection to their persons, and security to their property."

"And for their faith?" inquired the envoy in a lower voice.

"Toleration," replied Alroy, turning to Jabaster.

"Until further regulations," added the high priest.

"Emir," said Alroy, "the person of the caliph will be respected."

"May it please your highness," replied Honain, "the Sultan of Roum has retired with our late ruler."

"And his harem?"

"And his harem?"

"It was needless. We war not with women."

"Men, as well as women, must acknowledge the gracious mercy of your highness."

"Benomi," said Alroy, addressing himself to a young officer of the guard, "command the guard of honour that will attend this noble emir on his return. We soldiers deal only in iron, sir, and

cannot vie with the magnificence of Bagdad, yet wear this dagger for the donor's sake;" and Alroy held out to Honain a poniard flaming with gems.

The envoy of Bagdad advanced, took the dagger, kissed it, and placed it in his vest.*

"Scherirah," continued Alroy, "this noble emir is your charge. See that a choice pavilion of the host be for his use, and that his train complain not of the rough customs of our camp."

"May it please your highness," replied Honain, "I have done my duty, and with your gracious permission would at once return. I have business only less urgent than the present, because it concerns myself."

"As you will, noble emir. Benomi, to your post. Farewell, sir."

The deputation advanced, bowed, and retired. Alroy turned to Jabaster.

"No common person that, Jabaster."

"A very gracious Turk, sire."

"Think you he is a Turk?"

"By his dress."

"It may be so. Asriel, break up the camp. We'll march at once to Bagdad."

XIX.

THE chiefs dispersed to make the necessary arrangements for the march. The news that the army was immediately to advance to Bagdad soon circulated throughout the camp, and excited the most lively enthusiasm. Every hand was at work, striking the tents, preparing the arms and horses. Alroy retired to his pavilion. The curtains were drawn. He was alone, and plunged in profound meditation.

"Alroy!" a voice sounded.

He started and looked up. Before him stood Esther the prophetess.

"Esther! is it thou?"

"Alroy! enter not into Babylon."

"Indeed."

"As I live, the Lord hath spoken it. Enter not into Babylon."

"Not enjoy my fairest conquest, maiden?"

"Enter not into Babylon."

"What affrights thee?"

"Enter not into Babylon."

"I shall not surely change the fortunes of my life without a cause!"

"The Lord hath spoken. Is not that a cause?"

"I am the Lord's anointed. His warning has not reached me."

"Now it reaches thee. Doth the king despise the prophetess of the Lord? It is the sin of Ahab."

"Despise thee! despise the mouth that is the herald of my victories! 'Twere rank blasphemy. Prophecy triumph, Esther, and Alroy will never doubt thy inspiration."

"He doubts it now. I see he doubts it now. O! my king, I say again, enter not into Babylon."

"Beauteous maiden, those eyes flash lightning. Who can behold their wild and liquid glance, and doubt that Esther is inspired! Be calm, sweet girl, some dream disturbs thy fancy."

"Alroy, Alroy, enter not into Babylon!"

* The elegant mode in which the orientals receive presents.

"I have no fear—I bear a charmed life."

"Ah me! he will not listen. All is lost!"

"All is gained, my beautiful."

"I would we were upon the holy mount, and gazing on the stars of sacred Sion."

"Esther," said Alroy, advancing, and gently taking her hand, "the capital of the East will soon unfold its marvels to thy sight. Prepare thyself for wonders. Girl, we are no longer in the desert. Forget thy fitful fancies. Come, choose a husband from my generals, child, and I will give thee a kingdom for thy dower; I would gladly see a crown upon that tall imperial brow. It well deserves one."

The prophetess turned her dark eyes full upon Alroy. What passed in her mind was neither evident nor expressed. She gazed intently upon the calm and inscrutable countenance of the conqueror, she flung away his hand, and rushed out of the pavilion.

PART VIII.

I.

THE waving of banners, the flourish of trumpets, the neighing of steeds, and the glitter of spears! On the distant horizon, they gleam like the morning, when the gloom of the night shivers bright into the day.

Hark! the tramp of the foemen, like the tide of the ocean, flows onward and onward, and conquers the shore. From the brow of the mountain, like the rush of a river, the column defiling melts into the plain.

Warriors of Judah! holy men that battle for the Lord! The land wherein your fathers wept, and touched their plaintive psalter; the haughty city where your sires bewailed their cold and distant hearth: your steeds are prancing on its plain, and you shall fill its palaces. Warriors of Judah! holy men that battle for the Lord!

March, onward march, ye valiant tribes, the hour has come, the hour has come! All the promises of ages, all the signs of sacred sages, meet in this ravishing hour. Where is now the oppressor's chariot, where your tyrant's purple robe? The horse and the rider are both overthrown, the horse and the rider are both overthrown!

Rise, Rachel, from the wilderness arise, and weep no more. No more thy lonely palm tree's shade meet shroud thy sacred sorrowing. The Lord hath heard the widow's sigh, the Lord hath stilled the widow's tear. Be comforted, be comforted, thy children live again!

Yes! yes! upon the bounding plain fleet Asriel glances like a star, and stout Scherirah shakes his spear by stern Jabaster's cineter. And he is there, the chosen one, hymned by prophetic harps, whose life is like the morning dew on Sion's holy hill: the chosen one, the chosen one, that leads his race to victory, warriors of Judah! holy men that battle for the Lord!

They come, they come, they come!

The ramparts of the city were crowded with the inhabitants, the river sparkled with ten thousand boats, the bazaars were shut, the streets lined with the populace, and the terrace of every house covered with spectators. In the morning, Ithamar had

entered with his division and garrisoned the city. And now the vanguard of the Hebrew army, alie, having been long distinguished in the distance, approached the walls. A large body of cavalry at full speed dashed forward from the main force. Upon a milk-white charger, and followed by a glittering train of warriors, amid the shouts of the vast multitude, Alroy galloped up to the gates.

He was received by Ithamar and the members of the deputation, but Honain was not there. Accompanied by his staff and a strong detachment of the sacred guard, Alroy was conducted through the principal thoroughfares of the city, until he arrived at the chief entrance of the scrail, or palace of the caliph. The vast portal conducted him into a large quadrangular court, where he dismounted, and where he was welcomed by the captain of the eunuch guard. Accompanied by his principal generals and his immediate attendants, Alroy was then ushered through a suite of apartments, which reminded him of his visit with Honain, until he arrived at the grand council chamber of the caliphs.

The conqueror threw himself upon the gorgeous divan of the commander of the faithful.

"An easy seat after a long march," said Alroy, as he touched the coffee with his lips, which the chief of the eunuchs presented to him in a cup of transparent pink porcelain, studded with pearls.* "Ithamar, now for your report. What is the temper of the city? where is his sultanship of Roum?"

"The city, sire, is calm, and, I believe, content. The sultan and the caliph are still hovering on the borders of the province."

"So I supposed. Scherirah will settle that. Let the troops be encamped without the walls, the garrison, ten thousand strong, must be changed monthly. Ithamar, you are governor of the city: Asriel commands the forces. Worthy Jabaster, draw up a report of the civil affairs of the capital. Your quarters are the college of the dervishes. Bravo Scherirah, I cannot afford you a long rest. In three days time you must have crossed the river with your division. It will be quick work. I foresee they will not fight. Meet me all here in council by to-morrow's noon. Farewell.

The chieftains retired, the high priest lingered.

"Were it not an intrusion, sire, I would fain entertain a moment's audience."

"My own Jabaster, you have but to speak."

"Sire, I would speak of Abidan, as valiant a warrior as any in the host. It grieves me much, by some fatality, his services seem ever overcast."

"Abidan! I know him well,—a valiant man, but a dreamer, a dreamer."

"A dreamer, sire! Believe me, a true son of Israel, and one whose faith is deep."

"Good Jabaster, we are all true sons of Israel. Yet let me have men about me who see no visions in the mid-day sun. We must beware of dreamers."

"Dreams are the oracles of God."

"When God sends them. Very true, Jabaster. But this Abidan, and the company with whom he consorts, are filled with high-flown notions, caught from old traditions, which if acted on, would render government impracticable—in a word, they are dangerous men."

"The very flower of Israel! Some one has poisoned your sacred ear against them."

* Thus, a great Turk, who afforded me hospitality, was accustomed to drink his coffee.

"No one, worthy Jabaster. I have no counsellor except yourself. They may be the flower of Israel, but they are not the fruit. Good warriors,—bad subjects: excellent means, by which we may accomplish greater ends. I'll have no dreamers in authority. I must have practical men about me—practical men. See how Abner, Asriel, Ithamar, Medad,—see how these conform to what surrounds them, yet invincible captains, invincible captains. But then they are practical men, Jabaster; they have eyes and use them. They know the difference of times and seasons. But this Abidan, he has no other thought but the rebuilding of the temple: a narrow-souled bigot, who would sacrifice the essence to the form. The rising temple soon would fall again with such constructors. Why, sir, what think you, —this very same Abidan preached in the camp against my entry into what the quaint fanatic chooses to call 'Babylon,' and bored me with some vision!"

"There was a time your majesty thought not so ill of visions."

"Am I Abidan, sir? Are other men to mould their conduct or their thoughts by me? In this world I stand alone, a being of another order to yourselves, incomprehensible even to you. Let this matter cease. I'll hear no more, and have heard too much. To-morrow at council, to-morrow at council."

The high priest withdrew in silence.

"He is gone—at length I am alone. I cannot bear the presence of these men, except in action. Their words, even their looks, disturb the still creation of my brooding thought. I am once more alone; and loneliness hath been the cradle of my empire. Now I do feel inspired. There needs no mummy now to work a marvel.

"The sceptre of Solomon! It may be so. What then? Here's now the sceptre of Alroy. What's that without his mind? The legend said that none should free our people, but he who bore the sceptre of great Solomon. The legend knew that none could gain that sceptre, but with a mind, to whose supreme volition the fortunes of the world would bow like fate. I gained it; I confronted the spectre monarchs in their sepulchre; and the same hand that grasped their shadowy rule, hath seized the diadem of the mighty caliphs by the broad rushing of their imperial river.

"The world is mine: and shall I yield the prize, the universal and heroic prize, to realize the dull tradition of some dreaming priest, and consecrate a legend? He conquered Asia, and he built the temple. Are these my annals? Shall this quick blaze of empire sink to a glimmering and a twilight sway over some petty province, the decent patriarch of a pastoral horde? Is the Lord of Hosts so slight a God that we must place a barrier to his sovereignty, and fix the boundaries of Omnipotence between the Jordan and the Lebanon? It is not thus written: and were it so, I'll pit my inspiration against the presence of my ancestors. I also am a prophet, and Bagdad shall be my Sion. The Daughter of the Voice! Well, I am clearly summoned. I am the Lord's servant, not Jabaster's. Let me make his worship universal as his power; and where's the priest shall dare impugn my faith because his altars smoke on other hills than those of Judah?

"I must see Honain. That man has a great mind. He alone can comprehend my purpose.

Universal empire must not be founded on sectarian prejudices and exclusive rights. Jabaster would massacre the Moslem like Amalek; the Moslem, the vast majority, and most valuable portion of my subjects. He would depopulate my empire, that it might not be said that Ishmael shared the heritage of Israel. Fanatic! I'll send him to conquer Judah. We must conciliate. Something must be done to bind the conquered to our conquering fortunes. That bold Sultan of Roum,—I wish Abner had opposed him. To run off with the harem! I have half a mind to place myself at the head of the pursuing force, and—passion and policy alike combine—and yet—Honain is the man—I might send him on a mission. Could we make terms? I detest treaties. My fancy flies from all other topics. I must see him. Could I but tell him all I think! This door—where leads it? Hah! methinks I do remember you glittering gallery! No one in attendance. The discipline of our palace is somewhat lax. My warriors are no courtiers. What an admirable marshal of the palace Honain would make! Silence everywhere. So! 'tis well. These saloons I have clearly passed through before. Could I but reach the private portal by the river side, unseen or undetected! 'Tis not impossible. Here are many dresses. I will disguise myself. Trusty cimeter, thou hast done thy duty, rest a while. 'Tis lucky I am beardless. I shall make a capital eunuch. So! a very handsome robe. One dagger for a pinch, slippers powdered with pearls,* a caftan of cloth of gold, a Cashmere girdle, and a pelisse of sables. One glance at the mirror. Good! I begin to look like the conqueror of the world!"

II.

It was twilight: a small and solitary boat, with a single rower, glided along the Tigris, and stopped at the archway of a house that descended into the river. It stopped, the boatman withdrew the curtains, and his single passenger disembarked, and descended the stairs of the archway.

The stranger reached the landing-place, and, unfastening a golden grate, proceeded along a gallery, and entered a beautiful saloon of white and green marble, opening into gardens. No one was in the apartment; the stranger threw himself upon a silver couch, placed at the side of the fountain that rose from the centre of the chamber, and fell into a porphyry basin. A soft whisper roused the stranger from his reverie, a soft whisper, that faintly uttered the word "Honain." The stranger looked up, a figure, enveloped in a veil, that touched the ground, advanced from the gardens.

"Honain!" said the advancing figure, throwing off the veil, "Honain! Ah! the beautiful mute returned!"

A woman more lovely than the rosy morn, beheld an unexpected guest. They stood, the lady and the stranger gazing on each other in silence. A man, with a light, entered the extremity of the hall. Carefully he closed the portal, slowly he advanced, with a subdued step; he approached the lady and the stranger.

"Alroy!" said the astonished Honain, the light fell from his hand.

* The slippers in the East form a very fanciful portion of the costume. It is not uncommon to see them thus adorned, and beautifully embroidered. In precious embroidery and enamelling, the Turkish artists are unrivalled.

"Alroy!" exclaimed the lady, with a bewildered air: she turned pale, and leaned against a column.

"Daughter of the caliph!" said the leader of Israel; and he advanced, and fell upon his knee, and stole her passive hand, "I am indeed that Alroy to whom destiny has delivered the empire of thy sire; but the Princess Schirene can have nothing to fear from one who values, above all his victories, this memorial of her good-will;" and he took from his breast a rosary of pearls and emeralds, and rising slowly, left it in her trembling hand.

The princess turned and hid her face in her arm, which reclined against the column.

"My kind Honain," said Alroy, "you thought me forgetful of the past,—you thought me ungrateful. My presence here proves that I am not so. I come to inquire all your wishes. I come, if in my power to gratify and to fulfil them."

"Sire," replied Honain, who had recovered from the emotion in which he rarely indulged, and from the surprise which seldom entrapped him, "Sire, my wishes are slight. You see before you the daughter of my master. An interview, for which I fear I shall not easily gain that lady's pardon, has made you somewhat acquainted with her situation and sentiments. The Princess Schirene seized the opportunity of the late convulsions to escape from a mode of life long repugnant to all her feelings, and from a destiny at which she trembled. I was her only counsellor, and she may feel assured, a faithful, although perhaps an indiscreet one. The irresistible solicitations of the inhabitants, that I should become their deputy to their conqueror, prevented us from escaping as we had intended. Since then, from the movement of the troops, I have deemed it more prudent that we should remain at present here, although I have circulated the intelligence of my departure. In the kiosk of my garden, the princess is now a willing prisoner. At twilight she steals forth for the poor relaxation of my society, to listen to the intelligence which I acquire during the day in disguise. The history, sire, is short and simple. We are in your power; but instead of deprecating your interference, I now solicit your protection."

"Dear Honain, 'tis needless. The Princess Schirene has only to express a wish that it may be fulfilled. I came to speak with you on weighty matters, Honain, but I retire, for I am an intruder now. To-morrow, if it please you, at this hour, and in this disguise, I will again repair here. In the mean time, this lady may perchance express to you her wishes, and you will bear them to me. If an escort to any country, if any palace or province for her rule and residence—but I will not offer to one who should command. Lady! farewell. Pardon the past! To-morrow, good Honain! pr'ythee let us meet. Good even!"

III.

"THE royal brow was clouded," said Ithamar to Asriel, as departing from the council they entered their magnificent bark.

"With thought; he has so much upon his mind, 'tis wondrous how he bears himself."

"I have seen him gay on the eve of battle, and lively though calm, with weightier matters than now oppress him. His brow was clouded, but not, methinks, with *thought*; one might rather say with *temper*. Mark you, how he rated Jabaster?"

"Roundly! The stern priest writhed under it, and as he signed the ordinance, shivered his reed in rage. I never saw a man more pale."

"Or more silent. He looked like an imbodied storm. I tell you what, Asriel, that stern priest 'loves not us."

"Have you just discovered that secret, Ithamar? We are not of his school. Nor, in good faith, is our ruler. I am glad to see the king is so stanch about Abidan. Were he in council, he would support Jabaster."

"O! his mere tool. What think you of Scherirah?"

"I would not trust him. As long as there is fighting, he will meddle with nothing else; but, mark my words, Ithamar: in quiet times he will support the priest."

"Medad will have a place in council. He is with us."

"Heart and soul. I would your brother were here, Asriel: he alone could balance Jabaster. Alroy loves your brother like himself. Is it true he marries the Lady Miriam?"

"So the king wishes. 'Twill be a fine match for Abner."

"The world is all before us. I wonder who will be viceroy of Syria."

"When we conquer it. Not Scherirah. Mark my words, Ithamar: he never will have a government. You or I, perchance. For my own part, I would sooner remain as I am."

"Yours is a good post; the best."

"With the command of the city. It should go with the guard."

"Well, then, help me in getting Syria, and you can ask for my command."

"Agreed. Jabaster will have that in a Hebrew monarchy, the chief priest is in fact the grand vizier."

"Alroy will be his own minister."

"I am not so sure of that. He may choose to command the Syrian expedition in person; he must leave some head at Bagdad. Jabaster is no general."

"O! none at all. Alroy will be glad to leave him at home. The Sultan of Roum may not be always so merciful."

"Hah! hah! that was an escape!"

"By heavens! I thought it was all over. You made a fine charge."

"I shall never forget it. I nearly ran over Jabaster."

"Would that you had!"

IV.

It is the tender twilight hour, when maidens in their lonely bower, sigh softer than the eve! The languid rose her head upraises, and listens to the nightingale, while his wild and thrilling praises, from his trembling bosom gush: the languid rose her head upraises and listens with a blush.

In the clear and rosy air, sparkling with a single star, the sharp and spiry cypress tree, rises like a gloomy thought, amid the flow of revelry. A singing bird, a single star, a solemn tree, an odorous flower, are dangerous in the tender hour, when maidens in their twilight bower, sigh softer than the eve!

The daughter of the caliph comes forth to breathe the air: her lute her only company. She sits her

Down by a fountain's side, and gazes on the waterfall. Her cheek reclines upon her arm, like fruit upon a graceful bough. Very pensive is the face of that bright and beauteous lady. She starts; a warm voluptuous lip presses her soft and idle hand. It is her own gazelle. With his large and lustrous eyes, more eloquent than many a tongue, the fond attendant mutely asks the cause of all her thoughtfulness.

"Ah! bright gazelle! ah! bright gazelle!" the princess cried, the princess cried; "thy lips are softer than the swan, thy lips are softer than the swan; but his breathed passion, when they pressed, my bright gazelle! my bright gazelle!"

"Ah! bright gazelle! ah! bright gazelle!" the princess cried, the princess cried; "thine eyes are like the stars of night; thine eyes are like the stars of night; but his glanced passion when they gazed, my bright gazelle! my bright gazelle!"

She seized her lute, she wildly threw her fingers o'er its thrilling chords, and gazing on the rosy sky, to borrow all its poetry, thus, thus she sang; thus, thus she sang.

1.
He rose in beauty, like the morn,
That brightens in our Syrian skies;
Dark passion glittered in his eye,
And empire sparkled in his form!

2.
My soul! thou art the dusky earth,
On which his sunlight fell;
The dusky earth that, dim no longer,
Now breathes with light, now beams with love!

3.
He rose in beauty, like the morn,
That brightens on the Syrian skies;
Dark passion glittered in his eye,
And empire sparkled in his form!

"Once more, once more! Ah! sing that strain once more!"

The princess started and looked around. Before her stood Alroy. She rose, she would have retired; but, advancing, the conqueror stole her hand.

"Fair princess," said Alroy, "let it not be said my presence at once banished beauty and music."

"Sire, I doubt not, Honain awaits you. Let me summon him."

"Lady, it is not with Honain that I would speak."

He seated himself by her side. His countenance was pale, his heart trembled.

"This garden," at length he observed in a low voice; "this garden—a brief, brief space has glided away since first I wandered within its beauteous limits, and yet those days seem like the distant memory of another life."

"It is another life," said the princess. "Ourselves, the world, all forms and usages, all feelings and all habits, verily, they have changed as if we had breathed within another sphere."

"Tis a great change."

"Since first you visited my bright kiosk. Pretty bauble! I pray it may be spared."

"It is sacred like yourself."

"You are a courteous conqueror?"

"I am no conqueror, fair Schirene, but a slave more lowly than when I first bowed humbly in your presence."

"And bore away a token not forgotten. Your rosary is here."

"Let me claim it. It has been my consolation in much peril, beauteous lady. On the eve of battle I wound it round my heart."

She held forth the rosary, and turned away her head. Her hand remained in his: he pressed it to his lips. His right arm retained her hand, he wound the other round her waist, as he fell upon his knee.

"O! beautiful, O! more than beautiful! for thou to me art like a dream unbroken," exclaimed the young leader of Israel, "let me, let me breathe my adoration. I offer thee not empire; I offer thee not wealth; I offer thee not all the boundless gratification of magnificent fancy—these may be thine, but all these thou hast proved; but if the passionate affections of a spirit, which ne'er has yielded to the power of woman, or the might of man—if the deep devotion of the soul of Alroy be deemed an offering meet for the shrine of thy surpassing loveliness, I worship thee, Schirene, I worship thee, I worship thee!"

"Since I first gazed upon thee, since thy beauty first rose upon my presence like a star bright with my destiny, in the still sanctuary of my secret love, thy idol has ever rested. Then, then I was a thing whose very touch thy creed might count a contumely. I have avenged the insults of long centuries in the best blood of Asia; I have returned, in glory and in pride, to claim my ancient sceptre, but sweeter far than vengeance, sweeter far than the quick gathering of my sacred tribes, the rush of triumph and the blaze of empire, is this brief moment of adoring love, wherein I pour the passion of my life!"

"O! my soul, my life, my very being! thou art silent, but thy silence is sweeter than others' speech. Yield, yield thee, dear Schirene, yield to thy suppliant! Thy faith, thy father's faith, thy native customs, these, these shall be respected, beauteous lady! Pharaoh's daughter yielded her dusky beauty to my great ancestor. Thy face is like the bright inspiring day! Let it not be said the daughter of the Nile shared Israel's crown—the daughter of the Tigris spurned our sceptre. I am not Solomon, but I am one that, were Schirene the partner of my throne, would make his glowing annals read like a wearisome and misty tale to our surpassing lustre!"

He ceased, the princess turned her hitherto hidden countenance, and bowed it on his heart. "O! Alroy," she exclaimed, "I have no creed, no country, no life, but thee!"

V.

"The king is late to-day."

"Is it true, Asriel, there is an express from Hamadan?"

"Of no moment, Ithamar. I had private letters from Abner. All is quiet."

"Tis much past the hour. When do you depart, Scherirah?"

"The troops are ready. I wait orders. This morning's council will perchance decide."

"This morning's council is devoted to the settlement of the civil affairs of the capital," remarked Jabaster.

"Indeed!" said Asriel. "Is your report prepared, Jabaster?"

"Tis here," replied the high priest. "The Hebrew legislator requires but little musing to shape his order. He has a model which time cannot destroy, nor thought improve."

Ithamar and Asriel exchanged significant glances.

Scherirah looked solemn. There was a pause, which was broken by Asriel.

"'Tis a noble city, this Bagdad. I have not yet visited your quarters, Jabaster. You are well placed."

"As it may be. I hope we shall not tarry here long. The great point is still not achieved."

"How far is it to the holy city?" inquired Scherirah.

"A month's march," replied Jabaster.

"And when you get there?" inquired Ithamar.

"You may fight with the Franks," replied Asriel.

"Jabaster, how large is Jerusalem?" inquired Ithamar. "Is it true, as I have sometimes heard, that it is not bigger than the serail here, gardens and all?"

"Its glory hath departed," replied the high priest; "the bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with marble; and Sion, that is now without the Christian walls, shall yet sparkle, as in the olden time, with palaces and pavilions."

A flourish of trumpets, the portals flew open, and Alroy entered, leaning on the arm of the envoy of Bagdad.

"Valiant leaders," said Alroy to the astonished chieftains, "in this noble stranger you see one like yourselves, intrusted with my unbounded confidence. Jabaster, behold thy brother!"

"Honain! Art thou Honain?" exclaimed the pontiff, starting from his seat. "I have a thousand messengers after thee." With a countenance alternately pallid with surprise and burning with affection, Jabaster embraced his brother, and, overpowered with emotion, hid his face on his shoulder.

"Sire," at length exclaimed the high priest in a low and tremulous voice, "I must pray your pardon that for an instant in this character I have indulged in any other thoughts but those that may concern your welfare. 'Tis past; and you, who know all, will forgive me."

"All that respects Jabaster must concern my welfare. He is the pillar of my empire;" and holding forth his hand Alroy placed the high priest on his right. "Scherirah, you depart this eve."

The rough captain bowed in silence.

"What is this?" continued Alroy, as Jabaster offered him a scroll. "Ah! your report. 'Order of the Tribes'—'Service of the Levites'—'Princes of the People'—'Elders of Israel!' The day may come when this may be effected. At present, Jabaster, we must be moderate, and content ourselves with arrangements that may insure that order may be maintained, property respected, and justice administered. Is it true a gang has rifled a mosque?"

"Sire! of that I would speak. They are no plunderers, but men, perhaps too zealous, who have read and who have remembered that 'ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess, served their gods upon the high mountains, and upon the hill, and under every green tree. And ye shall overthrow their altars, and'—"

"Jabaster, is this a synagogue? Come I to a council of valiant statesmen, or dreaming rabbis? For a thousand centuries we have been quoting the laws we dare not practise! Is it with such aid we captured Nishabar, and crossed the Tigris? Valiant, wise Jabaster, thou art worthy of better things, and capable of all. I entreat thee urge such matters for the last time. Are these fellows in custody?"

"They were in custody. I have freed them."

"Freed them! Hang them! Hang them on the most public grove. Is this the way to make the Moslem a dutiful subject? Jabaster, Israel honours thee; and I, its chief, know that one more true, more valiant, or more learned, crowds not around our standard; but I see, the caverns of Caucasus are not a school for empire."

"Sire, I had humbly deemed the school for empire was the law of Moses."

"Ay! adapted for these times."

"Can aught divine be changed?"

"Am I as tall as Adam? If man, the crown, the rose of all this fair creation, the most divine of all divine inventions, if time have altered even this choicest of all godlike works, why shall it spare a law made but to rule his conduct? Good Jabaster, we must establish the throne of Israel—that is my mission, and for the means, no matter how—or where. Asriel, what news of Medad?"

"All is quiet between the Tigris and Euphrates. It would be better to recall his division, which has been harassed. I thought of relieving him by Abidan."

"I think so, too. We may as well keep Abidan out of the city. If the truth were known, I'll wager some of his company plundered the mosque. We must issue a proclamation on that subject. My good Jabaster, we'll talk over these matters alone. At present I will leave you with your brother, Scherirah, sup with me to-night, before you quit us. Asriel, come with me to my cabinet."

VI.

"I must see the king!"

"Holy priest, his highness has retired. It is impossible."

"I must see the king. Worthy Pharez, I take all peril on myself."

"Indeed his highness's orders are imperative. You cannot see him."

"Knowest thou who I am?"

"One whom all pious Hebrews reverence."

"I say I must see the king."

"Indeed, indeed, holy Jabaster, it cannot be."

"Shall Israel perish for a menial's place? Go to; I'll see him."

"Nay! if you will. I'll struggle for my duty."

"Touch not the Lord's anointed. Dog, you shall suffer for this!"

So saying, Jabaster threw aside Pharez, and, with the attendant clinging to his robes, rushed into the royal chamber.

"What is all this?" exclaimed Alroy, starting from the divan. "Jabaster! Pharez, withdraw! How now, is Bagdad in insurrection?"

"Worse, much worse, Israel soon will be."

"Ay!"

"My fatal brother has told me all, nor would I sleep until I lifted up my voice to save thee."

"Am I in danger?"

"In the wilderness, when the broad desert quivered beneath thy trembling feet, and the dark heavens poured down their burning torrents, thou wert less so. In that hour of death, one guarded thee, who ne'er forgets his fond and faithful offspring, and now, when he has brought thee out of the house of bondage; now, when thy fortunes, like a noble cedar, swell in the air, and shadow all the land thou the very leader of his people, his

chosen one, for whom he hath worked such marvels—thy heart is turned from thy father's God, and bankers after strange abominations."

Through the broad arch that led into the gardens of the serail, the moonlight fell upon the tall figure and the upraised arm of the priest; Alroy stood with folded arms at some distance, watching Jabaster as he spoke, with a calm but searching glance. Suddenly he advanced with a quick step, and, placing his hand upon Jabaster's arm, said in a low, inquiring tone, "You are speaking of this marriage?"

"Of that which ruined Solomon."

"Listen to me, Jabaster," said Alroy, interrupting him, in a calm, but peremptory tone. "I cannot forget that I am speaking to my master, as well as to my friend. The Lord, who knoweth all things, hath deemed me worthy of his mission. My fitness for this high and holy office was not admitted without proof. A lineage, which none else could offer, mystic studies, shared by few, a mind that dared encounter all things, and a frame that could endure most,—these were my claims;—but no more of this. I have passed the great ordeal, the Lord of Hosts hath found me not unworthy of his charge; I have established his people, his altars blaze with sacrifices, his priests are honoured—bear witness thou, Jabaster—his omnipotent unity is declared. What wouldst thou more?"

"All!"

"Then Moses knew ye well. It is a stiff-necked people."

"Sire, bear with me. If I speak in heat, I speak in zeal. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, a national existence, which we have not. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, the Land of Promise. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, Jerusalem. You ask me what I wish: my answer is, the temple—all we have forfeited, all we have yearned after, all for which we have fought—our beauteous country, our holy creed, our simple manners, and our ancient customs."

"Manners change with time and circumstances; customs may be observed everywhere. The ephod on thy breast proves our faith; and for a country, is the Tigris less than Siloah, or the Euphrates inferior to the Jordan?"

"Alas! alas! there was a glorious prime when Israel stood aloof from other nations, a fair and holy thing that God had hallowed. We were then a chosen family, a most peculiar people, set apart for God's entire enjoyment. All about us was solemn, deep, and holy. We shunned the stranger as an unclean thing that must defile our solitary sanctity, and keeping to ourselves, and to our God, our lives flowed on in one great solemn tide of deep religion, making the meanest of our multitude feel greater than the kings of other lands. It was a glorious time; I thought it had returned—but I awake from this, as other dreams."

"We must leave off dreaming, good Jabaster,—we must act. Were I, by any chance, to fall into one of those reveries, with which I have often lost the golden hours at Hamadan, or in our old cave, I should hear, some fine morning, his sultanship of Roum rattling at my gates." Alroy smiled as he spoke: he would willingly have introduced a lighter tone into the dialogue, but the solemn countenance of the priest was not sympathetic with his levity.

"My heart is full, and yet I cannot speak; the

memory of the past o'erpowers my thought. I had vainly deemed my voice, inspired by the soul of truth, might yet preserve him; and now I stand here in his presence, silent and trembling, like a guilty thing. O, my prince! my pupil!" said the priest, advancing, falling on his knee, and seizing the robe of Alroy, "by thy sacred lineage, by the sweet memory of thy ardent youth, and our united studies—by all thy zealous thoughts, and solemn musings, and glorious aspirations after fame—by all thy sufferings, and by all thy triumph, and chiefly by the name of that great God, who hath elected thee his favoured child—by all the marvels of thy mighty mission,—I do adjure thee! Arise, Alroy, arise and rouse thyself. The lure that snared thy fathers may trap thee—this Delilah may shear thy mystic lock. Spirits like thee act not by halves. Once fall out from the straight course before thee, and though thou deemest 'tis but to saunter 'mid the summer trees, soon thou wilt find thyself in the dark depths of some infernal forest, where none may rescue thee!"

"What if I do inherit the eager blood of my great ancestor, at least I hold his sceptre. Shall aught of earthly power prevail against the supernatural sway of heaven and hades?"

"Sire, sire, the legend that came from Sinai is full of high instruction. But shape thy conduct by its oracles, and all were well. It says our people can only be established by him who rules them with the verge of Solomon. Sire, when the Lord offered his pleasure to that mighty king, thou knowest his deep discretion. Riches, and length of days, empire and vengeance—these were not the choice of one to whom all accidents were proffered. The legend bears an inward spirit, as well as outward meaning. The capture of the prize was a wise test of thy imperial fitness. Thou hast his sceptre, but without his wisdom—'tis but a staff of cedar."

"Hah! Art thou there? I am glad to see Jabaster politic. Hear me, my friend. What my feelings be unto this royal lady, but little matters. Let them pass, and let us view this question by the light wherein you have placed it, the flame of policy and not of passion. I am no traitor to the God of Israel, in whose name I have conquered, and in whose name I shall rule; but thou art a learned doctor, thou canst inform us. I have heard no mandate to yield my glorious empire for my meanest province. I am lord of Asia, so would I have my long posterity. Our people are but a remnant, a feeble fraction of the teeming millions that own my sway. What I hold I can defend; but my children may not inherit the spirit of their sire. The Moslem will recognise their rule with readier hearts, when they remember a daughter of their caliphs gave them life. You see I too am politic, my good Jabaster!"

"The policy of the son of Kareah*—'twas fatal. He preferred Egypt to Judah, and he suffered. Sire, the Lord hath blessed Judah: it is his land. He would have it filled by his peculiar people, so that his worship might ever flourish. For this he has, by many curious rites and customs, marked us out from all other nations, so that we cannot, at the same time, mingle with them, and yet be true to him. We must exist alone. To preserve that

* *Vid.* Jeremiah, cap. 42.

loneliness, is the great end and essence of our law. What have we to do with Bagdad, or its people, where every instant we must witness some violation of our statutes? Can we pray with them? Can we eat with them? In the highest duties, and the lowest occupations of existence, alike we cannot mingle. From the altar of our God, to our own domestic boards, we are alike separated from them. Sire, you may be King of Bagdad, but you cannot, at the same time, be a Jew."

"I am what I am. I worship the Lord of Hosts. Perhaps, in his mercy, he will accept the days of Nishabur and the Tigris, as a compensation for some slight relaxation in the ritual of the baker and the bath."

"And mark my words: it was by the ritual of the baker and the bath, that Alroy rose, and without it he will fall. The genius of the people raised him, which he shared, and that genius has been formed by the law of Moses. Based on that law, he might indeed have handed down an empire to his long posterity; and now, though the tree of his fortunes seems springing up by the waterside, fed by a thousand springs, and its branches covered with dew, there is a gangrene in the sap, and to-morrow he may sink like a shrivelled gourd. Alas! alas! for Israel! We have long fed on mallows; but to lose the vintage in the very day of fruition, 'tis very bitter. Ah! when I raised thy exhausted form in the cavern of Gethsema, and the star of David beamed brightly in the glowing heavens upon thy high fulfilment, who could have dreamed of a night like this? Farewell, sire."

"Stop, Jabaster! earliest, dearest friend, pr'ythee, pr'ythee stop!"

The priest slowly turned, the prince hesitated.

"Part not in anger, good Jabaster."

"In sorrow, sire, only in sorrow; but deep and terrible."

"Israel is lord of Asia, my Jabaster. Why should we fear?"

"Solomon built Tadmor in the wilderness, and his fleet brought gold from Ophir; and yet Alroy was born a slave."

"But did not die one. The sultans of the world have fallen before me. I have no fear. Nay, do not go. At least you'll place some credence in the stars, my learned cabalist. See, my planet shines as brightly as my fortunes." Alroy withdrew the curtain, himself and Jabaster stepped on to the terrace. A beautiful star glittered on high. As they gazed, its colour changed, and a blood-red meteor burst from its circle, and fell into space. The conqueror and the priest looked at each other at the same time. Their countenances were pale, inquiring and agitated.

"Sire," said Jabaster, "march to Judah."

"It portends war," replied Alroy, endeavouring to recover himself. "Perchance some troubles in Persia."

"Troubles at home, no other. The danger is nigh. Look to thyself."

A wild scream was heard in the gardens. It sounded thrice.

"What is all this?" exclaimed Alroy, really agitated. "Rouse the guard, Jabaster, search the gardens."

"'Tis useless, and may do harm. It was a spirit that shrieked."

"What said it?"

"MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN!"

VII.

"THE old story, the priest against the king," said Honain to Alroy, when, at his morrow's interview, he had listened to the events of the preceding night. "My pious brother wishes to lead you back to the theocracy, and is fearful that if he pray at Bagdad, instead of Sion, he may chance to become only the head of an inferior sect, instead of revelling in the universal tithes of a whole nation. As for the meteor, Seherirah must have crossed the river about the same time, and the Sultan of Roum may explain the bloody portent. For the shriek, as I really have no acquaintance with spirits, I must leave the miraculous communication to the favoured ears and initiated intelligences of your highness and my brother. It seems, it differed from 'the Daughter of the Voice' in more respects than one, since it was not only extremely noisy, but, as it would appear, quite unintelligible, except to the individual who had an interest in the interpretation—an ingenious one, I confess. When I enter upon my functions as your highness's chamberlain, I will at least guaranty that your slumbers shall not be disturbed either by spirits or more unwelcome visitors."

"Enter upon them at once, good Honain. How fares my Persian rose to-day, my sweet Schirene?"

"Feeding on your image in your absence. She spares no word to me, I do assure your highness."

"Nay, nay, we know you are a general favourite with the sex, Honain. I' faith I'm jealous."

"I would your highness had cause," said Honain, very demurely.

VIII.

THE approaching marriage between the King of the Hebrews and the Princess of Bagdad was published throughout Asia. Preparations were made on the plain of the Tigris for the great rejoicing. Whole forests were felled to provide materials for the building and fuel for the banqueting. All the governors of provinces and cities, all the chief officers and nobility of both nations, were specially invited, and daily arrived in state at Bagdad. Among them the viceroy of the Medes and Persians, and his recent bride, the Princess Miriam, were conspicuous, followed by a train of nearly ten thousand persons.

A throne, ascended by one hundred steps, covered with crimson cloth, and crowned by a golden canopy, was raised in the middle of the plain: on each side two thrones less elevated, but equally gorgeous. In the front of these thrones an immense circus was described, formed by one hundred chartaks or amphitheatres, ample room for the admittance of the multitude being left between the buildings. These chartaks were covered with bright brocades and showy carpets—on each was hoisted a bright and brilliant banner. In some of them were bands of choice musicians, in others companies of jugglers, bullboons, and storiars. Five chartaks on each side of the thrones were allotted for the convenience of the court, the rest were filled by the different trades of the city. In one, the fruiterers had formed a beautiful garden, glowing with pomegranates, and gourds, and watermelons, oranges, almonds, and pistachio nuts; in another, the butchers exhibited their meats carved in the most fanciful shapes, and the skins of animals

dressed up in very ludicrous figures. Here assembled the furriners, all dressed in masquerade, like leopards, lions, tigers, and foxes; and in another booth mustered the upholsterers, proud of a camel made of wood, and reeds, and cord, and painted linen, a camel which walked about as if alive, though ever and anon the interior man drawing aside a curtain, discovered to the marvelling multitude the workman in his own piece. Further on might be perceived the cotton manufacturers, whose chartak was full of birds of all shapes and plumage, yet nevertheless formed of their curious plant; and of the same material, with the help of reeds, although every one imagined it to be built with bricks and mortar, rose in the centre a lofty minaret. It was covered with embroidered work, and on the top was placed a stork so cunningly devised, that the children pelted it with pistachio nuts. The saddlers showed their skill in two litters, open at top, each carried on a dromedary, and in each a beautiful woman, who diverted the spectators with light balls of gilt leather, throwing them up both with their hands and feet. Nor were the mat-makers backward in the proof of their dexterity, since, instead of a common banner, they exhibited a large standard of reeds worked with two lines of writing in Kufic, proclaiming the happy names of Alroy and Schirene. But, indeed, in every chartak might be witnessed some wondrous specimens of the wealth of Bagdad, and of the ingenuity of its unrivalled artisans.

Around this mighty circus, on every side, for the space of many miles, the plain was studded with innumerable pavilions. At measured intervals were tables furnished with every species of provision, and attended by appointed servants, flagons of wine and jars of sherbets mingled with infinite baskets of delicious fruits and trays of refreshing confectionary. Although open to all comers, so great and rapid was the supply, that these banqueting tables seemed ever laden; and that the joys of the people might be complete, they were allowed to pursue whatever pleasures they thought fit without any restraint, by proclamation, in these terms.

"This is the time of feasting, pleasure, and rejoicing. Let no person reprimand or complain of another: let not the rich insult the poor, or the strong the weak; let no one ask another, 'Why have you done this?'"

Millions of people were collected in this paradise. They rejoiced, they feasted, they frolicked, they danced, they sang. They listened to the tales of the Arabian storian, at once enchanted and enchanting, or melted to the strain of the Persian poet, as he painted the moonlit forehead of his heroine, and the wasting and shadowy form of his lovesick hero: they beheld with amazement the feats of the juggler of the Ganges, or giggled at the practised wit and the practical buffoonery of the Syrian mime. And the most delighted could still spare a fascinated glance to the inviting gestures and the voluptuous grace of the dancing girls of Egypt.* Everywhere were melody and merriment, rarity and beauty. For once mankind forgot their cares, and delivered themselves up to infinite enjoyment.

"I grow courteous," said Kisloch the Kourid, assisting a party into one of the shows.

"And I humane," said Calidas the Indian. "Fellow, how dare you violate the proclamation, by thrashing that child?" He turned to one of the stewards of the tables, who was belabouring the unfortunate driver of a camel which had stumbled, and, in its fall, had shivered its burden, two pan-niers of porcelain.

"Mind your own business, fellow," replied the steward, "and be thankful that for once in your life you can dine."

"Is this the way to speak to an officer?" said Calidas the Indian; "I have half a mind to cut your tongue out."

"Never mind, little fellow," said the Guebre, "here is a dirhem for you. Run away and be merry."

"A miracle," grinned the Negro, "he giveth alms."

"And you are witty," rejoined the Guebre. "'Tis a wondrous day."

"What shall we do?" said Kisloch.

"Let us dine," proposed the Negro.

"Ay! under this plane tree," said Calidas. "'Tis pleasant to be alone. I hate everybody but ourselves."

"Here, stop, you rascal," said the Guebre. "What's your name?"

"I am a hadgee," said our old friend Abdallah, the servant of the charitable merchant Ali, and who was this day one of the officiating stewards.

"Are you a Jew, you scoundrel?" said the Guebre: "that is the only thing worth being. Bring some wine, you accursed Giaour!"

"Instantly," said Kisloch, "and a pilau."

"And a gazelle stuffed with almonds," said Calidas.

"And some sugarplums," said the Negro.

"Quick, you infernal Gentile, or I'll send this javelin in your back," hallooed the Guebre.

The servile Abdallah hastened away, and soon bustled back, carrying two flagons of wine, and followed by four servants, each with a tray covered with dainties.

"Where are you going? you accursed scoundrels," grumbled Kisloch: "wait upon the true believers."

"We shall be more free alone," whispered Calidas.

"Away, then, dogs," growled Kisloch.

Abdallah and his attendants hurried off, but were soon summoned back.

"Why did not you bring Schiras wine?" asked Calidas, with an eye of fire.

"The pilau is overdone," thundered Kisloch.

"You have brought a lamb stuffed with pistachio nuts, instead of a gazelle with almonds," said the Guebre.

"Not half sugarplums enough," said the Negro.

"Every thing is wrong," said Kisloch. "Go, and get us a kabob!"

In time, however, even this unmanageable crew were satisfied, and seated under their planetree, and stuffing themselves with all the dainties of the East, they became more amiable as their appetites decreased.

"A bumper, Calidas, and a song," said Kisloch.

* A most capital thing. Square lumps of meat run upon a skewer, and between each piece of meat, a most delicate slice of onion, and quickly broiled. A very favourite dish with the Turks. A kabob shop is like an English chop-house.

* A sculptor might find studies in the Egyptian Alwyn.

"'Tis rare stuff," said the Guebre: "Come, Cally, it should inspire you."

Here goes, then—mind the chorus."

THE SONG OF CALIDAS.

Drink, drink, deeply drink,
Never feel, and never think.
What's love? what's fame? a sigh, a smile,
Friendship but a hollow wile.
If you've any thought or wo,
Drown them in the goblet's flow.
Yes! dash them in this brimming cup,
Dash them in, and drink them up.
Drink, drink, deeply drink,
Never feel, and never think.

"Hark, the trumpets! The king and queen! The procession is coming. Let's away."

"Again! they must be near. Hurry, hurry, for good places."

"Break all the cups and dishes. Come along!"

The multitude from all quarters hurried to the great circus amid the clash of ten thousand cymbals, and the blast of innumerable trumpets. In the distance, issuing from the gates of Bagdad, might be detected a brilliant crowd, the advance company of the bridal procession.

There came five hundred maidens crowned with flowers, and beauteous as the buds that girt their hair. Their flowing robes were whiter than the swan, and each within her hand a palm branch held.

Followed these a band of bright musicians, clothed in golden robes, and sounding silver trumpets.

Then five hundred youths, brilliant as stars, clad in jackets of white fox-skin, and alternately bearing baskets of fruit or flowers.

Followed these a band of bright musicians, clothed in silver robes, and sounding golden trumpets.

Six choice steeds, sumptuously caparisoned, each led by an Arab groom.*

The household of Medad, in robes of crimson, lined with sable.

The standard of Medad.

Medad, on a coal-black Arab, followed by three hundred officers of his division, all mounted on steeds of a pure race.

Slaves, bearing the bridal present of Medad, six Damascus sabres of unrivalled temper.†

Twelve choice steeds, sumptuously caparisoned, each led by an Anatolian groom.

The household of Ithamar, in robes of violet, lined with ermine.

The standard of Ithamar.

Ithamar, on a snow-white Anatolian charger,‡ followed by six hundred officers of his division, all mounted on steeds of a pure race.

Slaves bearing the marriage present of Ithamar. A golden vase of rubies, borne on a violet throne.

One hundred negroes, their noses bored, and

hung with rings of brilliants, playing upon wind instruments and kettle-drums.

The standard of the city of Bagdad.

The deputation from the citizens of Bagdad.

Two hundred mules with caparisons of satin, embroidered with gold, and adorned with small golden bells. These bore the sumptuous wardrobe, presented by the city to their princess. Each mule was attended by a girl, dressed like a peri, with starry wings, and a man, masked as a hideous Dive.

The standard of Egypt.

The deputation from the Hebrews of Egypt, mounted on dromedaries, with silver furniture.

Fifty slaves, bearing their present to the princess, with golden cords, a mighty bath of jasper, beautifully carved, the sarcophagus of some ancient temple, and purchased for an immense sum.

The standard of Syria.

The deputation from the Hebrews of the Holy Land, headed by Rabbi Zimri himself, each carrying in his hand his offering to the nuptial pair, a precious vase, containing earth from the mount of Zion.

The standard of Hamadan.

The deputation from the citizens of Hamadan, headed by the venerable Bostenay himself, whose sumptuous charger was led by Caleb.

The present of the city of Hamadan to David Alroy, offered at his own suggestion—the cup in which the prince of the captivity carried his tribute now borne full of sand.

Fifty choice steeds, sumptuously caparisoned, each led by a Median or Persian groom.

The household of Abner and Miriam, in number twelve hundred, clad in chain armour of ivory and gold.

The standard of the Medes and Persians.

Two white elephants, with golden litters, bearing the viceroys and his princess.

The offering of Abner to Alroy. Twelve elephants of state, with furniture embroidered with jewels, each tended by an Indian clad in chain armour of ivory and gold.

The offering of Miriam to Schirene. Fifty plants of roses from Rocnabad,* a white shawl of Cashmere, fifty feet in length, which folded into the handle of a fan; fifty screens, each made of a feather of the roc;† and fifty vases of crystal, full of exquisite perfumes, and each sealed with a talisman of precious stones.

After these followed the eunuch guard.

Then came the band of the Serail, consisting of three hundred dwarfs, hideous indeed to behold, but the most complete musicians in the world.

The steeds of Solomon, in number one hundred, each with a natural star upon its front, uncaparisoned, and led only by a bridle of diamonds.

The household of Alroy and Schirene. Foremost, the Lord Honain riding upon a chestnut charger shod with silver; the dress of the rider pink with silver stars. From his rosy turban depended a tremulous aigrette of brilliants,‡ blazing with a thousand shifting tints.

Two hundred pages followed him; and then

* Led horses always precede the advent of a great man. I think there were usually twelve before the sultan when he went to mosque, which he did in public every Friday.

† But sabres are not to be found at Damascus, any more than cheese at Stilton, or oranges at Malta. The art of watering the blade is, however, practised, I believe, in Persia. A fine Damascus blade will fetch a long figure, fifty, or even one hundred guineas English.

‡ The finest horses in the world are the Anatolian or Asiatic Turkish, from which all our best breeds have sprung, and not from the Arabian, which I believe to be little worth. It is against reason that the race should be so pre-eminent in a land without pasture. See an excellent letter on this subject signed "STEP," in a recent number of that capital periodical, the Sporting Magazine.

* A river in Persia famous for its bowery banks of roses. † The screens and fans in the East, made of the plumage of rare birds, with jewelled handles, are very gorgeous. ‡ Worn only by personages of the highest rank. The sultan presented Lord Nelson after the battle of the Nile with an aigrette of diamonds.

servants of both sexes gorgeously habited, amounting to nearly two thousand, carrying rich vases, magnificent caskets, and costly robes. The treasurer, and two hundred of his underlings, came after, showering golden dirhems on all sides.

The sceptre of Solomon, born by Asriel himself.

A magnificent and lofty car, formed of blue enamel, with golden wheels, and axletrees of turquoises and brilliants, and drawn by twelve snow-white and sacred horses, four abreast—in the car, Aloy and Schirene.

Five thousand of the sacred guard closed the procession.

Amid the exclamations of the people, this gorgeous procession crossed the plain, and moved around the mighty circus. The conqueror and his bride ascended their throne—its steps were covered by the youths and maidens. On the throne, upon their right, sat the venerable Bostenay; on the left, the gallant viceroy and his princess. The chartaks on each side were crowded with the court.

The deputations made their offerings, the chiefs and captains paid their homage, the trades of the city moved before the throne in order, and exhibited their various ingenuity. Thrice was the proclamation made, amid the sound of trumpets, and then began the games.

A thousand horsemen dashed into the arena and threw the jerred. They galloped at full speed, they arrested their fiery chargers in mid course, and flung their long javelins at the minute but sparkling target, the imitative form of a rare and brilliant bird. The conquerors received their prizes from the hand of the princess herself—bright shawls, and jewelled daggers, and rosaries of gems. Sometimes the trumpets announced a prize from the vice-queen, sometimes from the venerable Bostenay, sometimes from the victorious generals, or the loyal deputations, sometimes from the united trades, sometimes from the city of Bagdad, sometimes from the city of Hamadan. The hours flew away in gorgeous and ceaseless variety.

"I would we were all alone, my own Schirene," said Aloy to his bride.

"I would so, too; and yet I love to see all Asia prostrate at the feet of Aloy."

"Will the sun ne'er set? Give me thy hand to play with."

"Hush! See, Miriam smiles."

"Lovest thou my sister, my own Schirene?"

"None dearer but thyself."

"Talk not of my sister, but our selves. Thinkest thou the sun is nearer setting, love?"

"I cannot see—thine eyes, they dazzle me—they are so brilliant, sweet!"

"O! my soul, I could pour out my passion on thy breast."

"Thou art very serious."

"Love is ever so."

"Nay, sweet! It makes me wild and fanciful. Now I could do such things—but what I know not. I would we had wings, and then we would fly away."

"See, I must salute this victor in the games. Must I unloose thy hand? Dear hand, farewell! Think of me while I speak, my precious life. 'Tis done. Give back thy hand, or else methinks I'll die. What's this?"

A horseman, in no holiday dress, but covered with dust, rushed into the circus, bearing in his

hand a tall lance, on which was fixed a scroll. The marshals of the games endeavoured to prevent his advance, but he would not be stayed. His message was to the king alone. A rumour of news from the army circulated throughout the crowd. And news from the army it was. Another victory! Scherirah had defeated the Sultan of Roum, who was now a suppliant for peace and alliance. Sooth to say, the intelligence had arrived at dawn of day; but the courtly Honain had contrived that it should be communicated at a later and a more effective moment.

There scarcely needed this additional excitement to this glorious day. But the people cheered, the golden dirhems were scattered with renewed profusion, and the intelligence was received by all parties as a solemn ratification by Jehovah, or by Allah, of the morning ceremony.

The sun set, the court arose, and returned in the same pomp to the scrail. The twilight died away, a beacon fired on a distant eminence announced the entrance of Aloy and Schirene into the nuptial chamber; and suddenly, as by magic, the mighty city, every mosque, and minaret, and tower, and terrace, and the universal plain, and the numberless pavilions, and the immense circus, and the vast and winding river, blazed with light. From every spot a lamp, a torch, a lantern, tinted with every hue, burst forth; enormous cressets of silver radiancy beamed on the top of each chartak; and huge bonfires of ruddy flame started up along the whole horizon.

For seven days and seven nights, this unparalleled scene of rejoicing, though ever various, never ceased. Long, long was remembered the bridal feast of the Hebrew prince and the caliph's daughter; long, long did the peasantry on the plains of Tigris sit down by the side of that starry river, and tell the wondrous tale to their marvelling posterity.

Now what a glorious man was David Aloy, lord of the mightiest empire in the world, and wedded to the most beautiful princess, surrounded by a prosperous and obedient people, guarded by invincible armies, one on whom earth showered all its fortune, and heaven all its favour—and all by the power of his own genius!

PART IX.

I.

"T'WAS midnight, and the storm still raged: 'mid the roar of the thunder and the shrieks of the wind, the floods of forky lightning each instant revealed the broad and billowy breast of the troubled Tigris.

Jabaster stood gazing upon the wild scene from the gallery of his palace. His countenance was solemn, but disquieted.

"I would that he were here!" exclaimed the high priest. "Yet why should I desire his presence, who heralds only gloom? Yet, in his absence am I gay? I am nothing. This Bagdad weighs upon me like a cloak of lead—my spirit is dull and broken.

"They say Aloy gives a grand banquet in the scrail to-night, and toasts his harlot 'mid the thunderbolts. Is there no hand to write upon the wall? He is found wanting—he is weighed, and is indeed found wanting. The parting of his kingdom soon

will come, and then—I could weep, O! I could weep, and down these stern and seldom yielding cheeks, pour the wild anguish of my desperate woe. So young, so great, so favoured! But one more step, a god—and now, a 'ul Belshazzar!"

"Was it for this his gentle youth was past in musing solitude and mystic studies? Was it for this the holy messenger summoned his most religious spirit? Was it for this he crossed the fiery desert and communed with his fathers in their tombs? Is this the end of all his victories, and all his vast achievement? To banquet with a wanton!"

"A year ago this very night, it was the eve of battle, I stood within his tent to wait his final word. He mused awhile, and then he said, 'Good night, Jabaster!' I believed myself the nearest to his heart, as he has ever been nearest to mine, but that's all over. He never says, 'Good night, Jabaster,' now. Why, what's all this? Methinks I am a child.

"The Lord's anointed is a prisoner now in the light grating of a bright kiosk, and never gazes on the world he conquered. Egypt and Syria, even farthest Ind, send forth their messengers to greet Alroy, the great, the proud, the invincible. And where is he? In a soft paradise of girls and eunuchs crowned with flowers, listening to melting lays, and the wild thrilling of the amorous lute. He spares no hours to council, all is left to his prime favourites, of whom the leader is that juggling fiend I sometime called my brother.

"Why rest I here? Where should I fly? Methinks my presence is still a link to decency. Should I tear off the ephod, I scarcely fancy 'twould blaze upon another's breast. He goes not to the sacrifice; they say he keeps no fast, observes no ritual, and that their festive fantasies will not be balked, even by the Sabbath. I have not seen him thrice since the marriage. Honain has told her I did oppose it, and she bears to me a hatred that only women feel. Our strong passions break into a thousand purposes: women have one. Their love is dangerous, but their hate is fatal.

"See! a boat bounding on the waters. On such a night,—but one would dare to venture."

Now visible, now in darkness, a single lantern at the prow, Jabaster watched with some anxiety the slight bark buffeting the waves. A tremendous flash of lightning illuminated the whole river, and tipped with a spectral light even the distant piles of building. The boat, and the toiling figure of the single rower, were distinctly perceptible. Now all again was darkness, the wind suddenly subsided, in a few minutes the splash of the oars was audible, and the boat apparently stopped beneath the palace.

There was a knocking at the private portal.

"Who knocks?" inquired Jabaster.

"A friend to Israel."

"Abidan, by his voice. Art thou alone?"

"The prophetess is with me; only she."

"A moment. I'll open the gate. Draw the boat within the arch."

Jabaster descended from the gallery, and in a few moments returned with two visitors: the youthful prophetess Esther, and her companion, a man short in stature, but with a very powerful and well-knit frame. His countenance was very melancholy, and with much harshness in the lower part, not without a degree of pensive beauty in the broad clear brow, and sunken eyes, unusual in oriental visages.

"A rough night," said Jabaster.

"To those who fear it," replied Abidan. "The sun has brought so little joy to me, I care not for the storm."

"What news?"

"Wo! wo! wo!"

"Thy usual note, my sister. Will the day ne'er come when we may change it?"

"Wo! wo! wo! unutterable wo!"

"Abidan, how fares it?"

"Very well."

"Indeed!"

"As it may turn out."

"You are brief."

"Bitter."

"Have you been to court, that you have learned to be so wary in your words, my friend?"

"I know not what may happen. In time we may become all courtiers, though I fear, Jabaster, we have done too much to be rewarded. I gave him my blood, and you something more, and now we are at Bagdad. 'Tis a fine city. I wish to heaven the shower of Sodom would rain upon its terraces."

"I know thou hast something terrible to tell. I know it by that gloomy brow of thine, that lowers like the tempest. Speak out, man. I can bear the worst, for which I am prepared."

"Take it, then. Alroy has proclaimed himself caliph. Abner is made Sultan of Persia. Asriel, Ithamar, Medad, and the chief captains, viziers; Honain, their chief. Four Moslem nobles are sworn into the council. The princess goes to mosque in state next Friday; 'tis said thy pupil doth accompany her."

"I'll not believe it! By the God of Sinai, I'll not believe it! Were my own eye the accursed witness of the deed, I'd not believe it. Go to mosque! They play with thee, my good Abidan, they play with thee."

"As it may be. 'Tis a rumour, but rumours herald deeds. The rest of my intelligence is true. I had it from my kinsman, stout Zalmunna. He left the banquet."

"Shall I go to him? Methinks one single word—to mosque! only a rumour and a false ore. I'll never believe it; no, no, no, never, never! Is he not the Lord's anointed? The ineffable curse upon this daughter of the Moabite! No marvel that it thunders! By heavens, I'll go and beard him in his orgies!"

"You know your power better than Abidan. You bearded him before his marriage, yet——"

"He married. 'Tis true. Honain, their chief. And I kept his ring! Honain is my brother. Have I ne'er a dagger to cut the bond of brotherhood?"

"We have all daggers, Jabaster, if we know but how to use them."

"'Tis strange—we met after twenty years of severance. You were not in the chamber, Abidan. 'Twas at council. We met after twenty years of severance. He is my brother. 'Tis strange, I say; I felt that man shrink from my embrace."

"Honain is a philosopher, and believes in sympathy. 'Twould appear there was none between you. His system, then, absolves you from all ties."

"You are sure the rest of the intelligence is true? I'll not believe the mosque—the rest is bad enough."

"Zalmunna left the banquet. Hassan Subah's brother sat above him."

"Subah's brother! 'Tis all over, then. Is he of the council?"

"Ay, and others."

"Where now is Israel?"

"She should be in her tents."

"Wo! wo! wo! unutterable wo!" exclaimed the prophetess, who, standing motionless in the back of the chamber, seemed inattentive to their conversation.

Jabaster paced the gallery with agitated steps. Suddenly he stopped, and, walking up to Abidan, seized his arm, and looked him sternly in the face. "I know thy thought, Abidan," exclaimed the priest; "but it cannot be. I have dismissed,—henceforth and forever I have dismissed all feeling from my mind; now I have no brother, no friend, no pupil, and, I fear, no saviour. Israel is all and all to me. I have no other life—'tis not compunction, then, that stays my arm. My heart's as hard as thine."

"Why stays it, then?"

"Because with him we fall. He is the last of all his sacred line. There is no other hand to grasp our sceptre."

"Our sceptre!—what sceptre?"

"The sceptre of our kings."

"Kings!"

"Ay, why dost thou look so dark?"

"How looked the prophet when the stiffnecked populace forsooth must have a king? Did he smile? Did he shout, and clap his hands, and cry, God save his majesty! O, Jabaster! honoured, rare Jabaster! thou second Samuel of our light-headed people! there was a time when Israel had no king except their God. Were we viler then? Did kings conquer Canaan? Who was Moses, who was Aaron, who was mighty Joshua? Was the sword of Gideon a kingly sword? Did the locks of Samson shade royal temples? Would a king have kept his awful covenant like solemn Jephtha? Royal words are light as air, when, to maintain them, you injure any other than a subject!

"Kings! why what's a king? Why should one man break the equal sanctity of our chosen race? Is their blood purer than our own? We are all the seed of Abraham. Who was Saul, and who was David? I never heard they were a different breed unto our fathers. Grant them devout, which they were not; and brave and wise, which other men were; have their posterity a patent for all virtues? No, Jabaster! thou ne'er didst err, but when thou placed a crown upon this haughty stripling. What he did a thousand might have done. 'Twas thy mind inspired the deed. And now he is a king; and now, Jabaster, the very soul of Israel, who should be our judge and leader—Jabaster trembles in disgrace, while our unhallowed sanhedrim is filled with Ammonites!"

"O, Abidan! thou hast touched me to the quick: thou hast stirred up thoughts that ever and anon, like strong and fatal vapours, have risen from the dark abyss of thought, and I have quelled them."

"Let them rise, I say—let them down the beams of that all-scorching sun we suffer under, that drinks all vegetation up, and makes us languish with a dull exhaustion."

"Joy! joy! unutterable joy!"

"Hark! the prophetess has changed her note; and ~~not~~ she hears us not. The spirit of the Lord

is truly with her. Come, Jabaster, see thy heart is opening to thy people's sufferings: thy people, my Jabaster, for art not thou our judge! at least, thou shalt be."

"Can we call back the theocracy?—Is't possible?"

"But say the word, and it is done, Jabaster. Nay, stare not. Dost thou think there are no true ears in Israel? Dost thou suppose thy children have beheld, without a thought, the foul insults poured on thee—thee, their priest, their adored high priest, one who recalls the best days of the past—the days of their great judges. But one word, one single movement of that mitred head, and—But I speak unto a mind that feels more than I can express. Be silent, tongue, thou art a babbling counsellor. Jabaster's patriot soul needs not the idle schooling of a child. If he be silent, 'tis that his wisdom deems the hour's not ripe; but when her leader speaks, Israel will not be slack."

"The Moslem in council! We know what must come next. Our national existence is in its last agony. Methinks the time is very ripe, Abidan."

"Why, so we think, great sir; and say the word, and twenty thousand spears will guard the ark. I'll answer for my men. Stout Scherirah looks grimly on the Moabites. A word from thee, and the whole Syrian army will join our banner—the lion of Judah, that shall be our flag. The tyrant and his satraps, let them die, and then the rest must join us. We'll proclaim the covenant, and leaving Babylon to a bloody fate, march on to Zion!"

"Sion, his youthful dream, Sion!"

"You muse!"

"King or no king, he is the Lord's anointed. Shall this hand, that poured the oil on his hallowed head, wash out the balmy signet with his blood? Must I slay him? Shall this kid be scathed even in its mother's milk?"

"His voice is low, and yet his face is troubled. How now, sir?"

"What art thou? Ah! Abidan, trusty, stanch Abidan! You see, Abidan, I was thinking, my good Abidan, all this may be the frenzy of a revel. To-morrow's dawn may summon cooler councils. The tattle of the table, it is sacred. Let us forget it; let us pass it over. The Lord may turn his heart. Who knows, who knows, Abidan?"

"Noble sir, a moment since your mind was like your faith, firm and resolved, and now—"

"School me not, school me not, good Abidan. There is that within my mind you cannot fathom; some secret sorrows which are all my own. Leave me, good friend, leave me a while. When Israel calls me I shall not be wanting. Be sure of that, Abidan, be sure of that. Nay, do not go; the night is very rough, and the fair prophetess should let stem again the swelling river. I'll to my closet, and will soon return."

Jabaster quitted the gallery, and entered a small apartment. Several large volumes, unclasped and open, were lying on various parts of the divan. Before them stood his brazen cabalistic table. He closed the chamber with a cautious air. He advanced into the centre of the apartment. He lifted up his hands to heaven, and clasped them with an expression almost of agony,

"Is it come to this?" he muttered in a tone of deep oppression. "Is it come to this? What is I have heard? what done? Down, tempting devil

down. O! life, O! glory, O! my country, my chosen people, and my sacred creed!—why do we live, why act, why have we feeling for aught that's famous, or for aught that's holy? Let me die, let—let me die. The torture of existence is too great."

He flung himself upon the couch, he buried his awful countenance in his robes. His mighty heart was convulsed with passion. There did he lie, that great and solemn man, prostrate and wo-begone.

II.

"THE noisy banquet lingers in my ear; I love to be alone."

"With me?"

"Thou art myself; I have no other life.

"Sweet bird! It is now a caliph."

"I am what thou willest, soul of my sweet existence! Pomp and dominion, fame and victory, seem now but flawed and dimly-shaded gems compared with thy bright smile!"

"My plaintive nightingale, shall we hunt to-day?"

"Alas! my rose, I'd sooner lie upon this lazy couch, and gaze upon thy beauty!"

"Or sail upon the cool and azure lake, in some bright bark, like to a sea-nymph's shell, and followed by the swans?"

"There is no lake so blue as thy deep eye; there is no swan so white as thy round arm!"

"Or shall we lance our falcons in the air, and bring the golden pheasant to our feet?"

"I am the golden pheasant at thy feet, why wouldst thou richer prey?"

"Rememberest thou thy earliest visit to this dear kiosk, my gentle mute? There thou stoodest with folded arms, and looks demure as day, and ever anon, with those dark eyes, stealing a glance which made my cheek quite pale. Methinks I see thee even yet, shy bird. Dost know, I was so foolish when it quitted me, dost know I cried?"

"Ah, no! thou didst not cry?"

"Indeed, I think I did."

"Tell me again, my own Schirene, indeed didst cry?"

"Indeed I did, my soul!"

"I would those tears were in some crystal vase, I'd give a province for the costly urn."

She threw her arms around his neck, and covered his face with kisses.

Sunset sounded from the minarets. They arose and wandered together in the surrounding paradise. The sky was tinted with a pale violet flush, a single star floating by the side of the white moon, that beamed with a dim lustre, soft and shapely as a pearl.

"Beautiful!" exclaimed the pensive Schirene, as she gazed upon the star. "O! my Alroy, why cannot we ever live alone, and ever in a paradise?"

"I am wearied of empire," replied Alroy with a smile, "let us fly!"

"Is there no island with all that can make life charming, and yet impervious to man? How little do we require! Ah! if these gardens, instead of being surrounded by hateful Bagdad, were only encompassed by some beautiful ocean!"

"My heart, we live in a paradise, and are seldom disturbed, thanks to Honain!"

"But the very consciousness that there are any other persons existing but ourselves is to me painful. Every one who even thinks of you seems to rob me of a part of your being. Besides, I am weary of pomp and palaces. I should like to live in a sparry grot, and sleep upon a couch of sweet leaves!"

This interesting discussion was disturbed by a dwarf, who, in addition to being very small, and very ugly, was dumb. He bowed before the princess, and then had recourse to a great deal of pantomimic action, by which she at length discovered that it was dinner time. No other person could have ventured to disturb the royal pair, but this little being was a privileged favourite.

So Alroy and Schirene entered the serail. An immense cresset-lamp, fed with perfumed oil, threw a soft light round the sumptuous chamber. At the end stood a row of eunuchs in scarlet dresses, and each holding a tall silver staff. The caliph and the sultana threw themselves upon a couch covered with a hundred cushions; on one side stood a group consisting of the captain of the guard and other officers of the household, on the other, of beautiful female slaves magnificently attired.

The line of domestics at the end of the apartment opened, and a body of slaves advanced, carrying trays of ivory, and gold, and ebony, and silver, covered with the choicest dainties, most curiously prepared. These were in turn offered to the caliph and the sultana by their surrounding attendants. The princess accepted a spoon made of a single pearl, the long, thin golden handle of which was studded with rubies, and condescended to partake of some saffron soup, of which she was very fond. Afterwards she regaled herself with the breast of a eygnet stuffed with almonds, and stewed with violets and cream. Having now a little satisfied her appetite, and wishing to show a mark of her favour to a particular individual, she ordered the captain of the guard instantly to send him the whole of the next course* with her compliments. Her attention was then engaged with a dish of those delicate ortolans that feed upon the vine-leaves of Schiraz, and with which the governor of Nishabur took especial care that she should be well provided. Tearing their delicate forms to pieces with her still more delicate fingers, she insisted upon feeding Alroy, who of course yielded to her solicitations. In the mean time they refreshed themselves with their favourite sherbet of pomegranates, and the golden wine of mount Lebanon.† The caliph, who could eat no more ortolans, although fed by such delicate fingers, was at length obliged to call for "rice," which was synonymous to commanding the banquet to disappear. The attendants now brought to each, basins of gold, and ewers of rock crystal filled with rose-water, with towels of that rare Egyptian linen, which can only be made of the cotton that grows upon the banks of the Nile. While they amused themselves with eating sugarplums, and drinking coffee flavoured with cinnamon, the female slaves

* These compliments from the tables of the great are not uncommon in the East. When at the head-quarters of the grand vizier at Yanina, his highness sent to myself and my travelling companions, a course from his table, singers and dancing girls.

† A most delicious wine, from its colour, brilliancy, and rare flavour, justly meriting this title, is made on Lebanon; but it will not, unfortunately, bear exportation, and even materially suffers in the voyage from the coast to Alexan-
dria.

danced before them in the most graceful attitudes to the melody of invisible musicians.

"My enchanting Schirene," said the caliph, "I have dined, thanks to your attention, very well. These slaves of yours dance admirably, and are exceedingly beautiful. Your music, too, is beyond all praise; but, for my own part, I would sooner be quite alone, and listening to one of your songs."

"I have written a new one to-day. You shall hear it." So saying, she clapped her little white hands, and the whole of the retinue immediately withdrew.

III.

"THE stars are stealing forth, and so will I. Sorry sight! to view Jabaster, with a stealthy step, skulk like a thing dishonoured! O! may the purpose consecrate the deed—the die is cast."

So saying, the high priest, muffled up in his robe, emerged from his palace into the busy streets. It is at night that the vitality of oriental life is most impressive. The narrow winding streets, crowded with population breathing the now sufferable air, the illuminated coffee-houses, the groups of gay, yet sober revellers, the music and the dancing, and the animated recitals of the poet and the storer, all combine to invest the starry hours with a beguiling, and even fascinating, character of enjoyment and adventure.

It was the night after the visit of Abidan and the prophetess. Jabaster had agreed to meet Abidan in the square of the great mosque two hours after sunset, and thither he now repaired.

"I am somewhat before my time," he said, as he entered the great square, over which the rising moon threw a full flood of light. A few dark shadows of human beings alone moved in the distance. The world was in the streets and coffee-houses. "I am somewhat before my time," said Jabaster. "Conspirators are watchful. I am anxious for the meeting, and yet I dread it. Since he broke this business I have never slept. My mind is a chaos. I'll not think. If 'tis to be done, let it be done at once. I am more tempted to sheathe this dagger in Jabaster's breast than in Aloy's. If life or empire were the paltry stake, I'd end a life that now can bring no joy, and yield authority that hath no charm; but Israel, Israel, thou for whom I have endured so much—let me forget Jabaster had a mother.

"But for this thought that links me with my God, and leads my temper to a higher state, how vain and sad, how wearisome and void, were this said world they think of! But for this thought I could sit down and die. Yea! my great heart could crack, worn out, worn out: my mighty passions, with their fierce but flickering flame, sink down and die, and the strong brain that e'er hath urged my course, and pricked me onward with perpetual thought, desert the rudder it so long hath held, like some baffled pilot in blank discomiture, in the far centre of an unknown sea.

"Study and toil, anxiety and sorrow, mighty action, perchance time and disappointment, which is worse than all, have done their work, and not in vain. I am no longer the same Jabaster that gazed upon the stars of Caucasus. Methinks even they look dimmer than of yore. The glory of my life is fading. My leaves are sear, tinged, but not tainted. I am still the same in one respect—I have

not left my God, in deed or thought. Ah! who art thou?"

"A friend to Israel."

"I am glad that Israel hath a friend. Noble Abidan, I have well considered all that hath passed between us. Sooth to say, you touched upon a string I've played before, but kept it for my loneliness; a jarring tune, indeed a jarring tune, but so it is, and being so, let me at once unto your friends, Abidan."

"Noble Jabaster, thou art what I deemed thee."

"Abidan, they say the consciousness of doing justly is the best basis of a happy mind."

"Even so."

"And thou believest it?"

"Without doubt."

"We are doing very justly?"

"'Tis a weak word for such a holy purpose."

"I am most wretched!"

IV.

THE high priest and his companion entered the house of Abidan. Jabaster addressed the already assembled guests.

"Brave Scheriah, it joys me to find thee here. In Israel's cause when was Scheriah wanting? Stout Zalmunna, we have not seen enough of each other; the blame is mine. Gentle prophetess, thy blessing!

"Good friends, why we meet here is known to all. Little did we dream of such a meeting when we crossed the Tigris. But that is nothing. We come to act and not to argue. Our great minds, they are resolved; our solemn purpose requires no demonstration. If there be one among us who would have Israel a slave to Ishmael, who would lose all we have prayed for, all we have fought for, all which we have won, and all for which we are prepared to die—if there be one among us who would have the ark polluted, and Jehovah's altar stained with a Gentile sacrifice—if there be one among us who does not sigh for Sion, who would not yield his breath to build the temple and gain the heritage his fathers lost, why, let him go! There is none such among us; then stay and free your country!"

"We are prepared, great Jabaster; we are prepared, all, all!"

"I know it; you are like myself. Necessity hath taught decision. Now for our plans. Speak, Zalmunna."

"Noble Jabaster, I see much difficulty. Aloy no longer quits his palace. Our entrance unwatched is, you well know, impossible. What say you, Scheriah?"

"I doubt not of my men, but war against Aloy is, to say naught of danger, a doubtful issue."

"I am prepared to die, but not to fail," said Abidan. "We must be certain. Open war I fear. The mass of the army will side with their leaders, and they are with the tyrant. Let us do the deed, and they must join us."

"Is it impossible to gain his presence to some sacrifice in honour of some bygone victory—what think ye?"

"I doubt much, Jabaster. At this moment he little wishes to sanction our national ceremonies with his royal person. The woman assuredly will stay him. And even if he come, success is difficult, and therefore doubtful."

"Noble warriors, list to a woman's voice," exclaimed the prophetess, coming forward. "'Tis

weak, but with such instruments, even the aspirations of a child, the Lord will commune with his chosen people: There is a secret way by which I can gain the gardens of the palace. To-morrow night, just as the moon is in her midnight bower, behold the accursed pile shall blaze. Let Abidan's troop be all prepared, and at the moment the flames first mount, march to the seraglio gate as if with aid. The affrighted guard will offer no opposition. While the troops secure the portals, you yourselves, Zalmunna, Abidan, and Jabaster, rush to the royal chamber and do the deed. In the mean time, let brave Scherirah, with his whole division, surround the palace, as if unconscious of the mighty work. Then come you forward, show, if it need, with tears, the fated body to the soldiery, and announce the theocracy."

"It is the Lord who speaks," said Abidan, who was doubtless prepared for the proposition; "he has delivered them into our hands."

"A bold plan," said Jabaster, musing, "and yet I like it. 'Tis quick, and that is something. I think 'tis sure."

"It cannot fail," exclaimed Zalmunna, "for if the flame ascend not, still we are but where we were."

"I am for it," said Scherirah.

"Well, then," said Jabaster, "so let it be. To-morrow's eve will see us here again, prepared. Good night."

"Good night, holy priest. How seem the stars, Jabaster?"

"Very troubled; so have they been some days. What they portend I know not."

"Health to Israel."

"Let us hope so. Good night, sweet friends."

"Good night, holy Jabaster. Thou art our corner-stone."

"Israel hath no other hope but in Jabaster."

"My lord," said Abidan, "remain, I pray, one moment."

"What is't? I fain would go."

"Alroy must die, my lord, but dost thou think a single death will seal the covenant?"

"The woman?"

"Ay! the woman! I was not thinking of the woman. Asriel, Ithamar, Medad?"

"Valiant soldiers! doubt not we shall find them useful instruments. I do not fear such loose companions. They follow their leaders, like other beings born to obey. Having no head themselves, they must follow us who have."

"I think so too. There is no other man who might be dangerous?"

Zalmunna and Scherirah cast their eyes upon the ground. There was a dead silence, broken by the prophetess,

"A judgment hath gone forth against Honain!"

"Nay! he is Lord Jabaster's brother," said Abidan. "It is enough to save a more inveterate foe to Israel, if such there be."

"I have no brother, sir. The man you speak of I will not slay, since there are others who may do that deed. And so again, good night."

V.

It was the dead of night, a single lamp burned in the chamber, which opened into an arched gallery, that descended by a flight of steps into the gardens of the serail.

A female figure ascended the flight with slow and cautious steps. She paused on the gallery, she looked around, one foot was in the chamber.

She entered. She entered a chamber of small dimensions, but richly adorned. In the farthest corner was a couch of ivory, hung with a gauzy curtain of silver tissue, which, without impeding respiration, protected the slumberer from the fell insects of an oriental night. Leaning against an ottoman was a large brazen shield of ancient fashion, and near it some helmets and curious weapons.

"An irresistible impulse hath carried me into this chamber!" exclaimed the prophetess. "The light haunted me like a spectre; and wheresoe'er I moved, it seemed to summon me.

"A couch and a slumberer!"

She approached the object, she softly withdrew the curtain. Pale and panting she rushed back, yet with a light step. She beheld Alroy!

For a moment she leaned against the wall, overpowered by her emotions. Again she advanced, and gazed on her unconscious victim.

"Can the guilty sleep like the innocent? Who would deem this gentle slumberer had betrayed the highest trust that ever heaven vouchsafed to favoured man? He looks not like a tyrant and a traitor; calm his brow, and mild his placid breath! His long dark hair, dark as the raven's wing, hath broken from its fillet, and courses, like a wild and stormy night, over his pale and moonlit brow. His cheek is delicate, and yet repose hath brought a flush; and on his lip there seems some word of love, that will not quit it. It is the same Alroy that blessed our vision, when, like the fresh and glittering star of morn, he rose up in the desert, and, bringing joy to others, brought to me only—

"O! hush, my heart, and let thy secret lie hid in the charnel-house of crushed affections. Hard is the lot of woman; to love and to conceal is our sharp doom! O, bitter life! O, most unnatural lot! Man made society, and made us slaves. And so we droop and die, or else take refuge in idle fantasies, to which we bring the fervour that is meant for nobler ends.

"Beauteous hero! whether I bear thee most hatred or most love, I cannot tell. Die you must; yet I feel I should die with thee. O! that to-night could lead at the same time unto our marriage bed and funeral pyre. Must that white bosom bleed? and must those delicate limbs be hacked and handled by these bloody butchers? Is that justice? They lie, the traitors, when they call thee false to our God. Thou art thyself a god, and I could worship thee! See those beauteous lips—they move. Hark to the music!"

"Schirene, Schirene!"

"There wanted but that word to summon back my senses. O! fool, fool! where is thy fancy wandering? I'll not wait for tardy justice. I'll do the deed myself. Shall I not kill my Sisera?" She seized a dagger from the ottoman, a rare and highly-tempered blade. Up she raised it in the air, and dashed it to his heart, with superhuman force. It struck against the talisman which Jabaster had given Alroy, and which, from a lingering superstition, he still wore; it struck, and shivered into a thousand pieces. The caliph sprang from his couch, his eyes met the prophetess, standing over him in blank despair, with the hilt of the dagger in her hand.

"What is all this? Schirene! Who art thou? Esther!" He jumped from the couch, called to Pharez, and seized her by both hands. "Speak!" he continued. "Art thou Esther? What dost thou here?"

She broke into a wild laugh; she wrestled with his grasp, and pulled him towards the gallery. He beheld the chief tower of the serail in flames. Joining her hands together, grasping them both in one of his, and dragging her towards the ottoman, he seized a helmet, and flung it upon the mighty shield. It sounded like a gong. Pharez started from his slumbers, and rushed into the chamber.

"Pharez! Treason! treason! Send instant orders that the palace gates are open on no pretence whatever. Go, fly! See the captain himself. Summon the household. Order all to arms. Speed for our lives!"

The whole palace was now roused. Alroy delivered Esther, exhausted and apparently senseless, to a guard of eunuchs. Slaves and attendants poured in from all directions. Soon arrived Schirene, with dishevelled hair and hurried robes, attended by a hundred maidens, each bearing a torch.

"My soul, what ails thee?"

Nothing, sweetest; all will soon be well," replied Alroy, picking up, and examining the fragments of the shivered dagger, which he had just discovered.

"My life has been attempted; the palace is in flames; I suspect the city is in insurrection. Look to your mistress, maidens!" Schirene fell into their arms. "I'll soon be back." So saying, he rushed to the grand court.

Several thousand persons, for the population of the serail and its liberties was very considerable, were assembled in the grand court; eunuchs, women, pages, slaves and servants, and a few soldiers. All in confusion and alarm, fire raging within, and mysterious and terrible outcries without. A cry of "the caliph! the caliph!" announced the arrival of Alroy, and produced a degree of comparative silence.

"Where's the captain of the guard?" he exclaimed. "That's well. Open the gates to none. Who will leap the wall, and bear a message to Asriel? You? That's well too. To-morrow you shall yourself command. Where's Mesrou? Take the eunuch guard and the company of gardeners,* and suppress the flames at all cost. Pull down the intervening buildings. Abidan's troop arrived with succour, eh? I doubt it not. I expected them. Open to none. They force an entrance—eh? I thought so. So that javelin has killed a traitor. Feed me with arms. I'll keep the gate. Send again to Asriel. Where's Pharez?"

"By your side, my lord."

"Run to the queen, my faithful Pharez, and tell her that all's well. I wish it were! Didst ever hear a din so awful? Methinks all the tambours and the cymbals of the city are in full chorus. Foul play, I guess. O! for Asriel! Has Pharez returned?"

"I am by your side, my lord."

"How's the queen?"

"She would gladly join your side."

"No, no! Keep the gates there. Who says they are making fires before them? 'Tis true.

We must sally, if the worst come to the worst, and die at least like soldiers. O Asriel! Asriel!"

"May it please your highness, the troops are pouring in from all quarters."

"'Tis Asriel."

"No! your highness, 'tis not the guard. Methinks they are Scherirah's men."

"Hum! What it all is, I know not; but very foul play, I do not doubt. Where's Honain?"

"With the queen, sire."

"'Tis well. What is that shout?"

"Here's the messenger from Asriel. Make way! way!"

"Well! how is't, sir?"

"Please your highness, I could not reach the guard."

"Could not reach the guard! God of my fathers! who should let thee?"

"Sire, I was taken prisoner."

"Prisoner! By the thunder of Sinai, are we at war? Who made thee prisoner?"

"Sire, they have proclaimed thy death."

"Who?"

"The council of the elders. So I heard. Abidan, Zalmunna—"

"Rebels and dogs! Who else?"

"The high priest!"

"Hah! Is it there? Pharez, fetch me some drink. Is it true Scherirah has joined them?"

"His force surrounds the serail. No aid can reach us without cutting through his ranks."

"O! that I were there with my good guard! Are we to die here like rats, fairly murdered! Cowardly knaves! Hold out, hold out, my men! 'Tis sharp work, but some of us will smile at this hereafter. Who stands by Alroy to-night bravely and truly, shall have his heart's content to-morrow. Fear not, fear not: I was not born to die in a civic broil. I bear a charmed life. So to it."

VI.

"Go to the caliph, good Honain, I pray thee go. I can support myself, he needs thy counsel. Bid him not expose his precious life. The wicked men! Asriel must soon be here. What sayest thou?"

"There is no fear. Their plans are ill-devised. I have long expected this stormy night, and feel even now more anxious than alarmed."

"'Tis I they aim at—it is I they hate. The high priest, too! Ay, ay! Thy proud brother, good Honain, I have ever felt he would not rest until he drove me from this throne, my right; or washed my hated name from out our annals in my life's blood. Wicked, wicked Jabaster! He frowned upon me from the first, Honain. Is he indeed thy brother?"

"I care not to remember. He aims at something further than thy life; but time will teach us more than all our thoughts."

II.

THE fortifications of the serail resisted all the efforts of the rebels. Scherirah remained in his quarters with his troops under arms, and recalled the small force that he had originally sent out as much to watch the course of events as to assist Abidan. Asriel and Ithamar poured down their columns in the rear of that chieftain, and by dawn a division of the guard had crossed the river, the care of which had been intrusted to Sche-

* These gardeners of the serail form a very efficient body of police.

riah, and had thrown themselves into the palace. Alroy sallied forth at the head of these fresh troops. His presence decided a result which was perhaps never doubtful. The division of Abidan fought with the desperation that became their fortunes. The carnage was dreadful, but their discomfiture complete. They no longer acted in masses, or with any general system. They thought only of self-preservation, or of selling their lives at the dearest cost. Some dispersed, some escaped. Others entrenched themselves in houses, others fortified the bazaar. All the horrors of war in the streets were now experienced. The houses were in flames, the thoroughfares flowed with blood.

At the head of a band of faithful followers Abidan proved himself by his courage and resources worthy of success. At length, he was alone, or only surrounded by his enemies. With his back against a building in a narrow street, where the number of his opponents only embarrassed them, the three foremost of his foes fell before his irresistible cimeter. The barricaded door yielded to the pressure of the multitude. Abidan rushed up the narrow stairs, and gaining a landing-place, turned suddenly round, and cleaved the skull of his nearest pursuer. He hurled the mighty body at his followers, and retarding their advance, himself dashed onward, and gained the terrace of the mansion. Three soldiers of the guard followed him as he bounded from terrace to terrace. One armed with a dart, hurled the javelin at the chieftain. The weapon slightly wounded Abidan, who, drawing it from his arm, sent it back to the heart of its owner. The two other soldiers, armed only with swords, gained upon him. He arrived at the last terrace in the cluster of buildings. He stood at bay on the brink of the precipice. He regained his breath. They approached him. He dodged them in their course. Suddenly, with admirable skill, he flung his cimeter edgewise at the legs of the farthest foe, who stopped short, roaring with pain. The chieftain sprang at the foremost, and hurled him down into the street below, where he was dashed into atoms. A trap-door offered itself to the despairing eye of the rebel. He descended and found himself in a room filled with women. They screamed, he rushed through them, and descending a staircase, entered a chamber tenanted by a bed-ridden old man. The ancient invalid inquired the cause of the uproar, and died of fright before he could receive an answer, at the sight of the awful being before him, covered with streaming blood. Abidan secured the door, washed his blood-stained face, and disguising himself in the dusty robes of the deceased Armenian, sallied forth to watch the fray. The obscure street was silent. The chieftain proceeded unmolested. At the corner he found a soldier holding a charger for his captain. Abidan, unarmed, seized a poniard from the soldier's belt, and stabbed him to the heart, and vaulting on the steed galloped towards the river. No boat was to be found; he breasted the stream upon the stout courser. He reached the opposite bank. A company of camels were reposing by the side of a fountain. Alarm had dispersed their drivers. He mounted the fleetest in appearance; he dashed to the nearest gate of the city. The guard at the gate refused him a passage. He concealed his agitation. A marriage procession arrived returning from the country. He rushed into their centre, and overset the bride in her gilded wagon. In the midst of the confusion, the shrieks, the oaths,

and the scuffle, he forced his way through the gate, scoured over the country, and never stopped until he gained the desert.

VIII.

THE uproar died away. The shouts of warriors, the shrieks of women, the wild clang of warfare, all were silent. The flames were extinguished, the carnage ceased. The insurrection was suppressed, and order restored. The city, all the houses of which were closed, was patrolled by the conquering troops, and by sunset the conqueror himself, in his hall of state, received the reports and the congratulations of his chieftains. The escape of Abidan seemed counterbalanced by the capture of Jabaster. After performing prodigies of valour, the high priest had been overpowered, and was now a prisoner in the serail. The conduct of Scherirah was not too curiously criticised; a commission was appointed to inquire into the mysterious affair, and Alroy retired to the bath* to refresh himself after the fatigues of the first victory which he could not consider a triumph.

As he reposed upon his couch, melancholy and exhausted, Schirene was announced. The princess threw herself upon his neck, and covered him with embraces. His heart yielded to her fondness, his spirit became lighter, his depression melted away.

"My ruby!" said Schirene, and she spoke in a low smothered voice, her face hidden and nestled in his breast. "My ruby! dost thou love me?"

He smiled in fondness as he pressed her to his heart.

"My ruby, thy pearl is so frightened, it dare not look upon thee. Wicked men! 'tis I they hate, 'tis I they would destroy!"

"There is no danger, sweet. 'Tis over now. Speak not—nay, do not think of it."

"Ah! wicked men! There is no joy on earth while such things live. Slay, Alroy, their mighty master, who, from vile slaves, hath made them princes! Ungrateful churls! I am so alarmed—I ne'er shall sleep again. What! slay my innocent bird, my pretty bird, my very heart! I'll not believe it. It is I they hate. I am sure they'll kill me. You shall never leave me, no, no, no, no! You shall not leave me, love; never, never! Didst hear a noise? Methinks they are ever here, ready to plunge their daggers in our hearts—our soft, soft hearts! I think you love me, child: indeed, I think you do!"

"Take courage, heart! There is no fear, my soul; I cannot love thee more, or else I would."

"All joy is gone! I ne'er shall sleep again. O my soul! art thou indeed alive? Do I indeed embrace my own Alroy, or is it all a wild and troubled dream, and are not my arms clasped round a shadowy ghost, myself a spectre in a sepulchre! Wicked, wicked men! Can it indeed be true? What, slay Alroy! my joy, my only life! Ah! wo is me; our bright felicity hath fled forever!"

"Not so, sweet child; we are but as we were. A few quick hours, and all will be as bright, as if no storm had crossed our sunny days."

"Hast seen Asriel? He says such fearful things!"

* The bath is a principal scene of oriental life. Here the Asiatics pass a great portion of their day. The bath consists of a long suite of chambers of various temperatures, in which the various processes of the elaborate ceremony are performed.

"How now?"

"Ah me! I am desolate. I have no friend."

"Schirene!"

"They'll have my blood; I know they'll have my blood."

"Indeed, an idle fancy."

"Idle! ask Asriel, question Ithamar. Idle! 'tis written in their tablets, their bloody scroll of rapine and of murder. Thy death led only to mine, and had they hoped my bird would but have yielded his gentle mate, they would have spared him. Ay! ay! 'tis I they hate, 'tis I they would destroy. This form, I fear it has lost its lustre, but still 'tis thine, and once thou saidst thou lovedst it; this form was to have been hacked and mangled, this ivory bosom was to have been ripped up and tortured, and this warm blood, that flows alone for thee, that fell Jabaster was to pour its tide upon the altar of his ancient vengeance. He ever hated me!"

"Jabaster! Schirene! Where are we, and what are we? Life, life, they lie, that call thee nature! Nature never sent these gusts of agony. O! my heart will break. I drove him from my thought, and now she calls him up, and now must I remember he is my—prisoner! God of heaven, God of my fathers, is it come to this? Why did he not escape? Why must Abidan, a common cut-throat, save his graceless life, and this great soul, this stern and mighty being—ah me! I have lived long enough. Would they had not failed, would—"

"Stop, stop, Aloy! I pray thee, love, be calm. I came to soothe thee, not to raise thy passions. I did not say Jabaster willed thy death, though Asriel says so; 'tis I he wars against: and if indeed Jabaster be a man so near thy heart—if he indeed be one so necessary to thy prosperity, and cannot live in decent order with thy slave that's here, I know my duty, sir. I would not have thy fortunes marred to save my single heart, although I think 'twill break. I'll go, I'll die, and deem the hardest accident of life but sheer prosperity if it profit thee."

"O, Schirene! what wouldst thou? This—this is torture."

"To see thee safe and happy; nothing more."

"I am both if thou art."

"Care not for me, I am nothing."

"Thou art all—to me."

"Calm thyself, my soul. It grieves me much that when I came to soothe I only galled thee. All's well, all's well. Say that Jabaster lives. What then? He lives, and may he prove more dutious than before: that's all."

"He lives, he is my prisoner, he awaits his doom. It must be given."

"Yes, yes!"

"Shall we pardon?"

"My lord will do that which it pleases him."

"Nay, nay, Schirene. I pray thee be more kind. I am most wretched. Speak, what wouldst thou?"

"If I must speak, I say at once—his life."

"Ah me!"

"If our past loves have any charm, if the hope of future joy, not less supreme, be that which binds thee to this shadowy world, as it does me, and does alone, I say his life, his very carnal life. He stands between us and our loves, Aloy, and ever has. There is no happiness if Jabaster breathe; nor can I be the same Schirene to thee as

I have been, if this proud rebel live to spy my conduct."

"Banish him, banish him!"

"To herd with rebels. Is this thy policy?"

"O, Schirene! I love not this man, although methinks I should; yet didst thou know but all!"

"I know too much, Aloy. From the first he has been to me a hateful thought. Come, come, sweet bird, a boon, a boon unto thy own Schirene, who was so frightened by these wicked men! I fear it has done more mischief than thou deemest. Ay! robbed us of our hopes. It may be so. A boon, a boon! it is not much I ask—a traitor's head. Come, give me thy signet ring. It will not; nay, then, I'll take it. What, resist! I know a kiss, thou hast often told me, sir, could vanquish all denial. There it is. Is't sweet? Shalt have another, and another too. I've got the ring! Farewell, my lovely bird, I'll soon return to pillow in thy nest."

IX.

"SHE has got the ring! What's this? what's this? Schirene! art gone? Nay, surely not. She jests. Jabaster! A traitor's head? What ho! there. Pharez, Pharez!"

"My lord."

"Passed the queen that way?"

"She did, my lord."

"In tears?"

"Nay, very joyful."

"Call Honain—quick as my thought. Honain! Honain! He waits without. I have seen the best of life, that's very sure. My heart is cracking. She surely jests. Hah! Honain. Pardon these distracted looks. Fly to the armoury! fly! fly!"

"For what, my lord?"

"Ay! for what—for what! My brain it wanders. Thy brother—thy great brother—the queen—the queen has stolen my signet ring, that is, I gave it her. Fly, fly! or, in a word, Jabaster is no more. He is gone. Pharez, your arm—I swoon!"

X.

"His highness is sorely indisposed to-day."

"They say he swooned this morn."

"Ay, in the bath."

"No, not in the bath. 'Twas when he heard Jabaster's death."

"How died he, sir?"

"Self-strangled. His mighty heart could not endure disgrace, and thus he ended all his glorious deeds."

"A great man!"

"We shall not soon see his match. The queen had gained his pardon, and herself flew to the armoury to bear the news—alas! too late."

"These are strange times. Jabaster dead!"

"A very great event."

"Who will be high priest?"

"I doubt the appointment will be filled up."

"Sup you with the Lord Ithamar to-night?"

"I do."

"I also. We'll go together. The queen had gained his pardon. Hum! 'tis strange."

"Passing so. They say Abidan has escaped."

"I hear it. Shall we meet Medad to-night?"

"'Tis likely."

PART X.

I.

"SHE comes not yet! her cheerful form, not yet it sparkles in our mournful sky. She comes not yet! the shadowy stars seem sad and lustreless without their queen. She comes not yet!"

"We are the watchers of the moon, and live in loneliness to herald light."

"She comes not yet! her sacred form, not yet it summons to our holy feast. She comes not yet! our brethren far wait mute and motionless the saintly beam. She comes not yet!"

"We are the watchers of the moon, and live in loneliness to herald light."

"She comes, she comes! her beauteous form sails with soft splendour in the glittering air. She comes, she comes! The beacons fire, and tell the nation that the month begins? She comes, she comes!"

"We are the watchers of the moon, to tell the nation that the month begins."*

Instantly the holy watchers fired the beacons on the mountain top, and anon a thousand flames blaze round the land. From Caucasus to Lebanon, on every peak a crown of light!

II.

"SIRE! a Tatar has arrived from Hamadan, who will see none but thyself. I have told him your highness was engaged, and sent him to the Lord Honain; but all denial is lost upon him. And, as I thought perhaps the Lady Miriam—"

"From Hamadan? You did well, Pharez. Admit him."

The Tatar entered.

"Well, sir, good news, I hope!"

"Sire, pardon me, the worst. I come from the Lord Abner, with orders to see the caliph, and none else."

* The Feast of the New Moon is one of the most important festivals of the Hebrews. "Our year," says the learned author of the "Rites and Ceremonies," "is divided into twelve lunar months, some of which consist of twenty-nine, others of thirty days, which difference is occasioned by the various appearance of the new moon, in point of time; for if it appeared on the 30th day, the 29th was the last day of the precedent month; but if it did not appear till the 31st, the 30th was the last day, and the 31st the first of the subsequent month; and that was an intercalary moon, of all which take the following account.

"Our nation heretofore, not only observing the rules of some fixed calculation, also celebrated the Feast of the New Moon, according to the phasis, or first appearance of the moon, which was done in compliance with God's command, as our received traditions inform us.

"Hence it came to pass that the first appearance was not to be determined only by rules of art, but also by the testimony of such persons as deposed before the sanhedrim, or great senate, that they had seen the new moon. So a committee of three were appointed from among the said sanhedrim to receive the deposition of the parties aforesaid, who, after having calculated what time the moon might possibly appear, despatched some persons into high and mountainous places, to observe and give their evidence accordingly, concerning the first appearance of the moon.

"As soon as the new moon was either consecrated, or appointed to be observed, notice was given by the sanhedrim to the rest of the nation, what day had been fixed for the new moon, or first day of the month, because that was to be the rule and measure according to which they were obliged to keep their feasts and fasts in every month respectively.

"This notice was given to them in time of peace, by firing of beacons, set up for that purpose, (which was looked upon as the readiest way of communication,) but in time of war, when all places were full of enemies, who made use of beacons to amuse our nation with, it was thought fit to discontinue it."

"Well, sir, you see the caliph. Your mission? What of the viceroy?"

"Sire, he bid me tell thee, that the moment the beacon that announced the feast of the new moon was fired on Caucasus, the dreaded monarch of Karasme, the great Alp Arslan, entered thy kingdom, and now o'erruns all Persia."

"Hah! and Abner?"

"Is in the field and prays for aid."

"He shall have it. This indeed is great news! When left you Hamadan?"

"Night and day I have journeyed upon the swiftest dromedary. The third morn sees me at Bagdad."

"You have done your duty. See this faithful courier be well tended, Pharez. Summon the Lord Honain."

"Alp Arslan! Hah! a very famous warrior. The moment the beacon was fired. No sudden impulse then, but long matured. I like it not."

"Sire," said Pharez, re-entering, "a Tatar has arrived from the frontiers of the province, who will see none but thyself. I have told him your highness is deeply busied, and as methinks he brings but the same news, I—"

"Tis very likely; yet never think, good Pharez, I'll see the man."

The Tatar entered.

"Well, sir, how now!—from whom?"

"From Mozul. The governor bid me see the caliph and none else, and tell your highness, that the moment the beacon that announced the feast of the new moon was fired on the mountains, the fell rebel Abidan raised the standard of Judah in the province, and proclaimed war against your majesty."

"In any force?"

"The royal power keeps within their walls."

"Sufficient answer. Part of the same movement. We shall have some trouble. Hast summoned Honain?"

"I have, sir."

"Go, see this messenger be duly served, and, Pharez—come hither; let none converse with them. You understand?"

"Your highness may assure yourself."

"Abidan come to life! He shall not escape so well this time. I must see Scherirah. I much suspect—what's this? More news?"

A third Tatar entered.

"May it please your highness, this Tatar has arrived from the Syrian frontier."

"Mischief in the wind, I doubt not. Speak out, knave."

"Sire! pardon me, I bear but sad intelligence."

"Out with the worst!"

"I come from the Lord Medad."

"Well! has he rebelled? It seems a catching fever."

"Ah! no, dread sire, Lord Medad has no thought but for thy glory. Alas! alas! he has now to guard it 'gainst fearful odds. Lord Medad bid me see the caliph and none else, and tell your highness, that the moment the beacon that announced the feast of the new moon was fired on Lebanon, the Sultan of Roum and the old Arabian caliph unfurled the standard of their prophet in great array, and are now marching towards Bagdad."

"A clear conspiracy! Has Honain arrived? Summon a council of the viziers instantly. The

world is up against me. Well! I'm sick of peace. 'They shall not find me napping!'

III.

"You see, my lords," said Alroy, ere the council broke up, "we must attack them singly. There can be no doubt of that. If they join, we must combat at great odds. 'Tis in detail that we must rout them. I will myself to Persia. Ithamar must throw himself between the sultan and Abidan; Medad fall back on Ithamar. Scherirah must guard the capital. Honain, you are regent. And so, farewell. I shall set off to-night. Courage, brave companions. 'Tis a storm, but many a cedar survives the thunderbolt."

The council broke up.

"My own Scherirah!" said the caliph, as they retired, "stay a while. I would speak with you alone. Honain," continued Alroy, following the grand vizier out of the chamber, and leaving Scherirah alone: "Honain, I have not interchanged a word with you in private. What think you of all this?"

"Sire, I am prepared for the worst, but hope for the best."

"'Tis wise. If Abner could only keep that Karassiman in check! I am about to speak with Scherirah alone. I do suspect him much."

"I'll answer for—his treason."

"Hah! I do suspect him. Therefore I give him no command. I would not have him too near his old companion, eh?—We'll garrison the city with his rebels."

"Sire, these are not moments to be nice. Scherirah is a valiant captain, a very valiant captain, but—lend me thy signet ring, I pray thee, sire."

Alroy turned pale. "No, sir, it has left me once, and never shall again. You have touched upon a string that makes me sad. There is a burden on my conscience—why, or what, I know not. I am innocent, you know I am innocent, Honain!"

"I'll answer for your highness. He who has enough of the milk of human kindness to spare a thing like Scherirah when he stands in his way, may well be credited for the nobler mercy that spared his better."

"Ah me! there's madness in the thought. Why is he not here! Had I but followed—tush! tush! Go see the queen and tell her all that has happened. I'll to Scherirah."

The caliph returned.

"Thy pardon, brave Scherirah; in these moments my friends will pardon courtesy."

"Your highness is too considerate."

"You see, Scherirah, how the wind blows, brave heart. There's much to do, no doubt. I am in sad want of some right trusty friend, on whose devoted bosom I can pillow all my necessities. I was thinking of sending you against this Arslan, but perhaps 'tis better that I should go myself. These are moments one should not seem to shrink, and yet we know not how affairs may run—no, we know not. The capital, the surrounding province—one disaster, and these false Moslemis may rise against us. I should stay here, but if I leave Scherirah I leave myself. I feel that deeply—'tis a consolation. It may be that I must fall back upon the city. Be prepared, Scherirah. Let me fall back upon supporting friends. You have a great trust. O! use it wisely! worthily I am sure you must do."

"Your highness may rest I have no other thought but it for your weal and glory. Doubt not my devotion, sire. I am not one of those mealy-mouthed youths, full of their own deeds and lip-worship, sire, but I have a life devoted to your service, and ready at all times to peril all things."

"I know that, Scherirah, I know it, I feel it deeply. What think you of these movements?"

"They are not ill combined, and yet I doubt not your majesty will prove your fortunes most triumphant."

"Think you the soldiery are in good cue?"

"I'll answer for my own. They are rough fellows, like myself, a little too blunt, perhaps, your highness. We are not holiday guards, but we know our duty, and we will do it."

"That's well, that's all I want. I shall review the troops before I go. Let a donative be distributed among them; and, by-the-by, I have always forgotten it, your legion should be called the legion of Syria. We owe our first province to their arms."

"I shall convey to them your highness's wish. Were it possible, 'twould add to their devotion."

"I do not wish it. They are my very children. Sup at the serail to-night, Scherirah. We shall be very private. Yet let us drink together ere we part. We are old friends, you know. Hast not forgotten our ruined city!"

IV.

ALROY entered the apartment of Schirene. "My soul! thou knowest all?"

She sprang forward and threw her arms around his neck.

"Fear not, my life, we'll not disgrace our queen. 'Twill be quick work. Two-thirds of them have been beaten before, and for the new champion, our laurels must not fade, and his blood shall nourish fresh ones."

"Dearest, dearest Alroy, go not thyself, I pray thee. May not Asriel conquer?"

"I hope so—in my company. For a time we part, a short one. 'Tis our first parting: may it be our last!"

"O! no, no, no: O! say not we must part."

"The troops are under arms; to-morrow's dawn will hear my trumpet."

"I will not quit thee, no! I will not quit thee. What business has Schirene without Alroy? Hast thou not often told me I am thy inspiration? In the hour of danger shall I be wanting? Never! I will not quit thee; no, I will not quit thee."

"Thou art ever present in my thoughts, my soul. In the battle I shall think of her for whom alone I conquer."

"Nay, nay, I'll go, indeed I must, Alroy. I'll be no hinderance, trust me, sweet boy. I will not. I'll have no train, no, not a single maid. Credit me, I know how a true soldier's wife should bear herself. I'll watch thee sleeping, and I'll tend thee wounded, and when thou goest forth to combat, I'll gird thy sabre round thy martial side, and whisper triumph with victorious kisses."

"My own Schirene, there's victory in thine eyes. We'll beat them, girl."

"Abidan, doubly false Abidan! would he were doubly hanged! Ere she died the fatal prophetic foretold this time, and gloated on his future treachery."

"Think not of him."

"And the Karasman—think you he is very strong?"

"Enough, love, for our glory. He is a potent warrior: I trust that Abuer will not rob us of our intended victory."

"So you triumph, I care not by whose sword. Dost go indeed to-morrow?"

"At the break of dawn. I pray thee stay, my sweet!"

"Never! I will not quit thee. I am quite prepared. At the break of dawn? 'Tis near on midnight now. I'll lay me down upon this couch a while, and travel in my litter. Art sure Alp Arslan is himself in the field?"

"Quite sure, my sweet."

"Confusion on his crown! We'll conquer. Goes Asriel with us?"

"Ay!"

"That's well; at break of dawn. I'm somewhat drowsy. Methinks I'll sleep a while."

"Do, my best heart; I'll to my cabinet, and at break of dawn I'll wake thee with a kiss."

V.

THE caliph repaired to his cabinet, where his secretaries were occupied in writing. As he paced the chamber, he dictated to them the necessary instructions.

"Who is the officer on guard?"

"Benaiah, sire."

"I remember him. He saved me a broken skull upon the Tigris. This is for him. The queen accompanies us. She is his charge. These papers for the vizier. Let the troops be under arms by day break. 'This order of the day for the Lord Asriel. Send this instantly to Hamadan. Is the Tatar despatched to Medad? 'Tis well. You have done your duty. Now to rest. Pharez!"

"My lord!"

"I shall not sleep to-night. Give me my drink. Go rest, good boy. I have no wants. Good night."

"Good night, my gracious lord!"

"Let me ponder! I am alone. I am calm, and yet my spirit is not quick. I am not what I was. Four-and-twenty hours ago who would have dreamed of this! All at stake again! Once more in the field, and struggling at once for empire and existence! I do lack the mighty spirit of my former days. I am not what I was. I have little faith. All about me seems changed and dull and grown mechanical. Where are those flashing eyes and conquering visages that clustered round me on the battle eve, round me, the Lord's anointed! I see none such. They are changed, as I am. Why! this Abidan was a host, and now he fights against me. She spoke of the prophetess; I remember that woman was the stirring trumpet of our ranks, and now where is she? The victim of my justice! And where is he, the mightier far, the friend, the counsellor, the constant guide, the master of my boyhood; the firm, the fond, the faithful guardian of all my bright career, whose days and nights were one unbroken study to make me glorious! Alas! I feel more like a doomed and desperate renegade than a young hero on the eve of battle, flushed with the memory of unbroken triumphs!"

"Hah! what awful form art thou that rises from the dusky earth before me? Thou shouldst be one I dare not name, yet will—the likeness of Jabaster.

Away! why frownest thou upon me? I did not slay thee. Do I live, or dream, or what. I see him, ay! I see thee. I fear thee not. I fear nothing. I am Alroy.

"Speak! O! speak! I do conjure thee, mighty spectre, speak. By all the memory of the past, although 'tis madness, I do conjure thee, let me hear again the accents of my boyhood."

"Alroy, Alroy, Alroy!"

"I listen, as to the last trump."

"Meet me on the plain of Nehauend."

"'Tis gone! As it spoke, it vanished. It was Jabaster! God of my fathers, it was Jabaster! Life is growing too wild. My courage is broken! I could lie down and die. It was Jabaster! The voice sounds in my ear like distant thunder! 'Meet me on the plain of Nehauend.' I'll not fail thee, noble ghost, although I meet my doom. Jabaster! Have I seen Jabaster! Indeed, indeed! Methinks I'm mad. Hah! what's that?"

An awful clap of thunder broke over the palace, followed by a strange clashing sound that seemed to come from one of the chambers. The walls of the serail rocked.

"An earthquake!" exclaimed Alroy. "Would the earth would open and swallow all. Hah! Pharez, has it roused thee too! Pharez! Pharez! we live in strange times."

"Your highness is very pale."

"And so art thou, lad! Wouldst have me merry? Pale! we may well be pale, didst thou know all. Hah! that awful sound again! I cannot bear it, Pharez, I cannot bear it. I have borne many things, but this I cannot."

"My lord, 'tis in the armoury."

"Run, sec. No, I'll not be alone, I'll not be alone. Where's Benaiah! Let him go. Stay with me, Pharez, stay with me. I pray thee stay, my child."

Pharez led the caliph to a couch, on which Alroy lay pale and trembling. In a few minutes he enquired whether Benaiah had returned.

"Even now he comes, sire."

"Well, how is it?"

"Sire! a most awful incident. As the thunder broke over the palace, the sacred standard fell from its resting-place, and has shivered into a thousand pieces. Strange to say, the sceptre of Solomon can neither be found nor traced."

"Say nothing of the past as ye love me, lads. Let none enter the armoury. Leave me, Benaiah, leave me, Pharez."

They retired. Alroy watched their departure with a glance of inexpressible anguish. The moment that they had disappeared, he flew to the couch, and throwing himself upon his knees, and covering his face with his hands, burst into passionate tears, and exclaimed:—"O, my God, I have deserted thee, and now thou hast deserted me!"

VI.

EXHAUSTED and desperate, sleep crept over the senses of the caliph. He threw himself upon the divan, and was soon buried in profound repose. He might have slept an hour; he awoke suddenly. From the cabinet in which he slept, you entered through a lofty and spacious arch, generally covered with drapery, which was now withdrawn, into an immense hall. To the astonishment of Alroy, this presence-chamber apparently at this moment blazed

with light. He rose suddenly from his couch, he advanced—he perceived, with feelings of curiosity and fear, that the hall was filled with beings, terrible indeed to behold, but to his sight more terrible than strange. In the colossal and mysterious forms that lined the walls of the mighty chamber, and each of which held in its extended arm a streaming torch, he recognised the awful Afrites. At the end of the hall, upon a sumptuous throne, surrounded by priests and courtiers, there was seated a monarch, on whom Aloy had before gazed, Solomon the great! Aloy beheld him in state and splendour, the same Solomon whose sceptre the prince of the captivity had seized in the royal tombs of Judah.

The strange assembly seemed perfectly unconscious of the presence of the child of earth, who, with a desperate courage, leaned against a column of the arch, and watched, with wonder, their mute and motionless society. Nothing was said, nothing done. No one moved, no one, even by gesture, seemed sensible of the presence of any other apparition save himself.

Suddenly there advanced from the bottom of the hall, near unto Aloy, a procession. Pages and dancing girls, with eyes of fire, and voluptuous gestures, warriors with mighty arms, and venerable forms, with ample robes and flowing beards. And as they passed, even with all the activity of their gestures, they made no sound; neither did the musicians, whereof there was a great band playing upon harps and psalteries, and timbrels and cornets, break, in the slightest degree, the almighty silence.

This great crowd poured on in beautiful order, the procession never terminating, yet passing thrice round the hall, bowing to him that was upon the throne, and ranging themselves in ranks before the Afrites.

And there came in twelve forms, bearing a great seal. The stone green, and the engraven characters of living flame, and the characters were those on the talisman of Jabaster, which Aloy still wore next to his heart. And the twelve forms placed the great seal before Solomon, and humbled themselves, and the king bowed. At the same moment, Aloy was sensible of a pang next to his heart. He instantly put his hand to the suffering spot, and lo! the talisman crumbled into dust.

The procession ceased, a single form advanced. Recent experience alone prevented Aloy from sinking before the spectre of Jabaster. Such was the single form. It advanced, bearing the sceptre. It advanced, it knelt before the throne, it offered the sceptre to the crowned and solemn vision. And the form of Solomon extended its arm, and took the sceptre, and instantly the mighty assembly vanished!

Aloy advanced immediately into the chamber, but all was dark and silent. A trumpet sounded. He recognised the note of his own soldiery. He groped his way to a curtain, and pulling it aside, beheld the first streak of dawn.

VII.

ONCE more upon his charger, once more surrounded by his legions, once more his senses dazzled and inflamed by the waving banners and the inspiring trumpets, once more conscious of the power still at his command, and the mighty stake for which he was about to play, Aloy in a great degree recovered his usual spirit and self-possession. His

energy returned with his excited pulse, and the vastness of the impending danger seemed only to stimulate the fertility of his genius.

He pushed on with forced marches towards Media, at the head of fifty thousand men. At the end of the second day's march, fresh couriers arrived from Abner, informing him that, unable to resist the valiant and almost innumerable host of the King of Karasme he had entirely evacuated Persia, and had concentrated his forces in Louristan. Aloy, in consequence of this information, despatched orders to Scherirah, to join him with his division instantly, and leave the capital to its fate.

They passed again the mountains of Kerrund, and joined Abner and the army of Media thirty thousand strong, on the river Abzah. Here Aloy rested one night, to refresh his men, and on the ensuing morn pushed on to the Persian frontier, unexpectedly attacked the advanced posts of Alp Arslan, and beat them back, with great loss, into the province. But the force of the King of Karasme was so considerable, that the caliph did not venture on a general engagement, and therefore he fell back, and formed in battle array upon the neighbouring plain of Nehauend, the theatre of one of his earliest and most brilliant victories, where he awaited the hourly expected arrival of Scherirah.

The King of Karasme, who was desirous of bringing affairs to an issue, and felt confident in his superior force, instantly advanced. In two or three days at farthest, it was evident that a battle must be fought that would decide the fate of the East.

On the morn ensuing their arrival at Nehauend, while the caliph was out hunting, attended only by a few officers, he was suddenly attacked by an ambushed band of Karasmians. Aloy and his companions defended themselves with such desperation that they at length succeeded in beating off their assailants, although triple their amount in number. The leader of the Karasmians, as he retreated, hurled a dart at the caliph, which must have been fatal, had not a young officer of the guard interposed his own breast, and received the deadly wound. The party, in confusion, returned with all speed to the camp, Aloy himself bearing the expiring victim of desperate loyalty and military enthusiasm.

The bleeding officer was borne to the royal pavilion, and placed upon the imperial couch. The most skilful leech was summoned; but he examined the wound, and shook his head. The dying warrior was himself sensible of his desperate condition. His agony could only be alleviated by withdrawing the javelin, which would occasion his immediate decease. He desired to be left alone with his sovereign.

"Sire!" said the officer, "I must die; and I die without a pang. To die in your service, I have ever considered the most glorious end. Destiny has awarded it to me; and if I have not met my fate upon the field of battle, it is some consolation that my death has preserved the most valuable of lives. Sire! I have a sister."

"Waste not thy strength, dear friend, in naming her. Rest assured I shall ever deem thy relatives my own."

"I doubt it not. Would I had a thousand lives for such a master! I have a burden on my conscience, sire, nor can I die in peace unless I name it."

"Speak, speak freely. If thou hast injured any one, and the power or wealth of Alroy can redeem thy oppressed spirit, he'll not spare—he'll not spare, be assured of that."

"Noble, noble master, I must be brief; for although while this javelin rests within my body, I yet may live, the agony is great. Sire, the deed of which I speak doth concern thee."

"Ay?"

"I was on guard the day Jabaster died."

"Powers of heaven! I am all ears. Speak on, speak on!"

"He died self-strangled, so they say!"

"So they ever told me."

"Thou art innocent, thou art innocent, I thank my God, my king is innocent."

"Rest assured of that, as there is hope in Israel. I pray thee, tell me all."

"The queen came with the signet ring. To such authority I yielded way. She entered, and after her, the Lord Honain. I heard high words, I heard Jabaster's voice. He struggled, yes! he struggled; but his mighty form, wounded and fettered, could not long resist. Foul play, foul play, sire! What could I do against such adversaries? They left the chamber with a stealthy step. Her eyes met mine. I never could forget that fell and glittering visage."

"Thou ne'er hast spoken of this awful end?"

"To none but thee. And why I speak it now I cannot tell, save that it seems some inspiration urges me; and methinks they, who did this, may do even feller works, if such there be."

"Thou hast robbed me of all peace and hope of peace—and yet I thank thee. Now I know the worth of life. I have never loved to think of that sad day, and yet, though I have sometimes dreamed of villanous work, the worst were innocence to thy dread tale."

"'Tis told; and now I pray thee secure thy secret, by drawing from my agonized frame this javelin."

"Trusty heart, 'tis a sad office."

"I shall die with joy if thou performest it!"

"'Tis done."

"God save Alroy!"

VIII.

WHILE Alroy, plunged in thought, stood over the body of the officer, there arose a flourish of triumphant music, and a eunuch, entering the pavilion, announced the arrival of Schirene from Kerrund. Almost immediately afterwards the princess, descending from her litter, entered the tent; Alroy tore off his robe, and threw it over the corpse.

"My own," exclaimed the princess, as she ran up to the caliph, "I have heard all. Be not alarmed for me. I dare look upon a corpse. You know I am a soldier's bride. I am used to blood."

"Alas! alas!"

"Why art thou so pale? Thou dost not kiss me! Has this unhinged thee so? 'Tis a sad deed; and yet to-morrow's dawn may light up thousands to as grim a fate. Why! thou tremblest! Alas! kind soul! The single death of this fond, faithful heart hath quite upset my love. Yet art thou used to battle. Why! this is foolishness. Art not glad to see me? What, not one smile? And I have come to fight for thee! I will be kissed!"

She flung herself upon his neck. Alroy faintly

returned her embrace, and bore her to a couch. He clapped his hands, and two soldiers entered and bore away the corpse.

"The pavilion, Schirene, is now fitter for thy presence. Rest thyself; I shall soon return." Thus speaking, he quitted her.

He quitted her, but her humbled look of sorrowful mortification pierced to his heart. He thought of all her love, and all her loveliness; he called to mind all the marvellous story of their united fortunes. He felt that for her, and her alone, he cared to live; that without her quick sympathy, even success seemed unendurable. His judgment fluctuated in an eddy of passion and reason. Passion conquered. He dismissed from his intelligence all cognizance of good and evil; he determined, under all circumstances, to cling ever to her; he tore from his mind all memory of the late disclosure. He returned to the pavilion with a countenance beaming with affection; he found her weeping, he folded her in his arms, he kissed her with a thousand kisses, and whispered between each kiss his ardent love.

IX.

'Twas midnight. Schirene reposed in the arms of Alroy. The caliph, who was restless and anxious for the arrival of Scherirah, was scarcely slumbering, when the sound of a voice perfectly aroused him. He looked around; he beheld the spectre of Jabaster. His hair stood on end, his limbs seemed to loosen, a cold dew crept over his frame as he gazed upon the awful form within a yard of his couch. Unconsciously he disembarrassed his arms of their fair burden, and rising on the couch, leaned forward.

"*Alroy, Alroy, Alroy!*"

"I am here."

"*To-morrow Israel is avenged!*"

"Who is that?" exclaimed the princess, wakening.

In a frenzy of fear, Alroy, quite forgetting the spectre, turned and pressed his hand to her sight. When he again looked round, the apparition was invisible.

"What wouldst thou, Alroy?"

"Nothing, sweet! A soldier's wife must bear strange sights, yet I would save you some. One of my men, forgetting you were here, burst into my tent in such a guise as scarce would suit a female eye. I must away, my child. I'll call thy slaves. One kiss! Farewell! but for a time."

X.

"To-morrow Israel will be avenged. What, in Karasman blood? I have no faith. No matter. All is now beyond my influence. A rushing destiny carries me onward. I cannot stem the course, nor guide the vessel. How now! Who is the officer on guard?"

"Benomi, sire, thy servant."

"Send to the viceroy. Bid him meet me here, Who is this?"

"A courier from the Lord Scherirah, sire, but just arrived. He passed last night the Kerrund mountains, sire, and will be with you by the break of day."

"Good news, good news. Go fetch Abner. Haste! He'll find me here anon. I'll visit the camp a while. Well, my brave fellows, you have hither come to conquer again with Alroy. You

ha e fought before, I warrant, on the plain of Nehauend. 'Tis a rich soil, and shall be richer with Karasmian gore."

"God save your majesty! Our lives are thine."

"Please you, my little ruler," said a single soldier, addressing Aloy; "pardon my bluntness, but I knew you before you were a caliph."

"Stout heart, I like thy freedom. Pr'ythee say on."

"I was saying, I hope you'll lead us in the charge to-morrow. Some say you will not."

"They say falsely."

"I thought so. I'll ever answer for my little ruler—but then the queen!"

"Is a true soldier's wife, and lives in the camp."

"That's brave! There, I told you so, comrades; you would not believe me, but I knew our little ruler before you did. I lived near the gate at Hamadan, please your highness—old Shelomi's son."

"Give me thy hand—a real friend. What is't ye eat here, boys? Let me taste your mess. I' faith I would my cook could dress me such a pilau! 'Tis admirable!"

The soldiers gathered round their chieftain with eyes beaming with adoration. 'Twas a fine picture—the hero in the centre, the various groups around, some conversing with him, some cooking, some making coffee, all offering him by word or deed some testimonial of their devotion, and blending with that devotion the most perfect frankness.

"We shall beat them, lads!"

"There is no fear with you, you always beat."

"I do my best, and so do you. A good general without good troops, is little worth."

"I' faith that's true. One must have good troops. What think you of Alp Arslan?"

"I think he may give us as much trouble as all our other enemies together, and that's not much."

"Brave, brave! God save Aloy!"

Benomi approached, and announced that the viceroys were in attendance.

"I must quit you, my children," said Aloy. "We'll sup once more together when we have conquered."

"God save you, sire; and we will confound your enemies."

"Good night, my lads. Ere the dawn break we may have hot work."

"We are ready, we are ready. God save Aloy!"

"They are in good cue, and yet 'twas a different spirit that inspired our early days. That I strongly feel. These are men true to a leader, who has never failed them, and confident in a cause that leads to—plunder. They are but splendid mercenaries. No more. O! where are now the fighting men of Judah! Where are the men who, when they drew their cimeters, joined in a conquering psalm of holy triumph! Last eve of battle you would have thought the field a mighty synagogue. Priests and altars, flaming sacrifices, and smoking censers, groups of fiery zealots hanging with frenzy on prophetic lips, and sealing with their blood and holiest vows, a solemn covenant to conquer Canaan. All is changed, as I am. How now, Abner? You are well muffled!"

"Is it true Scherirah is at hand?"

"I doubt not all is right. Would that the dawn would break!"

"The enemy is advancing. Some of their columns are in sight. My scouts have dodged

them. They intend doubtless to form upon the plain."

"They are in sight, eh! Then we will attack them at once, ere they are formed. Rare, rare! We'll beat them yet. Courage, dear brother. Scherirah will be here at dawn in good time, very good time—very, very good time."

"I like the thought."

"The men are in good heart. At break of dawn charge with thirty thousand cavalry upon their forming ranks. I'll take the right, Asriel the left. It shall be a family affair, dear Abner. How is Miriam?"

"I heard this morn, quite well. She sends you her love and prayers. The queen is here!"

"She came this eve. Quite well."

"She must excuse all courtesy."

"Say nothing. She is a soldier's wife. She loves thee well, dear Abner."

"I know that; I hope my sword may guard her children's throne."

"Well, give thy orders. Instant battle, eh?"

"Indeed, I think so."

"I'll send couriers to hurry Scherirah. All looks well. Reserve the guard."

"Ay, ay! Farewell, dear sire. When we meet again, I trust your enemies may be your slaves!"

XI.

At the first streak of dawn the Hebrew cavalry, with the exception of the guard, charged the advancing columns of the Karasimians with irresistible force, and cut them to pieces. Alp Arslan rallied his troops, and at length succeeded in forming his main body in good order. Aloy and Asriel led on their divisions, and the battle now became general. It raged for several hours, and was on both sides well maintained. The slaughter of the Karasimians was great, but their stern characters and superior numbers counterbalanced for a time all the impetuosity of the Hebrews, and all the energy of their leaders. This day Aloy threw into a shade all his former exploits. Twelve times he charged at the head of the sacred guard, and more than once penetrated to the pavilion of Alp Arslan.

In vain he endeavoured singly, and hand to hand, to meet that famous chieftain. Both monarchs fought in their ranks, and yet fate decided that their cimeters should never cross. Four hours before noon it was evident to Aloy, that unless Scherirah arrived, he could not prevail against the vast superiority of numbers. He was obliged early to call his reserve into the field, and although the number of the slain on the side of Arslan exceeded any in the former victories of the Hebrews, still the Karasimians maintained an immense front, which was constantly supplied by fresh troops. Confident in his numbers, and aware of the weakness of his antagonists, Arslan contented himself with acting on the defensive, and wearying his assailants by resisting their terrible and repeated charge.

For a moment, Aloy at the head of the sacred guard had withdrawn from the combat. Abner and Asriel still maintained the fight, and the caliph was at the same time preparing for new efforts, and watching with anxiety the arrival of Scherirah. In the fifth hour, from an eminence he marked with exultation the advancing banners of his expected succours. Confident now that the day was won, he announced the exhilarating intelligence to his sol-

diers; and while they were excited by the animating intelligence, led them once more to the charge. It was irresistible; Scherirah seemed to have arrived only for the pursuit, only in time to complete the victory. What then was the horror, the consternation of Alroy, when Benaiah, dashing up to him, informed him that the long-expected succours consisted of the united forces of Scherirah and Abidan, and had attacked him in the rear. Human genius could afford no resource. The exhausted Hebrews, whose energies had been racked to the utmost, were surrounded. The Karasians made a general and simultaneous advance. In a few minutes the Hebrew army was disorganized. The stoutest warriors threw away their swords in despair. Every one thought only of self-preservation. Even Abner fled towards Hamadan. Asriel was slain. Alroy, finding that it was all over, rushed to his pavilion at the head of about three hundred of the guards, seized the fainting Schirene, and threw her before him on his saddle, and cutting his way through all obstacles, dashed into the desert.

For eight-and-forty hours they never stopped. Their band was soon reduced one-third. On the morning of the third day they dismounted and refreshed themselves at a well. Half only regained their saddles. Schirene never spoke. On they rushed again, each hour losing some exhausted comate. At length, on the fifth day, about eighty strong, they arrived at a grove of palm trees. Here they dismounted. And Alroy took Schirene in his arms, and the shade seemed to revive her. She opened her eyes, and pressed his hand and smiled. He gathered her some dates, and she drank some water.

"Our toils will soon be over, sweetest," he whispered to her; "I have lost every thing but thee."

Again they mounted, and proceeded at a less rapid pace, they arrived towards evening at the ruined city, whither Alroy all this time had been directing his course. Dashing down the great street, they at length entered the old amphitheatre. They dismounted. Alroy made a couch with their united cloaks for Schirene. Some collected fuel, great stores of which was found, and lit large fires.

Others, while it was yet light, chased the gazelles, and were sufficiently fortunate to provide their banquet, or fetched water from the well known to their leader. In an hour's time, clustering round their fires in groups, and sharing their rude fare, you might have deemed them, instead of the discomfited and luxurious guards of a mighty monarch, the accustomed tenants of this wild abode.

"Come, my lads," said Alroy, as he rubbed his hands over the ascending flame, "at any rate this is better than the desert!"

XII.

AFTER all his exertions, Alroy fell into a profound and dreamless sleep. When he awoke, the sun had been long up—Schirene was still slumbering. He kissed her, and she opened her eyes and smiled.

"You are now a bandit's bride," he said, with a smile. "How like you our new life!"

"Well! with thee."

"Rest here, my sweetest; I must rouse our men, and see how fortune speeds." So saying, and

tripping lightly over many a sleeping form, he touched Benaiah.

"So! my brave captain of the guard, still napping? Come! stir, stir."

Benaiah jumped up with a cheerful face. "I am ever ready, sire."

"I know it; but remember I am no more a king, only a comate. Away with me, and let us form some order."

The companions quitted the amphitheatre, and reconnoitred the adjoining buildings. They found many stores, the remains of old days—mats, tents, and fuel, drinking bowls, and other homely furniture. They fixed upon a building for their stable, and others for the accommodation of their band. They summoned their companions to the open place, the scene of Hassan Subah's fate, where Alroy addressed them, and developed to them his plans. They were divided into companies—each man had his allotted duty. Some were placed on guard at different parts; some were sent out to the chase, or to collect dates from the oasis; others led the horses to the contiguous pasture, or remained to complete their interior arrangements. The amphitheatre was cleared out. A rude but convenient pavilion was formed for Schirene. They covered its ground with mats, and each emulated the other in his endeavours to study her accommodation. Her kind words and inspiring smiles animated at the same time their zeal and their invention.

They soon became accustomed to their rough but adventurous life. Its novelty pleased them, and the perpetual excitement of urgent necessity left them no time to mourn over their terrible vicissitudes. While Alroy lived, hope indeed never deserted their sanguine bosoms. And such was the influence of his genius, that the most desponding felt that to be discomfited with him was preferable to conquest with another. They were a faithful and devoted band, and merry faces were not wanting when at night they assembled in the amphitheatre for their common meal.

No sooner had Alroy completed his arrangements, than he sent forth spies in all directions, to procure intelligence, and especially to communicate, if possible, with Ithamar and Medad, provided they still survived and maintained themselves in any force.

A fortnight passed away without the approach of any stranger; at the end of which there arrived four personages at their haunt, not very welcome to their chief, who, however, concealed his chagrin at their appearance. These were Kisloch the Kourd, and Calidas the Indian, and their inseparable companions, the Guebre and the Negro.

XIII.

"Noble captain," said Kisloch, "we trust that you will permit us to enlist in the band. This is not the first time we have served under your orders in this spot. Old comates, if faith, who have seen the best and the worst. We suspected where you might be found, although, thanks to the ever felicitous invention of man, it is generally received that you died in battle. I hope your majesty is well," added Kisloch, bowing to Schirene.

"You are very welcome, friends," replied Alroy—"I know your worth. You have seen, as you say, the best and the worst, and will, I trust, see better. Died in battle, eh! that's good."

"'Tis so receive!," said Calidas.
 "And what news of our friends?"
 "Not over good, but strange."
 "How?"
 "Hamadan is taken."
 "I am prepared—tell me all."
 "Old Bostenay and the Lady Miriam are borne prisoners to Bagdad."
 "Prisoners!"
 "But so—all will be well with them, I trow. The Lord Honain is in high favour with the conqueror, and will doubtless protect them."
 "Honain in favour?"
 "Even so. He made terms for the city, and right good ones."
 "Hah! he was ever dexterous. Well! if he save my sister, I care not for his favour."
 "There is no doubt. All may yet be well, sir."
 "Let us act and hope. Where's Abner?"
 "Dead."
 "How?"
 "In battle."
 "Art sure?"
 "I saw him fall, and fought beside him."
 "A soldier's death is all our fortune now. I am glad he was not captured. Where's Medad, Ithamar?"
 "Fled into Egypt."
 "We have no force whatever, then?"
 "None but your guards here."
 "They are strong enough to plunder a caravan. Honain, you say, in favour?"
 "Very high. He'll make good terms for us."
 "This is strange news."
 "Very, but true."
 "Well! you are welcome. Share our fare. 'Tis rough, and somewhat scanty; but we have feasted, and may feast again. Fled into Egypt, eh?"
 "Ay! sir."
 "Schirene, shouldst like to see the Nile?"
 "I have heard of crocodiles."

XIV.

If the presence of Kisloch and his companions were not very pleasing to Alroy, with the rest of the band they soon became great favourites. Their local knowledge, and their experience of desert life, made them valuable allies, and their boisterous jocularly, and unceasing merriment, were not unwelcome in the present monotonous existence of the fugitives. As for Alroy himself, he meditated an escape to Egypt. He determined to seize the first opportunity of procuring some camels, and then dispersing his band, with the exception of Benaiah and a few faithful retainers, he trusted that, disguised as merchants, they might succeed in crossing Syria, and entering Africa by Palestine. With these plans and prospects, he became each day more cheerful, and more sanguine as to the future. He had in his possession some very valuable jewels, which he anticipated parting with at Cairo for a sum sufficient for all his purposes; and having exhausted all the passions of life while yet a youth, he looked forward to the tranquil termination of his existence in some poetic solitude with his beautiful companion.

One evening, as they returned from the oasis, Alroy guiding the camel that bore Schirene, and ever and anon looking up in her inspiring face, her

sanguine spirit would have indulged in a delightful future.

"Thus shall we pass the desert, sweet," said Schirene. "Can this be toil?"

"There is no toil with love," replied Alroy.

"And we were made for love, and not for empire," rejoined Schirene.

"The past is a dream," said Alroy. "So sages teach us; but until we act their wisdom is but wind. I feel it now. Have we ever lived in aught but deserts, and fed on aught but dates? Methinks 'tis very natural. But that I am tempted by the security of distant lands, I could remain here a free and happy outlaw. Time, custom, and necessity, form our natures. When I first met Scherirah in these ruins, I shrank with horror from degraded man; and now I sigh to be his heir. We must not think!"

"No, love, we'll only hope," replied Schirene—and they passed through the gates.

The night was beautiful, the air was still warm and sweet. Schirene gazed upon the luminous heavens. "We thought not of these skies when we were at Bagdad," she exclaimed; "and yet, my life, what was the brightness of our palaces compared to these? All is left to us that man should covet—freedom, beauty, and youth. I do believe, ere long, Alroy, we shall look back upon the wondrous past, as another and a lower world. Would this were Egypt! 'Tis my only wish."

"And it shall soon be gratified. All will soon be arranged. A few brief days, and then Schirene will mount her camel for a longer ride than just to gather dates. You'll make a sorry traveller, I fear!"

"Not I—I'll tire ye all."

They reached the circus and seated themselves round the blazing fire. Seldom had Alroy, since his fall, appeared more cheerful. Schirene sang an Arab air to the band, who joined in joyous chorus. It was late ere they sought repose; and they retired to their rest sanguine and contented.

A few hours after, at the break of dawn, Alroy was roused from his slumbers by a rude pressure on his breast. He started—a ferocious soldier was kneeling over him. He would have spurned him—he found his hands manacled. He would have risen—his feet were bound. He looked round for Schirene, and called her name—he was answered only by a shriek. The amphitheatre was filled with Karasmian troops. His own men were surprised and overpowered. Kisloch and the Guebre had been on guard. He was raised from the ground, and flung upon a camel, which was instantly trotted out of the circus. On every side he beheld a wild scene of disorder and dismay. He was speechless from passion and despair. The camel was dragged into the desert. A body of cavalry instantly surrounded it, and they set off at a rapid pace. The whole seemed the work of an instant.

How many days had passed Alroy knew not. He had taken no count of time. Night and day were to him the same. He was in a stupor. But the sweetness of the air, and the greenness of the earth, at length partially roused his attention. He was just conscious that they had quitted the desert. Before him was a noble river—he beheld the Euphrates from the very spot he had first viewed it in his pilgrimage. The strong association of ideas called back his memory. A tear stole down his

check—the bitter drop stole to his parched lips—he asked the nearest horseman for water. The guard gave him a wetted sponge, with which with difficulty he contrived to wipe his lips, and then he let it fall to the ground. The Karasmian struck him.

They arrived at the river. The prisoner was taken from the camel and placed in a covered boat. After some hours, they stopped and disembarked at a small village. Alroy was placed upon a donkey with his back to its head. His clothes were soiled and tattered. The children pelted him with mud. An old woman, with a fanatic curse, placed a crown of paper on his brow. With difficulty his brutal guards prevented their victim from being torn to pieces. And in such fashion, towards noon of the fourteenth day, David Alroy again entered Bagdad.

XV.

THE intelligence of the capture of Alroy spread through the agitated city. The moolahs bustled about as if they had received a fresh demonstration of the authenticity of the prophetic mission. All the dervishes began begging. The men discussed affairs in the coffee-houses, and the women chatted at the fountains.*

"They may say what they like, but I wish him well," said a fair Arab, as she arranged her veil. "He may be an impostor, but he was a very handsome one."

"All the women are for him, that's the truth," responded a companion; "but then we can do him no good."

"We can tear their eyes out," said a third.

"And what do you think of Alp Arslan, truly?" inquired a fourth.

"I wish he were a pitcher, and then I could break his neck," said a fifth.

"Only think of the princess," said a sixth.

"Well! she has had a glorious time of it," said a seventh.

"Nothing was too good for her," said an eighth.

"I like true love," said a ninth.

"Well! I hope he will be too much for them all yet," said a tenth.

"I should not wonder," said an eleventh.

"He can't," said a twelfth, "he has lost his sceptre."

"You don't say so," said a thirteenth.

"It is too true," said a fourteenth.

"Do you think he was a wizard?" said a fifteenth, "I vow if there be not a fellow looking at us behind those trees."

"Impudent scoundrel!" said a sixteenth. "I wish it were Alroy. Let us all scream, and put down our veils."

And the group ran away.

XVI.

Two stout soldiers were playing chess† in a coffee-house

* The bath and the fountain are the favourite scenes of feminine conversation.

† On the walls of the palace of Amenoph the Second, called Medeenet Auh, at Egyptian Thebes, the king is represented playing chess with the queen. This monarch reigned long before the Trojan war.

"May I slay my mother," said one, "but I can not make a move. I fought under him at Nehaund; and though I took the amnesty, I have half a mind now to seize my sword and stab the first Turk that enters."

"'Twere but sheer justice," said his companion "By my father's blessing, he was the man for a charge. They may say what they like, but compared with him, Alp Arslan is a white-livered Giaour."

"Here is confusion to him and to thy last move. There's the dirhem, I can play no more. May I slay my mother, though, but I did not think he would have let himself be taken."

"By the blessing of my father, nor I; but then he was asleep."

"That makes a difference. He was betrayed."

"All brave men are. They say Kisloeh and his set pocket their fifty thousand by the job."

"May each dirhem prove a plague spot!"

"Amen! Dost remember Abner?"

"May I slay my mother if I ever forget him."

"He spoke to his men like so many lambs. What's become of the Lady Miriam?"

"She is here."

"That will cut Alroy."

"He was ever fond of her. Dost remember she gained Adoram's life?"

"O! she could do any thing—next to the queen."

"Before her, I say before her. He has refused the queen, he never refused the Lady Miriam."

"Because she asked less."

"Dost know it seemed to me that things never went on so well after Jabaster's death?"

"So say I. There was a something, eh?"

"A sort of a peculiar, as it were, kind of something, eh?"

"You have well described it. Every man felt the same. I have often mentioned it to my comrades. Say what you like, said I, but slay my mother, if ever since the old gentlemen strangled himself things don't seem, as it were, in their natural propinquity. 'Twas the phrase I used."

"A very choice one. Unless there's a natural propinquity, the best arranged matters will fall out. However, the ass sees farther than his rider, and so it was with Alroy, the best commander I ever served under, all the same."

"Let's go forth and see how affairs run."

"Ay, do. If we hear any one abuse Alroy, we'll leave his skull."

"That will we. There are a good many of our stout fellows about; we might do something yet."

"Who knows?"

XVII.

A SUBTERRANEAN dungeon of the citadel of Bagdad held in its gloomy limits the late lord of Asia. The captive did not sigh, or weep, or wail. He did not speak. He did not even think. For several days he remained in a state of stupor. On the morning of the fourth day, he almost unconsciously partook of the wretched provision which his jailers brought him. Their torches, round which the bats whirled and flapped their wings, and twinkled their small eyes, threw a ghastly glare over the nearer walls of the dungeon, the extremity of which defied the vision of the prisoner; and

when the jailers retired, Aloy was in complete darkness.

The image of the past came back to him. He tried in vain to penetrate the surrounding gloom. His hands were manacled, his legs also were loaded with chains. The notion that his life might perhaps have been cruelly spared in order that it might linger on in this horrible state of conscious annihilation, filled him with frenzy. He would have dashed his fetters against his brow, but the chain restrained him. He flung himself upon the damp and rigid ground. His fall disturbed a thousand obscene things. He heard the quick glide of a serpent, the creeping retreat of the clustering scorpions, and the swift escape of the dashing rats. His mighty calamities seemed slight, when compared with these petty miseries. His great soul could not support him under these noisome and degrading incidents. He sprang, in disgust, upon his feet, and stood fearful of moving lest every step should introduce him to some new abomination. At length, exhausted nature was unable any longer to sustain him. He groped his way to the rude seat, cut in the rocky wall, which was his only accommodation. He put forth his hand. It touched the slimy fur of some wild animal, that instantly sprang away, its fiery eyes sparkling in the dark. Aloy recoiled with a sensation of wo-begone dismay. His shaken nerves could not sustain him under this base danger, and these foul and novel trials. He could not refrain from an exclamation of despair; and when he remembered that he was far beyond the reach of all human solace and sympathy, even all human aid, for a moment his mind seemed to desert him; and he wrung his hands in forlorn and almost idiotic wo.

An awful thing it is—the failing energies of a master-mind. He who placed implicit confidence in his genius, will find himself some day utterly defeated and deserted. 'Tis bitter! Every paltry hind seems but to breathe to mock you. Slow, indeed, is such a mind to credit that the never-failing resource can at last be wanting. But so it is. Like a dried-up fountain, the perennial flow and bright fertility have ceased, and ceased forever. Then comes the madness of retrospection.

Draw a curtain! draw a curtain! and fling it over this agonizing anatomy—I can no more.

The days of childhood, his sweet sister's voice and smiling love, their innocent pastimes, and the kind solicitude of faithful servants, all the soft detail of mild domestic life,—these were the sights and memories that fitted in wild play before the burning vision of Aloy, and rose upon his tortured mind. Empire and glory, his sacred nation, his imperial bride,—these, these were nothing. Their worth had vanished with the creative soul that called them into action. The pure sympathies of nature alone remained, and all his thought and grief, all his intelligence, all his emotion, were centred in his sister.

It was the seventh morning. A guard entered at an accustomed hour, and, sticking a torch into a niche in the wall, announced that a person was without who had permission to speak to the prisoner. They were the first human accents that had met the ear of Aloy during his captivity, which seemed to him an age, a long dark period, that cancelled all things. He shuddered at the harsh tones. He tried to answer, but his un-

accustomed lips refused their office. He raised his heavy arms, and endeavoured to signify his consciousness of what had been uttered. Yet, indeed, he had not listened to the message without emotion. He looked forward to the grate with strange curiosity; and as he looked, he trembled. The visitor entered, muffled in a dark caftan. The guard disappeared; and the caftan falling to the ground, revealed Honain.

"My beloved Aloy," said the brother of Jabaster; and he advanced, and pressed him to his bosom. Had it been Miriam, Aloy might have at once expired; but the presence of this worldly man called back his worldliness. The revulsion of his feelings was wonderful. Pride, perhaps even hope, came to his aid; all the associations seemed to counsel exertion; for a moment he seemed the same Aloy.

"I rejoice to find at least thee safe, Honain."

"I also, if my security may lead to thine."

"Still whispering hope!"

"Despair is the conclusion of fools."

"O, Honain! 'tis a great trial. I can play my part, and yet methinks 'twere better we had not again met. How is Schirene!"

"Thinking of thee."

"'Tis something that she can think. My mind has gone. Where's Miriam?"

"Frec."

"That's something. Thou hast done that. Good, good Honain, be kind to that sweet child, if only for my sake. Thou art all she has left."

"She hath thee."

"Her desolation."

"Live, and be her refuge."

"How's that? These walls—escape! No, no; it is impossible."

"I do not deem it so."

"Indeed! I'll do any thing. Speak! speak! Can we bribe? can we cleave their skulls? can we—"

"Calm thyself, my friend. There is no need of bribes, no need of bloodshed. We must make terms."

"Terms! We might have made those upon the plains of Nehauend. Terms! Terms with a captive victim!"

"Why victim?"

"Is Arslan then so generous?"

"He is a beast, more savage than the boar that grinds its tusks within his country's forests."

"Why speakest thou then of hope?"

"I spoke of certainty. I did not mention hope."

"Dear Honain, my brain is weak; but I can bear strange things, or else I'd not be here. I feel thy thoughtful friendship; but indeed there needs no winding words to tell my fate. Pr'ythee, speak out."

"In a word, thy life is safe."

"What, spared!"

"If it please thee."

"Please me! Life is sweet. I feel its sweetness. I want but little. Freedom and solitude are all I ask. My life spared! I'll not believe it. Thou hast done this deed, thou mighty man, that masterest all souls. Thou hast not forgotten me, thou hast not forgotten the days gone by, thou hast not forgotten thine own Aloy! Who calls thee worldly is a slanderer. O, Honain! thou art too faithful!"

"I have no thought but for thy service, prince."

"Call me not prince, call me thine own Alroy. My life spared! 'Tis wonderful! When may I go? Let no one see me. Manage that, Honain. Thou canst manage all things. I'm for Egypt. Thou hast been to Egypt, hast thou not, Honain?"

"A very wondrous land, 'twill please thee much."

"When may I go? Tell me when may I go. When may I quit this dark and noisome cell?" 'Tis worse than all their tortures, dear Honain. Air and light, and I really think my spirit never would break, but this horrible dungeon—I scarce can look upon thy face, sweet friend. 'Tis serious."

"Wouldst thou have me gay?"

"Yes! if we are free."

"Alroy, thou art a great spirit, the greatest that e'er I knew, or ever I have read of. I never knew thy like, and never shall."

"Tush, tush, sweet friend, I am a broken reed, but still I am free. This is no time for courtly phrases. Let's go, and go at once."

"A moment, dear Alroy. I am no flatterer. What I said came from my heart, and doth concern us much and instantly. I was saying thou hast no common mind, Alroy—indeed thou hast a mind unlike all others. Listen, my prince. Thou hast read mankind deeply and truly. Few have seen more than thyself, and none have so rare a spring of that intuitive knowledge of thy race, which is a gem to which experience is but a jeweller, and without which no action can befriend us."

"Well, well!"

"A moment's calmness. Thou hast entered Bagdad in triumph, and thou hast entered the same city with every contumely the base spirit of our race could cast upon its victim. 'Twas a great lesson."

"I feel it so."

"And teaches us how vile and valueless is the opinion of our fellow-men."

"Alas! 'tis true."

"I am glad to see thee in this wholesome temper. 'Tis full of wisdom."

"The miserable are often wise."

"But to believe is nothing unless we act. Speculation should only sharpen practice. The time has come to prove thy lusty faith in this philosophy. I told thee we could make terms. I have made them. To-morrow it was doomed Alroy should die, and what a death! A death of infinite torture! Hast ever seen a man impaled?"*

"Hah!"

"To view it is alone a doom."

"God of heaven!"

"It is so horrible, that 'tis ever marked, that when this direful ceremony occurs, the average deaths in cities greatly increase. 'Tis from the turning of the blood in the spectators, who yet from some ungovernable madness can ne'er refrain from hurrying to the scene. I speak with some authority—I speak as a physician."

"Speak no more. I cannot endure it."

"To-morrow this doom awaited thee. As for Schirene—"

"Not for her, O! surely not for her!"

"No, they were merciful. She is a caliph's

daughter. 'Tis not forgotten. The axe would close her life. Her fair neck would give slight trouble to the headsmen's art. But for thy sister, but for Miriam—she is a witch, a Jewish witch! They would have burnt her alive."

"I'll not believe it, no, no, I'll not believe it: damnable, bloody demons! When I had power I spared all—all but—ah me! ah me! why did I live!"

"Thou dost forget thyself; I speak of that which was to have been, not of that which is to be. I have stepped in and communed with the conqueror. I have made terms."

"What are they—what can they be?"

"Easy. To a philosopher like Alroy an idle ceremony."

"Be brief, be brief."

"Thou seest thy career is a great scandal to the Moslem. I marked their weakness, and I have worked upon it. Thy mere defeat or death will not blot out the stain upon their standard and their faith. The public mind is wild with fantasies since Alroy rose. Men's opinions flit to and fro with that fearful change that bodes no stable settlement of states. None know what to cling to, or where to place their trust. Creeds are doubted—authority disputed. They would gladly account for thy success by other than human means, yet must deny thy mission. There also is the fame of a fair and mighty princess, a daughter of their caliphs, which they would gladly clear. I mark all this, observe, and work upon it. So, could we devise some means by which thy lingering followers could be forever silenced, this great scandal fairly erased, and the public frame brought to a sounder and more tranquil pulse, why, they would concede much, much, very much."

"Thy meaning, not thy means, are evident."

"They are in thy power."

"In mine? 'Tis a deep riddle. Pr'ythee solve it."

"Thou wilt be summoned at to-morrow's noon before this Arslan. There, in the presence of the assembled people, who are now with him as much as they were with thee, thou wilt be accused of magic, and of high intercourse with the infernal powers. Plead guilty."

"Well! is there more?"

"Some trifle. They will then examine thee about the princess. It is not difficult to confess that Alroy won the caliph's daughter by an irresistible spell—and now 'tis broken."

"So, so. Is that all?"

"The chief. Thou canst then address some phrases to the Hebrew prisoners, denying thy divine mission, and so forth—to settle the public mind, observe, upon this point forever."

"Ay, ay, and then—?"

"No more, except for form, (upon the completion of the conditions, mind, you will be conveyed to what land you please, with such amount of treasure as you choose,) there is no more, except, I say, for form, I would, if I were you, ('twill be expected,) I would just publicly affect to renounce our faith, and bow before their prophet."

"Hah! Art thou there? Is this thy freedom? Get thee behind me, tempter!"

"Never, never, never! not a jot, not a jot: I'll not yield a jot. Were my doom one everlasting torture, I'd spurn thy terms! Is this thy high contempt of our poor kind—to outrage my God!

* A friend of mine witnessed this horrible punishment in Upper Egypt. The victim was a man who had secretly murdered nine persons. He held an official post, and invited travellers and pilgrims to his house, whom he regularly disposed of and plundered. I regret that I have not stated his MS. account of the ceremony.

to prove myself the vilest of the vile, and baser than the basest! Rare philosophy! O, Honain! would we had never met!"

"Or never parted. True. Had my word been taken, Alroy would ne'er have been betrayed."

"No more, no more; I pray thee, sir, no more. Leave me."

"Were this a palace, I would. Harsh words are softened by a friendly ear, when spoken in affliction."

"Say what they will, I am the Lord's anointed. As such I should have lived, as such at least I'll die."

"And Miriam?"

"The Lord will not desert her: she ne'er deserted him."

"Schirene?"

"Schirene! why! for her sake alone I'll die a hero! Shall it be said she loved a craven slave, a base impostor, a vile renegade, a villainous dealer in drugs and charms? O! no, no, no! if only for her sake, her sweet, sweet sake, my end shall be like my great life. As the sun I rose, like him I set. Still the world is warm with my bright fame, and my last hour shall not disgrace my noon, stormy indeed but glorious!"

Honain took the torch from the niche, and advanced to the grate. It was not fastened: he drew it gently open, and led forward a veiled and female figure. The veiled and female figure threw herself at the feet of Alroy, who seemed lost to what was passing. A soft lip pressed his hand. He started, his chains clanked.

"Alroy!" softly murmured the kneeling female.

"What voice is that?" wildly exclaimed the prince of the captivity. "It falls upon my ear like long forgotten music. I'll not believe it. No! I'll not believe it. Art thou Schirene?"

"I am that wretched thing they called thy bride."

"O! this indeed is torture! What impalement can equal this sharp moment? Look not on me, let not our eyes meet! They have met before, like to the confluence of two shining rivers blending in one great stream of rushing light. Bear off that torch, sir. Let impenetrable darkness cover our darker fortunes."

"Alroy!"

"She speaks again. Is she mad, as I am, that thus she plays with agony?"

"Sir," said Honain, advancing, and laying his hand gently on the arm of the captive, "I pray thee moderate this passion. Thou hast some faithful friends here, who would fain commune in calmness for thy lasting welfare."

"Welfare! He mocks me."

"I beseech thee, sire, be calm. If, indeed, I speak unto that great Alroy that all men feared, and still may fear, I pray remember, 'tis not in palaces, or in the battle field alone, the heroic soul can conquer and command. Scenes like these are the great proof of a superior soul. While we live, our body is a temple where our genius pours forth its godlike inspiration, and while the altar is not overthrown, the deity may still work marvels. Then rouse thyself, great sire; bethink thee, a caliph or a captive, there is no man within this breathing world like to Alroy. Shall such a being fall without a struggle, like some poor felon, who has naught to trust to but the dull shuffling accidents of chance? I too am a prophet, and I feel thou still wilt conquer."

"Give me my sceptre then, give me the sceptre! I speak to the wrong brother. It was not thou—it was not thou that gave it me."

"Gain it once more. The Lord deserted David for a time, yet still he pardoned him, and still he died a king."

"A woman worked his fall."

"But thee a woman raises. This great princess, has she not suffered too? Yet her spirit is still unbroken. List to her counsel: it is deep and fond."

"So was our love."

"And is, my Alroy!" exclaimed the princess.

"Be calm, be calm, I pray thee! For my sake, I am calm for thine. Thou hast listened to all Honain has told thee; that wise man, my Alroy, that never erred. 'Tis but a word he counsels, an empty word, a most unmeaning form. But speak it, and thou art free, and Alroy and Schirene may blend again their glorious careers, and lives of sweet fruition. Dost thou not remember when walking in the garden of our joy, and palled with empire, how often hast thou sighed for some sweet isle unknown to man, where thou mightest pass the days with no companion but my faithful self, and no adventures but our constant loves? O! my beloved, that life may still be thine! And dost thou falter? Dost call thyself forlorn with such fidelity, and deem thyself a wretch, when paradise with all its beauteous gates but woo thy entrance? O! no, no, no! thou hast forgot Schirene: I fear me much, thy over-fond Schirene, who dotes upon thy image in thy chains more than she did when those sweet hands of thine were bound with gems, and played with her bright locks!"

"She speaks of another world. I do remember something. Who has sent this music to a dungeon? My spirit softens with her melting words. My eyes are moist. I weep! 'Tis pleasant. Sorrow is joy compared with my despair. I never thought to shed a tear again. My brain methinks is cooler."

"Weep, weep, I pray thee weep; but let me kiss away thy tears, my soul! Didst think thy Schirene had deserted thee? Ah! that was it that made my bird so sad. It shall be free, and fly in a sweet sky, and feed on flowers with its faithful mate. Ah me! I am once more happy with my boy. There was no misery but thy absence, sweet! Methinks this dungeon is our bright kiosk! Is that the sunbeam, or thy smile, my love, that makes the walls so joyful!"

"Did I smile?—I'll not believe it."

"Indeed you did. Ah! see, he smiles again. Why, this is freedom! There is no such thing as sorrow. 'Tis a lie to frighten fools!"

"Why, Honain, what's this? 'Twould seem I am really joyful. There's inspiration in her very breath. I am another being. Nay! waste not kisses on those ugly fetters."

"Methinks they are gold."

They were silent. Schirene drew Alroy to his rough seat, and gently placing herself on his knees, threw her arms round his neck, and buried her face in his breast. After a few minutes she raised her head, and whispered in his ear in irresistible accents of sweet exultation, "We shall be free to-morrow!"

"To-morrow! is the trial so near?" exclaimed the captive with an agitated voice and changing countenance. "To-morrow!" He threw Schirene aside somewhat hastily, and sprang from his seat.

"To-morrow! would it were over! To-morrow! Methinks there is within that single word the fate of ages! Shall it be said to-morrow Alroy—"

"Hah! what art thou that risest now before me? Dread, mighty spirit, thou hast come in time to save my last perdition. Take me to thy bosom, 'tis not stabbed. They did not stab thee. Thou seest me here communing with thy murderers. What then? I am innocent. Ask them, dread ghost, and call upon their fiendish souls to say I am pure. They would make me dark as themselves, but shall not."

"Honain, Honain!" exclaimed the princess in a terrible whisper, as she flew to the physician. "He is wild again, he is wild. Calm him, calm him. Mark! how he stands with his extended arms, and fixed and vacant eyes, muttering most awful words! My spirit fails me. It is too fearful."

The physician advanced and stood by the side of Alroy, but in vain attempted to catch his attention. He ventured to touch his arm. The prince started, turned round, and recognising him, exclaimed in a shrieking voice, "Oft, fratricide!"

Honain recoiled, pale and quivering. Schirene sprang to his arm. "What said he, Honain? Thou dost not speak. I never saw thee pale before. Art thou, too, mad?"

"Would I were!"

"All men are growing wild. I am sure he said something. I pray thee tell me. What was it?"

"Ask him."

"I dare not. Tell me—tell me, Honain!"

"That I dare not."

"Was it a word?"

"Ay! a word to wake the dead. Let us begone."

"Without our end? Coward! I'll speak to him. My own Alroy," sweetly whispered the princess, as she advanced before him.

"What, has the fox left the tigress! Is't so, eh, eh? Are there no judgments? Are the innocent only haunted? I am innocent; I did not strangle thee! He said rightly, Beware, beware! they who did this, may do even fouler deeds. And here they are quick at their damned work. Thy body suffered, great Jabaster, but me they would strangle body and soul!"

The princess shrieked, and fell into the arms of the advancing Honain, who bore her out of the dungeon.

XVIII.

AFTER the fall of Hamadan, Bostenay and Miriam had been carried prisoners to Bagdad. Through the interference of Honain, their imprisonment had been exempted from the usual hardships; but they were still confined to their chambers in the citadel. Hitherto all the endeavours of Miriam to visit her brother had been fruitless. Honain was the only person to whom she could apply for assistance, and he, in answer to her importunities, only regretted his want of power to aid her. In vain had she attempted, by the offer of some remaining jewels, to secure the co-operation of her guards, with whom her loveliness and the softness of her manners had already ingratiated her. She had not succeeded even in communicating with Alroy. But after the unsuccessful mission of Honain to the dungeon, the late vizier visited the sister of the captive, and

breaking to her with delicate skill, the intelligence of the impending catastrophe, he announced that he had at length succeeded in obtaining for her the desired permission to visit her brother, and while she shuddered at the proximity of an event for which she had long attempted to prepare herself, Honain, with some modifications, whispered the means by which he flattered himself it might yet be averted. Miriam listened to him in silence, nor could he with all his consummate art succeed in extracting from her the slightest indication of her own opinion as to their expediency. They parted, Honain as sanguine as the wicked ever are.

As Miriam dreaded, both for herself and for Alroy, the shock of an unexpected meeting, she availed herself of the influence of Honain to send Caleb to her brother, to prepare him for her presence, and to consult him as to the desirable moment. Caleb found his late master lying exhausted on the floor of his dungeon. At first he would not speak, or even raise his head, nor did he for a long time apparently recognise the faithful retainer of his uncle. But at length he grew milder, and when he fully comprehended who the messenger was, and the object of the mission, he at first seemed altogether disinclined to see his sister, but in the end, postponed their meeting for the present, and, pleading great exhaustion, fixed for that sad union, the first hour of dawn.

The venerable Bostenay had scarcely ever spoken since the fall of his nephew: indeed it was but too evident that his faculties, even if they had not entirely deserted him, were at least greatly impaired. He never quitted his couch, he took no notice of what occurred. He evinced no curiosity, scarcely any feeling. If indeed he occasionally did mutter an observation, it was generally of an irritable character, nor truly did he appear satisfied if any one approached him, save Miriam, from whom alone he would accept the scanty victuals which he ever appeared disinclined to touch. But his devoted niece, amid all her harrowing affliction, could ever spare to the protector of her youth a placid countenance, a watchful eye, a gentle voice, and a ready hand. Her religion and her virtue, the strength of her faith, and the inspiration of her innocence, supported this pure and hapless lady amid all her undeserved and unparalleled sorrows.

It was long past midnight, the young widow of Abner reposed upon a couch in a soft slumber. The amiable Beruna, and the beautiful Bathsheba, the blinds withdrawn, watched the progress of the night. "Shall I wake her?" said the beautiful Bathsheba. "Methinks the stars are paler! She bid me rouse her long before the dawn."

"Her sleep is too beautiful! Let us not wake her," replied the amiable Beruna. "We rouse her only to sorrow."

"May her dreams at least be happy," rejoined the beautiful Bathsheba. "She sleeps tranquilly as a flower."

"The veil has fallen from her head," said the amiable Beruna. "I will replace it lightly on her brow. Is that well, my Bathsheba?"

"It is well, sweet Beruna. Her face shrouded by the shawl is like a pearl in its shell. See! she moves!"

"Bathsheba?"

"I am here, sweet lady."

"Is it near dawn?"

"Not yet, sweet lady; it is yet night. It is

long past the noon of night, sweet lady : methinks I scent the rising breath of morn ; but still 'tis night, and the young moon shines like a sickle in the heavenly field, amid the starry harvest."

"Beruna, gentle girl, give me thy arm. I'll rise."

The maidens advanced, and gently raising their mistress, supported her to the window.

"Since our calamities," said Miriam, "I have never proved such tranquil slumber. My dreams were slight but soothing, I saw him, but he smiled. Have I slept long, sweet girls ? Give me a kiss. Ye are very watchful."

"Dear lady, let me bring thy shawl. The air is fresh—"

"But sweet : I thank thee, no. My brow is not so cool it needs a covering. 'Tis a fair night !"

Miriam gazed upon the wide prospect of the moonlit capital. The eminent position of the citadel afforded an extensive view of the mighty groups of buildings, each in itself a city, broken only by some vast and hooded cupola, the tall, thin, white minarets of the mosques, or the black and spiral form of some lonely cypress, and through which the rushing Tigris, flooded with light, sent forth its broad and brilliant torrent. All was silent ; not a single boat floated on the fleet river, not a solitary voice broke the stillness of slumbering millions. She gazed, and she gazed, she could not refrain from contrasting the present scene, which seemed the sepulchre of all the passions of our race, with the unrivalled excitement of that stirring spectacle which Bagdad afforded on the celebration of the marriage of Alroy. How different then, too, was her position to her present, and how happy ! The only sister of a devoted brother, the lord and conqueror of Asia, the bride of his most victorious captain, one worthy of all her virtues, and whose youthful valour had encircled her brow with a diadem. For Miriam, exalted station had brought neither cares nor crimes. It had, as it were, only rendered her charity universal, and her benevolence omnipotent. She could not accuse herself—this blessed woman—she could not accuse herself, even in this searching hour of self-knowledge—she could not accuse herself, with all her meekness, and modesty, and humility, of having for a moment forgotten her dependence on her God, or her duty to her neighbour.

But when her thoughts recurred to that being, from whom they were indeed scarcely ever absent ; and when she remembered him, and all his life and all the thousand incidents of his youth, mysteries to the world, and known only to her, but which were indeed the prescience of his fame, and thought of all his surpassing qualities, and all his sweet affection, his unrivalled glory, and his impending fate, the tears, in silent agony, forced their way down her pale and pensive cheek. She bowed her head upon Bathsheba's shoulder, and sweet Beruna pressed her quivering hand.

The moon set, the stars grew white and ghastly, and, one by one, vanished away. Over the distant plain of the Tigris, the scene of the marriage pomp, the dark purple horizon, shivered into a rich streak of white and orange. The solemn strain of the muzzin sounded from the minarets. Some one knocked at the door. It was Caleb.

"I am ready," said Miriam ; and for a moment she covered her face with her right hand. "Think of me, sweet maidens ; pray for me !"

XIX.

LEANING ON Caleb, and lighted by a jailer bearing torches, Miriam descended the damp and broken stairs that led to the dungeon. She faltered as she arrived at the gate. She stopped, and leaned against the cold and gloomy wall. The jailer and Caleb preceded her. She heard the voice of Alroy. It was firm and sweet. Its accents reassured her. Cabel came forth with a torch, and held it to her feet ; and as he bent down, he said, "My lord bids me beg you to be of good heart, for he is."

The jailer having stuck his torch in the niche, withdrew. Miriam desired Caleb to stay without. Then, summoning up all her energies, she entered the dreadful abode. Alroy was standing to receive her. The light fell upon his countenance. It smiled. Miriam could no longer restrain herself. She ran forward, and pressed him to her heart.

"O, my best, my long beloved," whispered Alroy : "such a meeting indeed leads captivity captive !"

But the sister could not speak. She leaned her head upon his shoulder, and closed her eyes, that she might not weep.

"Courage, dear heart : courage, courage !" whispered the captive. "Indeed I am very happy !"

"My brother, my brother !"

"Had we met yesterday, you would have found me perhaps a little vexed. But to-day I am myself again. Since I crossed the Tigris, I know not that I have felt such self-content. I have had sweet dreams, dear Miriam, full of solace, and more than dreams. The Lord hath pardoned me, I truly think."

"O, my brother ! your words are full of comfort ; for, indeed, I too have dreamed, and dreamed of consolation. My spirit since our fall has never been more tranquil."

"Indeed I am very happy."

"Say so again, my David ; let me hear again these words of solace !"

"Indeed, 'tis very true, my faithful friend. It is not spoken in kind mockery to make you joyous. For know, last eve, whether the Lord repented of his wrath, or whether some dreadful trials, of which we will not speak, and wish not to remember, had made atonement for my manifold sins—but so it was, that about the time my angel Miriam sent her soothing message, a feeling of repose came over me, such as I long have coveted. Anon, I fell into a slumber, deep and sweet, and, for those wild and whirling images that of late have darted from my brain when it should rest,—glimpses of empire and conspiracy, snatches of fierce wars and mocking loves,—I stood beside our native fountain's brink and gathered flowers with my earliest friend. As I placed the fragrant captives in your flowing locks and kissed you when you smiled, there came Jabaster, that great, injured man, no longer stern and awful, but with benignant looks, and full of love. And he said, 'David, the Lord hath marked thy faithfulness, despite the darkness of thy dungeon.' So he vanished. He spoke, my sister, of some strange temptations by heavenly aid withstood. No more of that. I awoke. And lo ! I heard my name still called. Full of my morning dream, I thought it was you, and I answered, 'Dear sister art thou here ?' But no one answered ; and then

reflecting, my memory recognised those thrilling tones that summoned Alroy in Jabaster's cave."

"The Daughter of the Voice?"

"Even that sacred messenger. I am full of faith. The Lord hath pardoned me. Be sure of that."

"I cannot doubt it, David. You have done great things for Israel; no one in these latter days has risen like you. It you have fallen, you were young, and strangely tempted."

"Yet Israel, Israel! Did I not feel a worthier leader awaits my country yet, my heart would crack. I have betrayed my country!"

"O no, no, no! You have shown what we can do, and shall. Your memory alone is inspiration. A great career, although balked of its end, is still a landmark of human energy. Failure, when sublime, is not without its purpose. Great deeds are great legacies, and work with wondrous usury. By what man has done, we learn what man can do; and gauge the power and prospects of our race."

"Alas! there is no one to guard my name. 'Twill be reviled; or worse, 'twill be forgotten!"

"Never, never! the memory of great actions never dies. The sun of glory, though a while obscured, will shine at last. And so, sweet brother, perchance some poet, in some distant age, within whose veins our sacred blood may flow, his fancy fired with the national theme, may strike his harp to Alroy's wild career, and consecrate a name too long forgotten!"

"May love make thee a prophetess!" exclaimed Alroy, as he bent down his head and embraced her. "Sweetest," he whispered, "do not tarry. 'Tis better we should part in this firm mood."

She sprang from him, she clasped her hands.

"We will not part," she exclaimed, with energy: "I will die with thee."

"Blessed girl, be calm, be calm! Do not unman me."

"I am calm. See! I do not weep. Not a tear, not a tear. They are all in my heart."

"Go, go, my Miriam, angel of light and loveliness! Tarry no longer; I pray thee go. I would not think of the past. Let all my mind be centred in the present. Thy presence calls back our by-gone days and softens me too much. My duty to my uncle. Go, dearest, go!"

"And leave thee, leave thee to—O! my David, thou hast seen, thou hast heard—Honain!"

"No more, no more; let not that accursed name profane those holy lips. Raise not the demon in me."

"I am silent, I am silent. Yet, yet 'tis madness, 'tis madness! O! my brother, thou hast a fearful trial."

"The God of Israel is my refuge. He saved our fathers in the fiery furnace. He will save me."

"I am full of faith. I pray thee let me stay."

"I would be silent, I would be alone. I cannot speak, Miriam. I ask one favour, the last and dearest from her who has never had a thought but for my wishes—blessed being, leave me."

"I go. O! Alroy, farewell! Let me kiss you. Again, once more! Let me kneel and bless you. Brother, beloved brother, great and glorious brother, I am worthy of you: I will not weep. I am prouder this dread moment of your love, than all your foes can be of their hard triumph!"

XX.

BERUNA and Bathsheba received their mistress when she returned to the chamber. They marked her desolate air. She was silent, pale, and cold. They bore her to her couch, whereon she sat with a most listless and unmeaning look, her quivering lips parted, her eyes fixed upon the ground in vacant abstraction, and her arms languidly folded before her. Beruna stole behind her, and supported her back with pillows, and Bathsheba, unnoticed, wiped the slight foam from her mouth. Thus Miriam remained for several hours, her faithful maidens in vain watching for any indication of her self-consciousness.

Suddenly a trumpet sounded.

"What is that?" exclaimed Miriam, in a shrill voice, and looking up with a distracted glance.

Neither of them answered, since they were aware it betokened the going forth of Alroy to his trial.

Miriam remained in the same posture, and with the same expression of wild inquiry. Another trumpet sounded, and after that a shout of the people. Then she raised up her arms to heaven, and bowed her head—and died.

XXI.

"HAS the second trumpet sounded?"

"To be sure; run, run for a good place. Where is Abdallah?"

"Selling sherbet in the square. We shall find him. Has Alroy come forth?"

"Yes! he goes the other way. We shall be too late. Only think of Abdallah selling sherbet!"

"Father, let me go!"

"You will be in the way; you are too young; you will see nothing. Little boys should stay at home."

"No, they should not. I will go. You can put me on your shoulders."

"Where is Ibrahim? Where is Ali? We must all keep together. We shall have to fight for it. I wish Abdallah were here. Only think of his selling sherbet!"

"Keep straight forward. That is right. It is no use going that way. The bazaar is shut. There is Fakreddin, there is Osman Effendi. He has got a new page."

"So he has, I declare; and a very pretty boy too."

"Father, will they impale Alroy alive?"

"I am sure I do not know. Never ask questions, my dear. Little boys never should."

"Yes, they should. O my! I hope they will impale him alive. I shall be so disappointed if they do not."

"Keep to the left. Dash through the butcher's bazaar: that is open. All right, all right. Did you push me, sir?"

"Suppose I did push you—what then, sir?"

"Come along, don't quarrel. That is a Karasman. They think they are to do what they like. We are five to one to be sure, but still there is nothing like peace and quiet. I wish Abdallah were here with his stout shoulders. Only think of his selling sherbet!"

XXII.

THE square of the great mosque, the same spot where Jabaster met Abidan by appointment, was the intended scene of the pretended trial of Alroy. Thither by break of day the sight-loving thousands of the capital had repaired. In the centre of the square a large circle was described by a crimson cord, and guarded by Karasman soldiers; around this the swelling multitude pressed like the gathering waves of ocean, but whenever the tide set in with too great an impulse, the savage Karasmians appeared the ungovernable element by raising their brutal battle-axes, and breaking the crowns and belabouring the shoulders of their nearest victims. As the morning advanced, the terraces of the surrounding houses, covered with awnings, were crowded with spectators. All Bagdad was about. Since the marriage of Alroy, there had never been such a merry morn as the day of his impalement.

At one end of the circle was erected a magnificent throne. Halfway between the throne and the other end of the circle, but farther back, stood a company of Negro eunuchs, hideous to behold, who, clothed in white and armed with various instruments of torture, surrounded the enormous stakes, tall, thin, and sharp, that were prepared for the final ceremony.

The flourish of trumpets, the clash of cymbals, and the wild eac of the tambour, announced the arrival of Alp Arslan from the serail. An avenue to the circle had been preserved through the multitude. The royal procession might be traced as it wound through the populace by the sparkling and undulating line of plumes of honour, and the dazzling forms of the waving streamers, on which were inscribed the names of Allah and the prophet. Suddenly, amidst the bursts of music and the shouts of the spectators, many of whom on the terraces humbled themselves on their knees, Alp Arslan mounted the throne, around which ranged themselves his chief captains, and a deputation of the moolahs, and imams, and cadis, and other principal personages of the city.

The King of Karasme was very tall in stature, and somewhat meager in form. He was fair, or rather sandy-coloured, with a red beard, and blue eyes and a flat nose. The moment he was seated a trumpet was heard in the distance from the opposite quarter, and it was soon understood throughout the assembly that the great captive was about to appear.

A band of Karasman guards first entered the circle and ranged themselves round the cord with their backs to the spectators. After them came fifty of the principal Hebrew prisoners, with their hands bound behind them, but evidently more for form than security. To these succeeded a small covered wagon drawn by mules, and surrounded by guards, from which was led forth, his legs relieved from their manacles, but his hands still in heavy chains, David Alroy!

A universal buzz of blended sympathy, and wonder, and fear, and triumph, arose throughout the whole assembly. Each man involuntarily stirred. The vast populace moved to and fro in agitation. His garments soiled and tattered, his head bare, and his long locks drawn off his forehead, pale, and very thin, but still unsubdued, the late conqueror and Caliph of Bagdad threw around a calm and imperial glance upon those who were but recently his slaves.

The trumpets again sounded, order was called, and a crier announced that his highness Alp Arslan, the mighty sovereign of Karasme, their lord, protector and king, and avenger of Allah and the prophet, against all rebellious and evil-minded Jews and Giauours, was about to speak. There was a deep and universal silence, and then sounded a voice high as the eagle's in a storm.

"David Alroy!" said his conqueror. "You are brought here this day neither for trial nor for judgment. Captured in arms against your rightful sovereign, you are of course prepared, like other rebels, for your doom. Such a crime alone deserves the most avenging punishments. What then do you merit, who are loaded with a thousand infamies, who have blasphemed Allah and the prophet, and by the practice of magic arts, and the aid of the infernal powers, have broken the peace of kingdoms, occasioned infinite bloodshed, outraged all law, religion, and decency, misled the minds of your deluded votaries, and especially, by a direct compact with Eblis, by the most horrible spells and infamous incantations, captivated the senses of an illustrious princess, heretofore famous for the practice of every virtue, and a descendant of the prophet himself.

"Behold those stakes of palm wood sharper than a lance! The most terrible retribution that human ingenuity has devised for the guilty arts you. But your crimes baffle all human vengeance. Look forward for your satisfactory reward to those infernal powers by whose dark co-operation you have occasioned such disasters. Your punishment is public, that all men may know that the guilty never escape, and that, if your heart be visited by the slightest degree of compunction for your numerous victims, you may this day, by the frank confession of the irresistible means by which you seduced them, exonerate your victims from the painful and ignominious end with which, through your influence, they are now threatened. Mark, O assembled people, the infinite mercy of the vicegerent of Allah! He allows the wretched man to confess his infamy, and to save, by his confession, his unfortunate victims. I have said it. Glory to Allah!"

And the people shouted, "He has said it! He has said it! Glory to Allah! He is great, he is great! and Mohammed is his prophet!"

"Am I to speak?" inquired Alroy, when the tumult had subsided. The melody of his powerful voice commanded universal attention.

Alp Arslan nodded his head in approbation.

"King of Karasme! I stand here accused of many crimes. Now hear my answers. 'Tis said I am a rebel. My answer is, I am a prince, as thou art, of a sacred race, and far more ancient. I owe fealty to no one but to my God, and if I have broken that, I am yet to learn Alp Arslan is the avenger of his power. As for thy God and prophet, I know not them, though they acknowledge mine. 'Tis well understood in every polity, my people stand apart from other nations, and ever will, despite of suffering. So much for blasphemy; I am true to a deep faith of ancient days, which even the sacred writings of thy race still reverence. For the arts magical I practised, and the communion with infernal powers 'tis said I held, know, king, I raised the standard of my faith, by the direct commandment of my God, the great Creator of the universe. What need of magic, then? what need paltering with petty fiends, when backed by his omnipotence?"

My magic was his inspiration. Need I prove why, with such aid, my people crowded around me? The time will come from out our ancient seed, a worthier chief shall rise, not to be quelled, even by thee, sir.

"For that unhappy princess of whom something was said, with no great mercy as it seemed to me, that lady is my wife, my willing wife, the daughter of a caliph—still my wife, although your stakes may make her soon a widow. I stand not here to account for female fancies. Believe me, sire, she gave her beauty to my raptured arms with no persuasions but such as became a soldier and a king. It may seem strange to thee upon thy throne, the flower of Asia should be plucked by one so vile as I am, sir. Remember, the accidents of fortune are most strange. I was not always what I am. We have met before. There was a day, and that too not long since, when, but for the treachery of some knaves I mark there, fortune seemed half inclined to reverse our fates. Had I conquered, I trust I should have shown more mercy."

The King of Karasme was the most passionate of men. He had made a speech according to the advice and instructions of his counsellors, who had assured him, that the tone he adopted would induce Alroy to confess all that he required, and especially to vindicate the reputation of the Princess Schirene, who had already contrived to persuade Alp Arslan that she was the most injured of her sex. The King of Karasme stamped thrice on the platform of his throne, and exclaimed, with great fire, "By my beard ye have deceived me; the dog has confessed nothing!"

All the counsellors, and chief captains, and the moolabs, and the inams, and the cadis, and the principal personages of the city, were in great consternation. They immediately consulted together, and after much disputation, agreed that before they proceeded to extremities it was expedient to prove what the prisoner would not confess. A most venerable sheikh, clothed in flowing robes of green, with a long white beard, and a turban like the tower of Babel, then rose. His sacred reputation procured silence while he himself delivered a long prayer, supplicating Allah and the prophet to confound all blaspheming Jews and Giaours, and to pour forth words of truth from the mouths of religious men. And then the venerable sheikh summoned all witnesses against David Alroy. Immediately advanced Kisloch the Kourd, who being placed in an eminent position, the Cadi of Bagdad drew forth a scroll from his velvet bag, and read to him a deposition wherein the worthy Kisloch stated, that he first became acquainted with the prisoner, David Alroy, in some ruins in the desert; the haunt of banditti, of whom Alroy was the chief; that he, Kisloch, was a reputable merchant, and that his caravan had been plundered by these robbers, and he himself captured: that on the second night of his imprisonment, Alroy appeared to him in the likeness of a lion, and on the third, of a bull with fiery eyes: that he was in the habit of constantly transforming himself; that he frequently raised spirits; that at length, on one terrible night, Eblis himself came in great procession, and presented Alroy with the sceptre of Solomon Ben Daoud; and that the next day Alroy raised his standard, and soon after massacred Hassan Subah and his Seljuks, by the visible aid of many terrible demons. Calidas the Indian, the Guebre, and the Negro,

and a few congenial spirits, were not eclipsed in the satisfactory character of their evidence by the luminous testimony of Kisloch the Kourd. The irresistible career of the Hebrew conqueror was undeniably accounted for, and the honour of the Moslem arms, and the purity of the Moslem faith, were established in their pristine glory, and all their unsullied reputation. David Alroy was proved to be a child of Eblis, a sorcerer, and a dealer in charms and magical poisons. The people listened with horror and with indignation. They would have burst through the guards and have torn him to pieces, had not they been afraid of the Karasman battle-axes. So they consoled themselves with the prospect of his approaching tortures.

The Cadi of Bagdad bowed himself before the King of Karasme, and whispered at a respectful distance in the royal ear. The trumpets sounded, the criers enjoined silence, and the royal lips again moved.

"Hear, O ye people! and be wise. The chief cadi is about to read the deposition of the royal Princess Schirene, chief victim of the sorcerer."

And the deposition was read which stated that David Alroy possessed, and wore next to his heart, a talisman, given him by Eblis, of which the virtue was so great, that if once it were pressed to the heart of any woman, she was no longer mistress of her will. Such had been the unhappy fate of the daughter of the commander of the faithful.

"Is it so written?" inquired the captive.

"It is so written," replied the cadi, "and bears the imperial signature of the princess."

"It is a forgery."

The King of Karasme started from his throne, and in his rage nearly descended its steps. His face was like scarlet, his beard like a flame. A favourite minister ventured gently to restrain the royal robe.

"Kill the dog on the spot," muttered the King of Karasme.

"The princess is herself here," said the cadi, "to bear witness to the spells of which she was a victim, but from which, by the power of Allah and the prophet, she is now released."

Alroy started!

"Advance, royal princess," said the cadi, "and if the deposition thou hast heard be indeed true, condescend to hold up the imperial hand that adorned it with thy signature."

A band of eunuchs near the throne gave way, a female figure veiled to her feet appeared. She held up her hand amid the breathless agitation of the whole assembly; the ranks of the eunuchs again closed; a loud shriek was heard, and the veiled figure disappeared.

"I am ready for thy tortures, king," said Alroy, in a tone of deep depression. His firmness appeared to have deserted him. His eyes were cast upon the ground. Apparently he was buried in profound thought, or had delivered himself up to despair.

"Prepare the stakes," said Alp Arslan.

An involuntary, but universal shudder might be distinguished through the whole assembly.

A slave advanced, and offered Alroy a scroll. He recognised the Nubian who belonged to Honain. His former minister informed him that he was at hand, that the terms he offered in the dungeon might even yet be granted, that if Alroy would, as he doubted not, as he entreated him, accept them,

he was to place the scroll in his bosom, but that if he were still inexorable, still madly determined on a horrible and ignominious end, he was to tear the scroll, and throw it into the arena. Instantly Alroy took the scroll, and with great energy tore it into a thousand pieces. A puff of wind carried the fragments far and wide. The mob fought for these last memorials of David Alroy; and this little incident created a great confusion.

In the mean time the negroes prepared the instruments of torture and of death.

"The obstinacy of this Jewish dog makes me mad," said the King of Karasme to his courtiers. "I will hold some parley with him before he dies." The favourite minister entreated his sovereign to be content; but the royal beard grew so red, and the royal eyes flashed forth such terrible sparks of fire, that even the favourite minister at length gave way.

The trumpets sounded, the criers called silence, and the voice of Alp Arslan was again heard.

"Thou dog, dost see what is preparing for thee? Dost know what awaits thee in the halls of thy master Eblis? Can a Jew be influenced even by false pride? Is not life sweet? Is it not better to be my slipper-bearer than to be impaled?"

"Magnanimous Alp Arslan," replied Alroy, in a tone of undisguised contempt; "thinkest thou that any torture can be equal to the recollection that I have been conquered by thee?"

"By my beard, he mocks me," exclaimed the Karasman monarch, "he defies me. Touch not my robe. I will parley with him. Ye see no farther than a hooded hawk, ye sons of a blind mother. This is a sorcerer; he hath yet some master-spell; he will yet save himself. He will fly into the air, or sink into the earth. He laughs at our tortures." The King of Karasme precipitately descended the steps of his throne, followed by his favourite minister, and his counsellors, and chief captains, and the cadis, and the moolahs, and the imams, and the principal personages of the city.

"Sorcerer!" exclaimed Alp Arslan, "insolent sorcerer! base son of a base mother! dog of dogs! dost thou defy us? Does thy master Eblis whisper hope? Dost thou laugh at our punishments? Wilt thou fly into the air? wilt thou sink into the earth? eh, eh? Is it so, is it so?" The breathless monarch ceased, from the exhaustion of passion. He tore his beard up by the roots, he stamped with uncontrollable rage.

"Thou art wiser than thy counsellors, royal Arslan; I do defy thee. My master, although not Eblis, has not deserted me. I laugh at thy punishments. Thy tortures I despise. I shall both sink into the earth, and mount into the air. Art thou answered?"

"By my beard," exclaimed the enraged Arslan, "I am answered. Let Eblis save thee if he can." and the King of Karasme, the most famous master of the sabre in Asia, drew his blade like lightning from its sheath, and carried off the head of Alroy at a stroke. It fell, and as it fell, a smile of triumphant derision seemed to play upon the dying features of the hero, and to ask of his enemies, "Where now are all their tortures?"*

* In the *German Davidis of Ganz* translated into Latin by Vorstius, Lug. 1654, is an extract from a Hebrew MS. containing an account of Alroy. I subjoin a passage respecting his death for the learned reader. "*Scribit R. Maimonides, Sultatum interrogasse illum, nun esset Messias, et dixisse, Sum, et quavisse ab illo regem, quodnam signum habes? Et respondisse, ut præcideret caput, ut se in vitam reversurum. Tunc regem jussisse et caput ejus amputarent, et obisise; sed hoc illi dixisse, ne gravibus tormentis ipsum enecaret.*"

"Septem annis ante decretum hoc, de quo supra locuti sumus, habuerunt Israelitæ vehementes angustias propter virum Belial, qui seipsum fecit Messiam; et rex atque principes valde accensi sunt exandescencia contra Judæos, ut dicerent, eos querere interitum regni sui Messia petitione. Maledicti hujus nomen vocatum fuit David El-David aut Alroy ex urbe Omadia; et erat ibi cæcus magnus, circiter mille familias devotes, refertas, honestas et felices continens. Atque Ecclesie hæc erat principum cætuump habitantium circa fluvium Sabathion, atque erant plus quam centum Ecclesie. Erat hic initium regionis Medie, atque lingua eorum erat idiom Thargum, inde autem usque ad regionem Golan est iter 50 dierum, et sunt sub imperio Regis Persiæ, cui dant quotannis tributum a 15 annis et ultra aureum unum. Vir autem hic David El-David studuit coram principe captivitate Chasdai et coram eccellente Scholarcha in urbe Bagdad, qui eximus erant sapiens in Thalmude et omnibus scientiis Exoticis, atque in omnibus libris divinatorum, magorum et Chaldeorum. Hic vero David El-David ex audacia et arrogantia cordis sui elevavit manum contra regem, et collegit Judæos habitantes in monte Choptan, et seduxit eos, ut exirent in prælium cum omnibus gentibus. Ostendit illi signa; sed ignorabant quam virtute; erant enim homines, qui asserbant istud per modum magiæ et præstigationis fieri, alii dicebant, potentiam ejus magnam esse propter manum Dei. Qui consortium ejus veniebant, vocabant eum Messiam, eumque laudabant et extollabant.

* * * * *

"In regno Persiæ alio quodam tempore surrexit vir quidam Judæus, et seipsum fecit Messiam, atque valde prospere egit; et numerus ex Israele ad illum confuxit populus. Cum vero audiret rex omnem ejus potentiam, atque propositum ejus esse descendere in prælium cum ipso, misit ad Judæos congregatos in regione sua, fisque dixit: Nisi egerent cum hocce viro, ut e medio tolleir, certo sciant, se eos omnes gladio interempturum et uno die infantes ac feminas deleburum. Tunc congregatus est totus populus Israelis simul, atque contendit ad virum illum, ceciditque coram; illo in terram; vehementer supplicatus est, clamavit atque ploravit, ut reveteretur a visa sua; et cur seipsum et omnes afflictos conjiceret in periculum; jam enim regem jurasse se immisurum eis gladium, et quomodo posset intueri afflictionem omnium cætuump Persiæ. Respondit, *Veni servatum vos, et non vultis. Quem meluistis? Quisnam coram me consistet? Et quid ager rex Persiæ. ut non reformidet me et gladium meum?* Interrogarunt eum, quodnam signum haberet quod esset Messias. Respondit, *QUIA FELICITER REM GERERET, NEQUE MESSIAM OPUS HABERE ALIO SIGNO.* Responderunt multos similiter egisse, neque prospera usus fuisse fortuna: tunc rejecit eos a facie sua cum superba indignatione."

THE RISE OF ISKANDER.

I.

THE sun had set behind the mountains, and the rich plain of Athens was suffused with the violet glow of a Grecian eve. A light breeze rose; the olive groves awoke from their noonday trance, and rustled with returning animation, and the pennons of the Turkish squadron, that lay at anchor in the harbour of Piræus, twinkled in the lively air. From one gate of the city the women came forth in procession to the fountain; from another, a band of sumptuous horsemen sallied out, and threw their wanton javelins in the invigorating sky, as they galloped over the plain. The voice of birds, the buzz of beauteous insects, the breath of beauteous flowers, the quivering note of the nightingale, the pittering call of the grasshopper, and the perfume of the violet, shrinking from the embrace of the twilight breeze, filled the purple air with music and odour.

A solitary being stood upon the towering crag of the Acropolis, amid the ruins of the temple of Minerva, and gazed upon the inspiring scene. Around him rose the matchless memorials of antique art; immortal columns whose symmetry baffles modern proportion, serene caryatides, bearing with greater grace a graceful burden, carvings of delicate precision, and friezes breathing with heroic life. Apparently the stranger, though habited as a Moslem, was not insensible to the genius of the locality, nor indeed would his form and countenance have misbecome a contemporary of Pericles and Phidias. In the prime of life, and far above the common stature, but with a frame, the muscular power of which was even exceeded by its almost ideal symmetry, his high white forehead, his straight profile, his oval countenance, and his curling lip, exhibited the same visage that had inspired the sculptor of the surrounding demi-gods.

The dress of the stranger, although gorgeous, was, however, certainly not classic. A crimson shawl was wound round his head, and glittered with a trembling aigrette of diamonds. His vest, which sat tight to his form, was of green velvet, richly embroidered with gold and pearls. Over this he wore a very light jacket of crimson velvet, equally embroidered, and lined with sable. He wore also the full white camese common among the Albanians; and while his feet were protected by sandals, the lower part of his legs was guarded by greaves of embroidered green velvet. From a broad belt of scarlet leather peeped forth the jewelled hilts of a variety of daggers, and by his side was an enormous cimeter, in a scabbard of chased silver.

The stranger gazed upon the wide prospect before him with an air of pensive abstraction. "Beautiful Greece," he exclaimed, "thou art still my

country. A mournful lot is mine, a strange and mournful lot, yet not uncheered by hope. I am at least a warrior; and this arm, though trained to war against thee, will not well forget, in the quick hour of battle, the blood that flows within it. Themistocles saved Greece and died a satrap; I am bred one—let me reverse our lots, and die at least a patriot."

At this moment the evening hymn to the Virgin arose from a neighbouring convent. The stranger started as the sacred melody floated towards him, and taking a small golden cross from his heart, he kissed it with devotion, and then descending the steep of the citadel, entered the city.

He proceeded along the narrow winding streets of Athens until he at length arrived in front of a marble palace, in the construction of which the architect had certainly not consulted the surrounding models which time had spared to him, but which, however it might have offended a classic taste, presented altogether a magnificent appearance. Half a dozen guards, whose shields and helmets somewhat oddly contrasted with two pieces of cannon, one of which was ostentatiously placed on each side of the portal, and which had been presented to the Prince of Athens by the republic of Venice, lounging before the entrance, and paid their military homage to the stranger as he passed them. He passed them and entered a large quadrangular garden, surrounded by arcades, supported by a considerable number of thin, low pillars, of barbarous workmanship and various-coloured marbles. In the midst of the garden rose a fountain, whence the bubbling waters flowed in artificial channels through vistas of orange and lemon trees. By the side of the fountain, on a luxurious couch, his eyes fixed upon a richly-illuminated volume, reposed Nicæus, the youthful Prince of Athens.

"Ah! is it you?" said the prince, looking up with a smile, as the stranger advanced. "You have arrived just in time to remind me that we must do something more than read the Persæ—we must act it."

"My dear Nicæus," replied the stranger, "I have arrived only to bid you farewell."

"Farewell!" exclaimed the prince in a tone of surprise and sorrow, and he rose from the couch. "Why! what is this?"

"It is too true," said the stranger, and he led the way down one of the walks. "Events have occurred which entirely baffle all our plans and prospects, and placed me in a position as difficult as it is harrowing. Hunniades has suddenly crossed the Danube in great force, and carried every thing before him. I am ordered to proceed to Albania instantly, and to repair to the camp at the head of the Epirots."

"Indeed!" said Nicæus, with a thoughtful air. "My letters did not prepare me for this. 'Tis sudden! Is Amurath himself in the field?"

"No; Karam Bey commands. I have accounted for my delay to the sultan by pretended difficulties in our treaty, and have held out the prospect of a large tribute."

"When we are plotting that that tribute should be paid no longer!" added Nicæus with a smile.

"Alas! my dear friend," replied the Turkish commander, "my situation has now become critical. Hitherto my services for the Moslem in have been confined to acting against nations of their own faith. I am now suddenly summoned to combat against my secret creed, and the best allies of what I must yet call my secret country. The movement, it appears to me, must be made now or never, and I cannot conceal from myself, that it never could have been prosecuted under less auspicious circumstances."

"What, you desponding!" exclaimed Nicæus, "then I must despair. Your sanguine temper has alone supported me throughout all our dangerous hopes."

"And Æschylus?" said the stranger smiling.

"And Æschylus, certainly," replied Nicæus; "but I have lived to find even Æschylus insipid. I pant for action."

"It may be nearer than we can foresee," replied the stranger. "There is a God who fashions all things. He will not desert a righteous cause. He knoweth that my thoughts are as pure as my situation is difficult. I have some dim ideas still brooding in my mind, but we will not discuss them now. I must away, dear prince. The breeze serves fairly. Have you ever seen Hunniades?"

"I was educated at the court of Transylvania," replied Nicæus, looking down with a somewhat embarrassed air. "He is a famous knight, Christendom's chief bulwark."

The Turkish commander sighed. "When we meet again," he said, "may we meet with brighter hopes and more buoyant spirits. At present, I must, indeed, say farewell."

The prince turned with a dejected countenance, and pressed his companion to his heart. "'Tis a sad end," said he, "to all our happy hours and lofty plans."

"You are as yet too young to quarrel with fortune," replied the stranger, "and, for myself, I have not yet settled my accounts with her. However, for the present, farewell, dear Nicæus!"

"Farewell," replied the Prince of Athens, "Farewell, dear Iskander!"

II.

ISKANDER was the youngest son of the Prince of Epirus, who, with the other Grecian princes, had, at the commencement of the reign of Amurath the Second, in vain resisted the progress of the Turkish arms in Europe. The Prince of Epirus had obtained peace by yielding his four sons as hostages to the Turkish sovereign, who engaged that they should be educated in all the accomplishments of their rank, and with a due deference to their faith. On the death of the Prince of Epirus, however, Amurath could not resist the opportunity that then offered itself of adding to his empire the rich principality he had long coveted. A Turkish force instantly marched into Epirus, and seized upon Croia,

the capital city, and the children of its late ruler were doomed to death. The beauty, talents, and valour of the youngest son, saved him, however from the fate of his poisoned brothers. Iskander was educated at Adrianople, in the Moslem faith, and as he, at a very early age, excelled in feats of arms all the Moslem warriors, he became a prime favourite of the sultan, and speedily rose in his service to the highest rank.

At this period the irresistible progress of the Turkish arms was the subject of alarm throughout all Christendom.

Constantinople, then the capital of the Greek empire, had already been more than once besieged by the predecessors of Amurath, and had only been preserved by fortunate accidents and humiliating terms. The despots of Bosnia, Servia, and Bulgaria, and the Grecian princes of Ætolia, Macedon, Epirus, Athens, Phocis, Bœotia, and indeed of all the regions to the straits of Corinth, were tributaries to Amurath, and the rest of Europe was only preserved from his grasp by the valour of the Hungarians and the Poles, whom a fortunate alliance had now united under the sovereignty of Uladislans, who, incited by the pious eloquence of the Cardinal of St. Angelo, the legate of the pope, and, yielding to the tears and supplications of the despot of Servia, had, at the time our story opens, quitted Buda, at the head of an immense army, crossed the Danube, and joining his valiant viceroy, the famous John Hunniades, vaivode of Transylvania, defeated the Turks with great slaughter, relieved all Bulgaria, and pushed on to the base of Mount Hæmus, known in modern times as the celebrated Balkan. Here the Turkish general, Karam Bey, awaited the Christians, and hither to his assistance was Iskander commanded to repair at the head of a body of janissaries, who had accompanied him to Greece, and the tributary Epirots.

Had Iskander been influenced by vulgar ambition, his loftiest desires might have been fully gratified by the career which Amurath projected for him. The Turkish sultan destined for the Grecian prince the hand of one of his daughters, and the principal command of his armies. He lavished upon him the highest dignities and boundless wealth; and, whether it arose from a feeling of remorse, or of affection for a warrior, whose unexampled valour and unrivalled skill had already added some of the finest provinces of Asia to his rule, it is certain that Iskander might have exercised over Amurath a far greater degree of influence than was enjoyed by any other of his courtiers. But the heart of Iskander responded with no sympathy to these flattering favours. His Turkish education could never eradicate from his memory the consciousness that he was a Greek; and although he was brought up in the Moslem faith, he had, at an early period of his career, secretly recurred to the creed of his Christian fathers. He beheld in Amurath the murderer of his dearest kinsmen, and the oppressor of his country; and although a certain calmness of temper, and coolness of judgment, which very early developed themselves in his character, prevented him from ever giving any indication of his secret feelings, Iskander had long meditated on the exalted duty of freeing his country.

Despatched to Greece, to arrange the tributes and the treaties of the Grecian princes, Iskander became acquainted with the young Nicæus; and

their acquaintance soon matured into friendship. Nicæus was inexperienced: but nature had not intended him for action. The young Prince of Athens would loiter by the side of a fountain, and dream of the wonders of old days. Surrounded by his eunuchs, his priests, and his courtiers, he envied Leonidas, and would have emulated Themistocles. He was passionately devoted to the ancient literature of his country, and had the good taste, rare at that time, to prefer Demosthenes and Lysias to Chrysostom and Gregory, and the choruses of the Grecian theatre to the hymns of the Greek church. The sustained energy and noble simplicity of the character of Iskander, seemed to recall to the young prince the classic heroes, over whom he was so often musing, while the enthusiasm and fancy of Nicæus, and all that apparent weakness of will, and those quick vicissitudes of emotion, to which men of a fine susceptibility are subject, equally engaged the sympathy of the more vigorous, and constant, and experienced mind of his companion.

To Nicæus, Iskander had, for the first time in his life, confided much of his secret heart; and the young prince fired at the inspiring tale. Often they consulted over the fortunes of their country, and, excited by their mutual invention, at length even dared to hope that they might effect its deliverance, when Iskander was summoned to the army. It was a mournful parting. Both of them felt that the last few months of their lives had owed many charms to their companionship. The parting of friends, united by sympathetic tastes, is always painful; and friends, unless their sympathy subsist, had much better never meet. Iskander stepped into the ship, sorrowful, but serene; Nicæus returned to his palace moody and fretful; lost his temper with his courtiers, and, when he was alone, even shed tears.

III.

THREE weeks had elapsed since the parting of Iskander and Nicæus, when the former, at the head of ten thousand men, entered, by a circuitous route, the defiles of Mount Hæmus, and approached the Turkish camp, which had been pitched upon a vast and elevated table-ground, commanded on all sides by superior heights, which, however, were fortified and well garrisoned by janissaries. The Epirots halted, and immediately prepared to raise their tents, while their commander, attended by a few of his officers, instantly proceeded to the pavilion of Karam Bey.

The arrival of Iskander diffused great joy among the soldiery; and as he passed through the encampment, the exclamations of the Turkish warriors announced how ready they were to be led to the charge by a chieftain who had been ever successful. A guard of honour, by the orders of Karam Bey, advanced, to conduct Iskander to his presence; and soon, entering the pavilion, the Grecian prince exchanged courtesies with the Turkish general. After the formal compliments had passed, Karam Bey waved his hand, and the pavilion was cleared, with the exception of Mousa, the chief secretary, and favourite of Karam. "You have arrived in good time, Iskander, to assist in the destruction of the Christian dogs," said the bey. "Flushed with their accursed success, they have advanced too far. Twice they have endeavoured to penetrate the mountains; and each time they

have been forced to retire with great loss. The passages are well barricaded with timber and huge fragments of rock. The dogs have lost all heart, and are sinking under the joint sufferings of hunger and cold. Our scouts tell me they exhibit symptoms of retreat. We must rush down from the mountains, and annihilate them."

"Is Hunniades here in person?" inquired Iskander.

"He is here," replied Karam, "in person—the dog of dogs! Come, Iskander, his head would be a fine Ramadan present to Amurath. 'Tis a head worth three tails, I guess?"

Mousa, the chief secretary, indulged in some suppressed laughter at this joke. Iskander smiled.

"If they retreat we must assuredly attack them," observed Iskander, musingly. "I have a persuasion that Hunniades and myself will soon meet."

"If there be truth in the prophet!" exclaimed Karam, "I have no doubt of it. Hunniades is reserved for you, bey. We shall hold up our heads at court yet, Iskander. You have had letters lately?"

"Some slight words."

"No mention of us, of course?"

"Nothing, except some passing praise of your valour and discretion."

"We do our best, we do our best. Will Isa Bey have Ætolia, think you?"

"I have no thoughts. Our royal father will not forget his children, and Isa Bey is a most valiant chieftain."

"You heard not that he was coming here?" inquired Karam.

"Have you?" responded the cautious Iskander.

"A rumour, a rumour," replied Karam. "He is at Adrianople, think you?"

"It may be so: I am, you know, from Athens."

"True, true. We shall beat them, Iskander, we shall beat them."

"For myself, I feel sanguine," replied the prince, and he arose to retire. "I must at present to my men. We must ascertain more accurately the movements of the Christians before we decide on our own. I am inclined myself to reconnoitre them. How far may it be?"

"There is not room to form our array between them and the mountains," replied Karam.

"'Tis well. Success attend the true believers! By to-morrow's dawn we shall know more."

IV.

ISKANDER returned to his men. Night was coming on. Fires and lights blazed and sparkled in every direction. The air was clear but very cold. He entered his tent, and muffling himself up in his pelisse of sables, he mounted his horse, and declining any attendance, rode for some little distance, until he had escaped from the precincts of the camp. Then he turned his horse towards one of the wildest passes of the mountain, and galloping at great speed, never stopped until he had gained a considerable ascent. The track became steep and rugged. The masses of loose stone rendered his progress slow; but his Anatolian charger still bore him at intervals bravely, and in three hours' time he had gained the summit of Mount Hæmus. A brilliant moon flooded the broad plains of Bulgaria with shadowy light. At the base of the mountainous range, the red watch-fires denoted the situation of the Christian camp.

Iskander proceeded down the descent with an audacious rapidity; but his charger was thoroughbred, and his moments were golden. Ere midnight, he had reached the outposts of the enemy, and was challenged by a sentinel.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend to Christendom."

"The word?"

"I have it not—nay, calmly. I am alone, but I am not unarmed. I do not know the word. I come from a far country, and bear important tidings to the great Hunniades; conduct me to that chief."

"May I be crucified if I will," responded the sentinel, "before I know who and what you are. Come, keep off, unless you wish to try the effect of a Polish lance," continued the sentinel; " 'tis something, I assure you, not less awkward than your Greek fire, if Greek indeed you be."

"My friend, you are a fool," said Iskander, "but time is too precious to argue any longer." So saying, the Turkish commander dismounted, and taking up the brawny sentinel in his arms with the greatest ease, threw him over his shoulder, and, threatening the astounded soldier with instant death if he struggled, covered him with his pelisse, and entered the camp.

They approached a watch-fire, around which several soldiers were warming themselves.

"Who goes there?" inquired a second sentinel.

"A friend to Christendom," answered Iskander.

"The word?"

Iskander hesitated.

"The word, or I'll let fly," said the sentinel, elevating his cross-bow.

"The Bridge of Buda," instantly replied the terrified prisoner beneath the pelisse of Iskander.

"Why did not you answer before, then?" said one of the guards.

"And why do you mock us by changing your voice?" said another. "Come, get on with you, and no more jokes."

Iskander proceeded through a street of tents, in some of which were lights, but all of which were silent. At length he met the esquire of a Polish knight returning from a convivial meeting, not a little elevated.

"Who are you?" inquired Iskander.

"I am an esquire," replied the gentleman.

"A shrewd man, I doubt not, who would make his fortune," replied Iskander. "You must know great things have happened. Being on guard, I have taken a prisoner, who has deep secrets to divulge to the Lord Hunniades. Thither, to his pavilion, I am now bearing him. But he is a stout barbarian, and almost too much for me. Assist me in carrying him to the pavilion of Hunniades, and you shall have all the reward and half the fame."

"You are a very civil spoken young gentleman," said the esquire. "I think I know your voice. Your name, if I mistake not, is Leckinski?"

"A relative. We had a common ancestor."

"I thought so. I know the Leckinskies ever by their voice. I am free to help you on the terms you mention—all the reward and half the fame. 'Tis a strong barbarian, is it. We cannot cut its throat, or it will not divulge. All the reward and half the fame! I will be a knight to-morrow. It seems a sort of fish, and has a smell."

The esquire seized the shoulders of the prisoner, who would have spoken had he not been terrified by the threats of Iskander, who carrying the legs

of the sentinel, allowed the Polish gentleman to lead the way to the pavilion of Hunniades. Thither they soon arrived; and Iskander, dropping his burden, and leaving the prisoner without to the charge of his assistant, entered the pavilion of the general of the Hungarians.

He was stopped in a small outer apartment by an officer, who inquired his purpose, and to whom he repeated his desire to see the Hungarian leader, without loss of time, on important business. The officer hesitated; but, summoning several guards, left Iskander in their custody, and stepping behind a curtain, disappeared. Iskander heard voices, but could distinguish no words. Soon the officer returned, and, ordering the guards to disarm and search Iskander, directed the Grecian prince to follow him. Drawing aside the curtain, Iskander and his attendant entered a low apartment of considerable size. It was hung with skins. A variety of armour and dresses were piled on couches. A middle-aged man, of majestic appearance, muffled up in a pelisse of furs, with long chestnut hair, and a cap of crimson velvet and ermine, was walking up and down the apartment, and dictating some instructions to a person who was kneeling on the ground, and writing by the bright flame of a brazen lamp. The bright flame of the brazen lamp fell full upon the face of the secretary. Iskander beheld a most beautiful woman.

She looked up as Iskander entered. Her large dark eyes glanced through his soul. Her raven hair descended to her shoulders in many curls on each side of her face, and was braided with strings of immense pearls. A broad cap of white fox-skin crowned her whiter forehead. Her features were very small, but sharply moulded, and a delicate tint gave animation to her clear fair cheek. She looked up as Iskander entered, with an air rather of curiosity than embarrassment.

Hunniades stopped, and examined his visiter with a searching inquisition. "Whence come you?" inquired the Hungarian chieftain.

"From the Turkish camp," was the answer.

"An envoy or a deserter?"

"Neither."

"What then?"

"A convert."

"Your name?"

"Lord Hunniades," said Iskander, "that is for your private ear. I am unarmed, and were I otherwise, the first knight of Christendom can scarcely fear. I am one in birth and rank your equal; if not in fame, at least, I trust, in honour. My time is all-precious: I can scarcely stay here while my horse breathes. Dismiss your attendant."

Hunniades darted a glance at his visiter which would have baffled a weaker brain, but Iskander stood the scrutiny calm and undisturbed. "Go, Stanislaus," said the vaivode to the officer. "This lady, sir," continued the chieftain, "is my daughter, and one from whom I have no secrets."

Iskander bowed lowly as the officer disappeared.

"And now," said Hunniades, "to business. Your purpose?"

"I am a Grecian prince, and a compulsory ally of the Moslem. In a word, my purpose here is to arrange a plan by which we may effect at the same time your triumph and my freedom."

"To whom, then, have I the honour of speaking?" inquired Hunniades.

"My name, great Hunniades, is perhaps not

altogether unknown to you: they call me Iskander."

"What, the right arm of Amurath, the conqueror of Caramania, the flower of Turkish chivalry? Do I indeed behold that matchless warrior?" exclaimed Hunniades, and he held forth his hand to his guest, and ungirding his own sword, offered it to the prince. "Iduna," continued Hunniades, to his daughter, "you at length behold Iskander."

"My joy is great, sir," replied Iduna, "if I indeed rightly understand that we may count the Prince Iskander a champion of the cross."

Iskander took from his heart his golden crucifix, and kissed it before her. "This has been my companion and consolation for long years, lady," said Iskander; "you, perhaps, know my mournful history, Hunniades. Hitherto, my pretended sovereign has not required me to bare my cimeter against my Christian brethren. That hour, however, has at length arrived, and it has decided me to adopt a line of conduct long meditated. Karam Bey, who is aware of your necessities, the moment you commence your retreat, will attack you. I shall command his left wing. In spite of his superior power and position, draw up in array, and meet him with confidence. I propose, at a convenient moment in the day, to withdraw my troops, and, with the Epirots, hasten to my native country, and at once raise the standard of independence. It is a bold measure, but success is the child of audacity. We must assist each other with mutual diversions. Single-handed it is in vain for me to commence a struggle, which, with all adventitious advantages, will require the utmost exertion of energy, skill, and patience. But if yourself and the King Uladislaus occupy the armies of Amurath in Bulgaria, I am not without hope of ultimate success, since I have to inspire me all the most urgent interests of humanity, and combat, at the same time, for my God, my country, and my lawful crown."

"Brave prince, I pledge you my troth," said Hunniades, coming forward, and seizing his hand; "and while Iskander and Hunniades live, they will never cease until they have achieved their great and holy end."

"It is a solemn compact," said Iskander, "more sacred than if registered by the scribes of Christendom. Lady Iduna, your prayers!"

"They are ever with the champions of the cross," replied the daughter of Hunniades. She rose, the large cloak in which she was enveloped, fell from her exquisite form. "Noble Iskander, this rosary is from the holy sepulchre," continued Iduna; "wear it for the sake and memory of that blessed Saviour, who died for our sins."

Iskander held forth his arm and touched her delicate hand as he received the rosary, which, pressing to his lips, he placed round his neck.

"Great Hunniades," said the Grecian prince, "I must cross the mountains before dawn. Let me venture to entreat that we should hear to-morrow that the Christian camp is in retreat."

"Let it be even so," said the Hungarian, after some thought, "and may to-morrow's sun bring brighter days to Christendom." And with these words terminated the brief and extraordinary visit of Iskander to the Christian general.

V.

THE intelligence of the breaking up of the Christian camp, and the retreat of the Christian army,

soon reached the divan of Karam Bey, who immediately summoned Iskander to consult on the necessary operations. The chieftains agreed that instant pursuit was indispensable, and soon the savage Hæmus poured forth from its green bosom, swarms of that light cavalry which was perhaps even a more fatal arm of the Turkish power than the famous janissaries themselves. They hovered on the rear of the retreating Christians, charged the wavering, captured the unwary. It was impossible to resist their sudden and impetuous movements, which rendered their escape as secure as their onset was overwhelming. Wearied at length by the repeated assaults, Hunniades, who, attended by some chosen knights, had himself repaired to the rear, gave orders for the army to halt and offer battle.

Their pursuers instantly withdrew to a distance, and gradually forming into two divisions, awaited the arrival of the advancing army of the Turks. The Moslem came forward in fierce array, and with the sanguine courage inspired by expected triumph. Very conspicuous was Iskander bounding in his crimson vest upon his ebony steed, and waving his gleaming cimeter.

The janissaries charged calling upon Allah! with an awful shout. The Christian knights, invoking the Christian saints, received the Turks at the point of their lances. But many a noble lance was shivered that morn, and many a bold rider and worthy steed bit the dust of that field, borne down by the irresistible numbers of their fierce adversaries. Everywhere the balls and the arrows whistled through the air, and sometimes an isolated shriek, heard amid the general clang, announced another victim to the fell and mysterious agency of the Greek fire.

Hunniades, while he performed all the feats of an approved warrior, watched with anxiety the disposition of the Turkish troops. Hitherto, from the nature of their position, but a portion of both armies had interfered in the contest, and as yet, Iskander had kept aloof. But now, as the battle each instant raged with more fury, and it was evident that ere long the main force of both armies must be brought into collision, Hunniades, with a terrible suspense, watched whether the Grecian prince was or even capable of executing this fulfilment, the concealment from himself against the cross.

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He deems that a battle is not to be won by loitering under a shadowy tree. Now I differ with him, and I even mean to win this day by such a piece of truancy. However, it may certainly now be time for more active work. You smile encouragement, good Mousa. Giorgio, Demetrius, to your duty!"

At these words, two stout Epirots advanced to the unfortunate secretary, seized and bound him, and placed him on horseback before one of their comrades.

"Now all who love their country follow me!" exclaimed Iskander. So saying, and at the head of five thousand horsemen, Iskander quitted the field at a rapid pace.

VI.

WITH incredible celerity Iskander and his cavalry dashed over the plains of Roumelia, and never halted except for short and hurried intervals of rest and repose, until they had entered the mountainous borders of Epirus, and were within fifty miles of its capital, Croia. On the eve of entering the kingdom of his fathers, Iskander ordered his guards to produce the chief secretary of Karam Bey. Exhausted with fatigue, vexation, and terror, the disconsolate Mousa was led forward.

"Cheer up, worthy Mousa!" said Iskander, lying his length on the green turf. "We have had a sharp ride; but I doubt not we shall soon find ourselves, by the blessing of God, in good quarters. There is a city at hand which they call Croia, in which once, as the rumour runs, the son of my father should not have had to go seek for an entrance. No matter. Methinks, worthy Mousa, thou art the only man in our society that can sign thy name. Come, now, write me an order signed Karam Bey to the governor of this said city, for its delivery up to the valiant champion of the crescent, Iskander, and thou shalt ride in future at a pace more suitable to a secretary."

The worthy Mousa humbled himself to the ground, and then taking his writing materials from his girdle, inscribed the desired order, and delivered it to Iskander, who, glancing at the inscription, rushed it into his vest.

"I shall proceed at once to Croia, with a few men," said Iskander; "do you, my bold comrade, this eve in various parties, and at the second night, depart for his now remote period to his mountains, de-

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strangers, or their own seed." So saying, he spurred his horse, and with panting hearts and smiling faces, Iskander and his company had soon arrived in the vicinity of the city.

The city was surrounded by a beautiful region of corn-fields and fruit trees. The road was arched with the overhanging boughs. The birds chirped on every spray. It was a blithe and merry morn. Iskander plucked a bunch of olives as he cantered along. "Dear friends," he said, looking round with an inspiring smile, "let us gather our first harvest!" And, thereupon, each putting forth his rapid hand, seized, as he rushed by, the emblem of possession, and following the example of his leader, placed it in his cap.

They arrived at the gates of the city, which was strongly garrisoned; and Iskander, followed by his train, galloped up the height of the citadel. Alighting from his horse, he was ushered into the divan of the governor, an ancient pasha, who received the conqueror of Caramania with all the respect that became so illustrious a companion of the crescent. After the usual forms of ceremonious hospitality, Iskander, with a courteous air, presented him the order for delivering up the citadel; and the old pasha, resigning himself to the loss of his post with oriental submission, instantly delivered the keys of the citadel and town to Iskander, and requested permission immediately to quit the late scene of his command.

Quitting the citadel, Iskander now proceeded through the whole town, and in the afternoon reviewed the Turkish garrison in the great square. As the late governor was very anxious to quit Croia that very day, Iskander insisted on a considerable portion of the garrison accompanying him as a guard of honour, and returning the next morning. The rest he divided in several quarters, and placed the gates in charge of his own companions.

At midnight the Epirots, faithful to their orders, arrived and united beneath the walls of the city, and after interchanging the signals agreed upon, the gates were opened. A large body instantly marched and secured the citadel. The rest, conducted by appointed leaders, surrounded the Turks in their quarters. And suddenly, in the noon of night, in that great city, arose a clang so dreadful that people leaped up from their sleep and stared with stupor. Instantly the terrace of every house blazed with torches, and it became as light as day. Troops of armed men were charging down the streets brandishing their cimeters and yataghans, and exclaiming, "The Cross, the Cross!"—"Liberty!"—"Greece!"—"Iskander and Epirus!" The townsmen recognised their countrymen by their language and their dress. The name of Iskander acted as a spell. They stopped not to inquire. A magic sympathy at once persuaded them that this great man had, by the grace of heaven, recurred to the creed and country of his fathers. And so every townsman, seizing the nearest weapon, with a spirit of patriotic frenzy, rushed into the streets, crying out, "The Cross, the Cross! Liberty! Greece! Iskander and Epirus!" Ay! even the women lost all womanly fears, and stimulated instead of soothing the impulse of their masters. They fetched them arms, they held the torches, they sent them forth with vows, and prayers, and imprecations, their children clinging to their robes, and repeating with enthusiasm, phrases which they could not comprehend

As the Turks fought with the desperation of men who feel that they are betrayed, and must be victims. The small and isolated bodies were soon massacred, and with cold steel, for at this time, although some of the terrible inventions of modern warfare were introduced, their use was not general. The citadel, indeed, was fortified with cannon; but the greater part of the soldiery trusted to their crooked swords, and their unerring javelins. The main force of the Turkish garrison had been quartered in an old palace of the archbishop, situated in the middle of the city on a slightly rising and open ground, a massy building of rustic stone. Here the Turks, although surrounded, defended themselves desperately, using their cross-bows with terrible effect; and hither, the rest of the city being now secured, Iskander himself prepared to achieve its complete deliverance.

The Greeks had endeavoured to carry the principal entrance of the palace by main force, but the strength of the portal had resisted their utmost exertions, and the arrows of the besieged had at length forced them to retire to a distance. Iskander directed that two pieces of cannon should be dragged down from the citadel, and then played against the entrance. In the mean time, he ordered immense piles of damp fagots to be lit before the building, the smoke of which prevented the besieged from taking any aim. The ardour of the people was so great, that the cannon were soon served against the palace, and their effects were speedily remarked. The massy portal shook; a few blows of the battering ram, and it fell. The Turks sallied forth, were received with a shower of Greek fire, and driven in with agonizing yells. Some endeavoured to escape from the windows, and were speared or cut down; some appeared wringing their hands in despair upon the terraced roof. Suddenly the palace was announced to be on fire. A tall white bluish flame darted up from a cloud of smoke, and soon, as if by magic, the whole back of the building was encompassed with rising tongues of red and raging light. Amid a Babel of shrieks, and shouts, and cheers, and prayers, and curses, the roof of the palace fell in with a crash, which produced amid the besiegers an awful and momentary silence, but in an instant they started from their strange inactivity, and rushing forward, leaped into the smoking ruins, and at the same time completed the massacre and achieved their freedom.

VII.

At break of dawn Iskander sent couriers throughout all Epirus, announcing the fall of Croia, and that he had raised the standard of independence in his ancient country. He also despatched a trusty messenger to Prince Nicæus, at Athens, and to the great Hunniades. The people were so excited throughout all Epirus, at this great and unthought of intelligence, that they simultaneously rose in all the open country, and massacred the Turks, and the towns were only restrained in a forced submission to Amurath, by the strong garrisons of the sultan.

Now Iskander was very anxious to effect the removal of these garrisons without loss of time, in order that if Amurath sent a great power against him, as he expected, the invading army might have nothing to rely upon but its own force, and that his attention might not in any way be diverted from effecting their overthrow. Therefore, as soon as

his troops had rested, and he had formed his new recruits into some order, which, with their willing spirits, did not demand many days, Iskander set out from Croia, at the head of twelve thousand men, and marched against the strong city of Petrella, meeting in his way the remainder of the garrison of Croia on their return, who surrendered themselves to him at discretion. Petrella was only one day's march from Croia, and when Iskander arrived there he requested a conference with the governor, and told his tale so well, representing the late overthrow of the Turks by Hunniades, and the incapacity of Amurath at present to relieve him, that the Turkish commander agreed to deliver up the place, and leave the country with his troops, particularly as the alternative of Iskander to these easy terms was ever conquest without quarter. And thus, by a happy mixture of audacity and adroitness, the march of Iskander throughout Epirus, was rather like a triumph than a campaign, the Turkish garrisons imitating, without any exception, the conduct of their comrades at Petrella, and dreading the fate of their comrades at the capital. In less than a month, Iskander returned to Epirus, having delivered the whole country from the Moslemian yoke.

Hitherto Iskander had heard nothing either of Hunniades or Nicæus. He learned therefore with great interest as he passed through the gates of the city that the Prince of Athens had arrived at Croia on the preceding eve, and also that the messenger had returned from the Hungarian camp. Amid the acclamations of an enthusiastic people, Iskander once more ascended the citadel of Croia. Nicæus received him at the gate. Iskander sprang from his horse, and embraced his friend. Hand in hand, and followed by their respective trains, they entered the fortress palace.

"My dear friend," said Iskander, when they were once more alone, "you see we were right not to despair. Two months have scarcely elapsed since we parted without a prospect, or with the most gloomy one, and now we are in a fair way of achieving all that we can desire. Epirus is free!"

"I came to claim my share in its emancipation," said Nicæus with a smile, "but Iskander is another Cæsar!"

"You will have many opportunities yet, believe me, Nicæus, of proving your courage and your patriotism," replied Iskander; "Amurath will never allow this affair to pass over in this quiet manner. I did not commence this struggle without a conviction that it would demand all the energy and patience of a long life. I shall be rewarded if I leave freedom as a heritage to my countrymen; but for the rest, I feel that I bid farewell to every joy of life, except the ennobling consciousness of performing a noble duty. In the mean time, I understand a messenger awaits me here from the great Hunniades. Unless that shield of Christendom maintain himself in his present position, our chance of ultimate security is feeble. With his constant diversion in Bulgaria, we may contrive here to struggle into success. You sometimes laugh at my sanguine temper, Nicæus. To say the truth, I am more serene than sanguine, and was never more conscious of the strength of my opponent than now, when it appears that I have beaten him. Hark! the people cheer. I love the people. Nicæus, who are ever influenced by genuine and generous feelings. They cheer as if they had

once more gained a country. Alas! they little know what they must endure even at the best. Nay! look not gloomy; we have done great things, and will do more. Who waits without there? Demetrius! Call the messenger from Lord Hunniades."

An Epirot bearing a silken packet was now introduced, which he delivered to Iskander. Reverently touching the hand of his chieftain, the messenger then kissed his own and withdrew. Iskander broke the seal, and drew forth a letter from the silken cover.

"So! this is well!" exclaimed the prince with great animation, as he threw his quick eye over the letter. "As I hoped and deemed, a most complete victory. Karam Bey himself a prisoner, baggage, standards, great guns, treasure. Brave soldier of the cross! (may I prove so!) Your perfectly devised movement, (poh, poh!) Hah! what is this?" exclaimed Iskander, turning pale; his lip quivered, his eye looked dim. He walked to an arched window. His companion, who supposed that he was reading, did not disturb him.

"Poor, poor Hunniades!" at length exclaimed Iskander, shaking his head.

"What of him?" inquired Nicæus quickly.

"The sharpest accident of war!" replied Iskander. "It quite clouds my spirit. We must forget these things, we must forget. Epirus! he is not a patriot who can spare a thought from thee. And yet, so young, so beautiful, so gifted, so worthy of a hero!—when I saw her by her great father's side, sharing the toils, aiding his councils, supplying his necessities, methought I gazed upon a ministering angel!—upon—"

"Stop, stop in mercy's name, Iskander!" exclaimed Nicæus in a very agitated tone. "What is all this? Surely no,—surely not—surely Iduna—!"

"'Tis she!"

"Dead?" exclaimed Nicæus, rushing up to his companion, and seizing his arm.

"Worse, much worse!"

"God of heaven!" exclaimed the young prince, with almost a frantic air. "Tell me all, tell me all! This suspense fires my brain. Iskander, you know not what this woman is to me—the sole object of my being, the bane, the blessing of my life! Speak, dear friend, speak! I beseech you! where is Iduna?"

"A prisoner to the Turk."

"Iduna a prisoner to the Turk! I'll not believe it! Why do we wear swords? Where's chivalry? Iduna a prisoner to the Turk! 'Tis false. It cannot be. Iskander, you are a coward! I am a coward! All are cowards! A prisoner to the Turk! Iduna! What, the rose of Christendom! has it been plucked by such a turbaned dog as Amurath? Farewell, Epirus! Farewell, classic Athens! Farewell, bright fields of Greece, and dreams that made them brighter! The sun of all my joy and hope is set, and set forever!"

So saying, Nicæus, tearing his hair and garments, flung himself upon the floor, and hid his face in his robes.

Iskander paced the room with a troubled step and thoughtful brow. After some minutes he leaned down by the Prince of Athens, and endeavoured to console him.

"It is in vain, Iskander, it is in vain," said Nicæus. "I wish to die."

'Were I a favoured lover, in such a situation,"

replied Iskander, "I should scarcely consider death my duty, unless the sacrifice of myself preserved my mistress."

"Hah!" exclaimed Nicæus, starting from the ground. "Do you conceive, then, the possibility of rescuing her."

"If she live, she is a prisoner in the seraglio at Adrianople. You are as good a judge as myself of the prospect that awaits your exertions. It is, without doubt, a difficult adventure, but such, methinks, as a Christian knight should scarcely shun."

"To horse," exclaimed Nicæus, "to horse—and yet what can I do? Were she in any other place but the capital I might rescue her by force, but in the heart of their empire—it is impossible. Is there no ransom that can tempt the Turk? My principality would rise in the balance beside this jewel."

"That were scarcely wise, and certainly not just," replied Iskander; "but ransom will be of no avail. Hunniades has already offered to restore Karam Bey, and all the prisoners of rank, and the chief trophies, and Amurath has refused to listen to any terms. The truth is, Iduna has found favour in the eyes of his son, the young Mahomed."

"Holy Virgin! hast thou no pity on this Christian maid?" exclaimed Nicæus. "The young Mahomed! Shall this licentious infidel—ah! Iskander, dear, dear Iskander, you who have so much wisdom, and so much courage; you who can devise all things, and dare all things; help me, help me; on my knees I do beseech you, take up this crying cause of foul oppression, and for the sake of all you love and reverence—your creed, your country, and perchance your friend, let your great genius, like some solemn angel, haste to the rescue of the sweet Iduna, and save her, save her!"

"Some thoughts like these were rising in my mind when first I spoke," replied Iskander. "This is a better cue, far more befitting princes than boyish tears, and all the outward misery of wo, a tattered garment and dishevelled locks. Come, Nicæus, we have to struggle with a mighty fortune. Let us be firm as fate itself."

VIII.

IMMEDIATELY after his interview with Nicæus, Iskander summoned some of the chief citizens of Croia to the citadel, and submitting to them his arrangements for the administration of Epirus, announced the necessity of his instant departure for a short interval; and the same evening, ere the moon had risen, himself and the Prince of Athens quitted the city, and proceeded in the direction of Adrianople. They travelled with great rapidity until they reached a small town upon the frontiers, where they halted for one day. Here, in the bazaar, Iskander purchased for himself the dress of an Armenian physician. In his long dark robes, and large round cap of black wool, his face and hands stained, and his beard and mustachios shaven, it seemed impossible that he could be recognised. Nicæus was habited as his page, in a dress of coarse red cloth, setting tight to his form, with a red cap, with a long blue tassel. He carried a large bag containing drugs, some surgical instruments, and a few books. In this guise, as soon as the gates were open on the morrow, Iskander mounted on a very small mule, and Nicæus on a very large donkey, the two princes commenced the pass of the

mountainous range, an arm of the Balkan, which divided Epirus from Roumelia.

"I broke the wind of the finest charger in all Asia when I last ascended these mountains," said Iskander; "I hope this day's journey may be accepted as a sort of atonement."

"Faith! there is little doubt I am the best mounted of the two," said Nicæus. "However, I hope we shall return at a sharper pace."

"How came it, my Nicæus," said Iskander, "that you never mentioned to me the name of Iduna when we were at Athens? I little supposed when I made my sudden visit to Hunniades, that I was about to appear to so fair a host. She is a rarely gifted lady."

"I knew of her being at the camp as little as yourself," replied the Prince of Athens, "and for the rest, the truth is, Iskander, there are some slight crosses in our loves, which time, I hope, will fashion rightly." So saying, Nicæus pricked on his donkey, and flung his stick at a bird which was perched on the branch of a tree. Iskander did not resume a topic to which his companion seemed disinclined. Their journey was tedious. Towards nightfall they reached the summit of the usual track; and as the descent was difficult, they were obliged to rest until daybreak.

On the morrow they had a magnificent view of the rich plains of Roumelia, and in the extreme distance, the great city of Adrianople, its cupolas and minarets blazing and sparkling in the sun. This glorious prospect at once revived all their energies. It seemed that the moment of peril and of fate had arrived. They pricked on their sorry steeds; and on the morning of the next day, presented themselves at the gates of the city. The thorough knowledge which Iskander possessed of the Turkish character, obtained them an entrance, which was at one time almost doubtful, from the irritability and impatience of Nicæus. They repaired to a caravansera of good repute in the neighbourhood of the seraglio; and having engaged their rooms, the Armenian physician, attended by his page, visited several of the neighbouring coffee-houses, announcing, at the same time, his arrival, his profession, and his skill.

As Iskander felt pulses, examined tongues, and distributed drugs and charms, he listened with interest and amusement to the conversation of which he himself was often the hero. He found that the Turks had not yet recovered from their consternation at his audacity and success. They were still wondering, and if possible more astounded than indignant. The politicians of the coffee-houses, chiefly consisting of janissaries, were loud in their murmurs. The popularity of Amurath had vanished before the triumph of Hunniades, and the rise of Iskander.

"But Allah has in some instances favoured the faithful," remarked Iskander; "I heard in my travels of your having captured a great princess of the Giaours!"

"God is great!" said an elderly Turk with a long white beard. "The hakim congratulates the faithful because they have taken a woman!"

"Not so, merely," replied Iskander; "I heard the woman was a princess. If so, the people of Franguestan will pay any ransom for their great women; and by giving up this fair Giaour, you may free many of the faithful."

"Mashallah!" said another ancient Turk, sipping his coffee. "The hakim speaks wisely."

"May I murder my mother!" exclaimed a young janissary, with great indignation. "But this is the very thing that makes me wild against Amurath. Is not this princess a daughter of that accursed Giaour, that dog of dogs, Hunniades? and has he not offered for her ransom our brave Karam Bey himself, and his chosen warriors? and has not Amurath said nay? And why has he said nay? Because his son, the Prince Mahomed, instead of fighting against the Giaours, has looked upon one of their women, and has become a mejnoun. Pah! May I murder my mother,—but if the Giaours were in full march to the city, I'd not fight. And let him tell this to the *cadi* who dares; for there are ten thousand of us, and we have sworn by the kettle—but we will not fight for Giaours, or those who love Giaours!"

"If you mean me, Ali, about going to the *cadi*," said the chief eunuch of Mahomed, who was standing by, "let me tell you I am no tale-bearer, and scorn to do an unmanly act. The young prince can beat the Giaours without the aid of those who are noisy enough in a coffee-house, when they are quiet enough in the field. And, for the rest of the business, you may all ease your hearts; for the frangy princess you talk of, is pining away, and will soon die. The sultan has offered a hundred purses of gold to any one who cures her; but the gold will never be counted by the *hasnadar*, or I will double it."

"Try your fortune, hakim," said several laughing loungers to Iskander.

"Allah has stricken the frangy princess," said the old Turk with a white beard.

"He will strike all Giaours," said his ancient companion, sipping his coffee. "Tis so written."

"Well! I do not like to hear of women-slaves pining to death," said the young janissary, in a softened tone, "particularly when they are young. Amurath should have ransomed her, or he might have given her to one of his officers, or any young fellow that had particularly distinguished himself." And so, twirling his mustachios, and flinging down his piastre, the young janissary strutted out of the coffee-house.

"When we were young," said the old Turk with the white beard to his companion, shaking his head, "when we were young—"

"We conquered Anatolia, and never opened our mouths," rejoined his companion.

"I never offered an opinion till I was sixty," said the old Turk; "and then it was one which had been in our family for a century."

"No wonder Hunniades carries every thing before him," said his companion.

"And that accursed Iskander," said the old man.

The chief eunuch, finishing his vase of sherbet, moved away. The Armenian physician followed him.

IX.

THE chief eunuch turned into a burial-ground, through which a way led, by an avenue of cypress-trees, to the quarter of the seraglio. The Armenian physician, accompanied by his page, followed him.

"Noble sir!" said the Armenian physician; "may I trespass for a moment on your lordship's attention?"

"Worthy hakim, is it you?" replied the chief eunuch, turning round with an encouraging smile of courteous condescension,—“your pleasure?”

“I would speak to you of important matters,” said the physician.

The eunuch carelessly seated himself on a richly-carved tomb, and crossing his legs with an air of pleasant superiority, adjusted a fine emerald that sparkled on his finger, and bade the hakim address him without hesitation.

“I am a physician,” said the Armenian.

The eunuch nodded.

“And I heard your lordship in the coffee-house mention that the sultan, our sublime master, had offered a rich reward to any one who could effect the cure of a favourite captive.”

“No less a reward than one hundred purses of gold,” remarked the eunuch. “The reward is proportioned to the exigency of the case. Believe me, worthy sir, it is desperate.”

“With mortal means,” replied the Armenian; “but I possess a talisman of magical influence, which no disorder can resist. I would fain try its efficacy.”

“This is not the first talisman that has been offered us, worthy doctor,” said the eunuch, smiling incredulously.

“But the first that has been offered on these terms,” said the Armenian. “Let me cure the captive, and of the one hundred purses, a moiety shall belong to yourself. Ay! so confident am I of success, that I deem it no hazard to commence our contract by this surety.” And so saying, the Armenian took from his finger a gorgeous carbuncle, and offered it to the eunuch. The worthy dependant of the seraglio had a great taste in jewellery. He examined the stone with admiration, and placed it on his finger with complacency. “I require no inducements to promote the interests of science, and the purposes of charity,” said the eunuch, with a patronising air. “’Tis assuredly a pretty stone, and, as the memorial of an ingenious stranger, whom I respect, I shall, with pleasure, retain it. You were saying something about a talisman. Are you serious? I doubt not that there are means which might obtain you the desired trial; but the Prince Mahomed is as violent when displeased or disappointed as munificent when gratified. Cure this Christian captive, and we may certainly receive the promised purses; fail, and your head will as assuredly be flung into the seraglio moat, to say nothing of my own.”

“Most noble sir!” said the physician; “I am willing to undertake the experiment on the terms you mentioned. Rest assured that the patient, if alive, must, with this remedy, speedily recover. You marvel! Believe me, had you witnessed the cures which it has already effected, you would only wonder at its otherwise incredible influence.”

“You have the advantage,” replied the eunuch, “of addressing a man who has seen something of the world. I travel every year to Anatolia with the Prince Mahomed. Were I a narrow-minded bigot, who had never been five miles from Adrianople in the whole course of my life, I might indeed be skeptical. But I am a patron of science, and have heard of talismans. How much might this ring weigh, think you!”

“I have heard it spoken of as a carbuncle of uncommon size,” replied the Armenian.

“Where did you say you lodged, hakim?”

“At the khan of Bedreddin.”

“A very proper dwelling. Well, we shall see. Have you more jewels? I might, perhaps, put you in the way of parting with some at good prices. The khan of Bedreddin is very conveniently situated. I may, perhaps, towards evening, taste your coffee at the khan of Bedreddin, and we will talk of this said talisman. Allah be with you, worthy hakim!” The eunuch nodded, not without encouragement, and went his way.

“Anxiety alone enabled me to keep my countenance,” said Nicæus. “A patron of science, forsooth! Of all the insolent, shallow-brained, rapacious coxcombs——”

“Hush, my friend!” said Iskander, with a smile. “The chief eunuch of the heir apparent of the Turkish empire is a far greater man than a poor prince, or a proscribed rebel. This worthy can do our business, and I trust will. He clearly bites, and a richer bait will, perhaps, secure him. In the mean time, we must be patient, and remember whose destiny is at stake.”

X.

THE chief eunuch did not keep the adventurous companions long in suspense; for before the muezzin had announced the close of day from the minarets, he had reached the khan of Bedreddin, and inquired for the Armenian physician.

“We have no time to lose,” said the eunuch to Iskander. “Bring with you whatever you may require, and follow me.”

The eunuch led the way, Iskander and Nicæus maintaining a respectful distance. After proceeding down several streets, they arrived at the burial-ground, where they had conversed in the morning; and when they had entered this more retired spot, the eunuch fell back, and addressed his companion.

“Now, worthy hakim,” he said, “if you deceive me, I will never patronise a man of science again. I found an opportunity of speaking to the prince this afternoon of your talisman, and he has taken from my representations such a fancy for its immediate proof, that I found it quite impossible to postpone its trial even until to-morrow. I mentioned the terms. I told the prince your life was the pledge. I said nothing of the moiety of the reward, worthy hakim. That is an affair between ourselves. I trust to your honour, and I always act thus with men of science.”

“I shall not disgrace my profession or your confidence, rest assured,” replied Iskander. “And am I to see the captive to-night?”

“I doubt it not. Are you prepared? We might, perhaps, gain a little time, if very necessary.”

“By no means, sir; truth is ever prepared.”

Thus conversing, they passed through the burial-ground, and approached some high, broad walls, forming a terrace, and planted with young sycamore trees. The eunuch tapped, with his silver stick, at a small gate, which opened and admitted them into a garden, full of large clumps of massy shrubs. Through these a winding walk led for some way, and then conducted them to an open lawn, on which was situated a vast and irregular building. As they approached the pile, a young man of very imperious aspect rushed forward from a gate, and abruptly accosted Iskander.

“Are you the Armenian physician?” he inquired.

Iskander bowed assent.

"Have you got your talisman? You know the terms? Cure this Christian girl, and you shall name your own reward; fail, and I shall claim your forfeited head."

"The terms are well understood, mighty prince," said Iskander, for the young man was no less a personage than the son of Amurath, and future conqueror of Constantinople; "but I am confident there will be no necessity for the terror of Christendom claiming any other heads than those of his enemies."

"Kafis will conduct you at once to your patient," said Mahomed. "For myself, I cannot rest until I know the result of your visit. I shall wander about these gardens, and destroy the flowers, which is the only pleasure now left me."

Kafis motioned to his companions to advance, and they entered the seraglio.

At the end of a long gallery they came to a great portal, which Kafis opened, and Iskander and Nicæus for a moment supposed that they had arrived at the chief hall of the tower of Babel, but they found the shrill din only proceeded from a large company of women, who were employed in distilling the rare atar of the jessamine flower. All their voices ceased on the entrance of the strangers, as if by a miracle; but when they had examined them, and observed that it was only a physician and his boy, their awe, or their surprise, disappeared; and they crowded round Iskander, some holding out their wrists, others lolling out their tongues, and some asking questions, which perplexed alike the skill and the modesty of the adventurous dealer in magical medicine. The annoyance, however, was not of great duration, for Kafis so belaboured their fair shoulders with his official baton, that they instantly retreated with precipitation, uttering the most violent shrieks, and bestowing on the eunuch so many titles, that Iskander and his page were quite astounded at the intuitive knowledge which the imprisoned damsels possessed of that vocabulary of abuse, which is in general mastered only by the experience of active existence.

Quitting this chamber, the eunuch and his companions ascended a lofty staircase. They halted, at length, before a door. "This is the chamber of the tower," said their guide, "and here we shall find the fair captive." He knocked, the door was opened by a female slave, and Iskander and Nicæus, with an anxiety they could with difficulty conceal, were ushered into a small but sumptuous apartment. In the extremity was a recess covered with a light gauzy curtain. The eunuch bidding them keep in the background, advanced, and cautiously withdrawing the curtain slightly aside, addressed some words in a low voice to the inmate of the recess. In a few minutes the eunuch beckoned to Iskander to advance, and whispered to him: "She would not at first see you, but I have told her you are a Christian, the more the pity, and she consents." So saying, he withdrew the curtain, and exhibited a veiled female figure lying on a couch.

"Noble lady," said the physician in Greek, which he had ascertained the eunuch did not comprehend; "pardon the zeal of a Christian friend. Though habited in this garb, I have served under your illustrious sire. I should deem my life well spent in serving the daughter of the great Hunniades."

"Kind stranger," replied the captive, "I was ill-prepared for such a meeting. I thank you for your

sympathy, but my sad fortunes are beyond human aid."

"God works by humble instruments, noble lady," said Iskander, "and with his blessing we may yet prosper."

"I fear that I must look to death as my only refuge," replied Iduna, "and still more, I fear that it is not so present a refuge as my oppressors themselves imagine. But you are a physician; tell me then how speedily nature will make me free."

She held forth her hand, which Iskander took and involuntarily pressed. "Noble lady," he said, "my skill is mere pretence to enter these walls. The only talisman I bear with me is a message from your friends."

"Indeed!" said Iduna, in a very agitated tone.

"Restrain yourself, noble lady," said Iskander, interposing, "restrain yourself. Were you any other but the daughter of Hunniades, I would not have ventured upon this perilous exploit. But I know that the Lady Iduna has inherited something more than the name of her great ancestors—their heroic soul. If ever there were a moment in her life in which it behoved her to exert all her energies, that moment has arrived. The physician who addresses her, and his attendant who waits at hand, are two of the Lady Iduna's most devoted friends. There is nothing that they will not hazard to effect her delivery; and they have matured a plan of escape which they are sanguine must succeed. Yet its completion will require, on her part, great anxiety of mind, greater exertion of body, danger, fatigue, privation. Is the Lady Iduna prepared for all this endurance, and all this hazard?"

"Noble friend," replied Iduna, "for I cannot deem you a stranger, and none but a most chivalric knight could have entered upon this almost forlorn adventure; you have not, I trust, miscalculated my character. I am a slave, and unless Heaven will interpose, must soon be a dishonoured one. My freedom and my fame are alike at stake. There is no danger, and no suffering which I will not gladly welcome, provided there be even a remote chance of regaining my liberty and securing my honour."

"You are in the mind I counted on. Now, mark my words, dear lady. Seize an opportunity this evening of expressing to your jailers that you have already experienced some benefit from my visit, and announce your rising confidence in my skill. In the mean time I will make such a report that our daily meetings will not be difficult. For the present, farewell. The Prince Mahomed waits without, and I would exchange some words with him before I go."

"And must we part without my being acquainted with the generous friends to whom I am indebted for an act of devotion which almost reconciles me to my sad fate?" said Iduna. "You will not, perhaps, deem the implicit trust reposed in you by one whom you have no interest to deceive, and who, if deceived, cannot be placed in a worse position than she at present fills, as a very gratifying mark of confidence, yet that trust is reposed in you, and let me at least soothe the galling dreariness of my solitary hours, by the recollection of the friends to whom I am indebted for a deed of friendship which has filled me with a feeling of wonder from which I have not yet recovered."

"The person who has penetrated the seraglio of Constantinople in disguise, to rescue the Lady Iduna," answered Iskander, "is the Prince Nicæus."

"Nicæus!" exclaimed Iduna, in an agitated tone

"The voice to which I listen is surely not that of the Prince Nicæus; nor the form on which I gaze," she added, as she unveiled. Beside her stood the tall figure of the Armenian physician. She beheld his swarthy and unrecognised countenance. She cast her dark eyes around with an air of beautiful perplexity.

"I am a friend of the Prince Nicæus," said the physician. "He is here. Shall he advance? Alexis," called out Iskander, not waiting for her reply. The page of the physician came forward, but the eunuch accompanied him. "All is right," said Iskander to Kafis. "We are sure of our hundred purses. But, without doubt, with any other aid, the case were desperate."

"There is but one God," said the eunuch, polishing his carbuncle, with a visage radiant as the gem. "I never repented patronising men of science. The prince waits without. Come along." He took Iskander by the arm. "Where is your boy? What are you doing there, sir?" inquired the eunuch, sharply, of Nicæus, who was tarrying behind and kissing the hand of Iduna.

"I was asking the lady for a favour to go to the coffee-house with," replied Nicæus, with pouting lips; "you forget that I am to have none of the hundred purses."

"True," said the eunuch; "there is something in that. Here, boy, here is a piastre for you. I like to encourage men of science, and all that belong to them. Do not go and spend it all in one morning, boy, and when the fair captive is cured, if you remind me, boy, perhaps I may give you another."

XI.

KAFIS and his charge again reached the garden. The twilight was nearly past. A horseman galloped up to them, followed by several running footmen. It was the prince.

"Well, hakim," he inquired, in his usual abrupt style, "can you cure her?"

"Yes," answered Iskander, firmly.

"Now listen, hakim," said Mahomed. "I must very shortly leave the city, and proceed into Epirus at the head of our troops. I have sworn two things, and I have sworn them by the holy stone. Ere the new moon, I will have the heart of Iduna and the head of Iskander!"

The physician bowed.

"If you can so restore the health of this frangy girl," continued Mahomed, "that she may attend me within ten days into Epirus, you shall claim from my treasury what sum you like, and become physician to the seraglio. What say you?"

"My hope and my belief is," replied Iskander, "that within ten days she may breathe the air of Epirus."

"By my father's beard, you are a man after my own heart," exclaimed the prince; "and since thou leapest in talismans, hakim, can you give me a charm that will secure me a meeting with this Epirot rebel within the term, so that I may keep my oath. What say you?—what say you?"

"There are such spells," replied Iskander. "But mark, I can only secure the meeting, not the head."

"That is my part," said Mahomed, with an arrogant sneer. "But the meeting, the meeting?"

"You know the fountain of Kallista in Epirus. Its virtues are renowned."

"I have heard of it."

"Plunge your cimeter in its midnight waters thrice, on the eve of the new moon, and each time summon the enemy you would desire to meet. He will not fail you."

"If you cure the captive, I will credit the legend, and keep the appointment," replied Mahomed, thoughtfully.

"I have engaged to do that," replied the physician.

"Well, then, I shall redeem my pledge," said the prince.

"But mind," said the physician, "while I engage to cure the lady, and produce the warrior, I can secure your highness neither the heart of the one nor the head of the other."

"'Tis understood," said Mahomed.

XII.

THE Armenian physician did not fail to attend his captive patient at an early hour on the ensuing morn. His patron Kafis received him with an encouraging smile. "The talisman already works," said the eunuch: "she has passed a good night, and confesses to an improvement. Our purses are safe. Methinks I already count the gold. But I say, worthy hakim, come hither, come hither," and Kafis looked around to be sure that no one was within hearing. "I say," and here he put on a very mysterious air indeed, "the prince is generous: you understand? We go shares. We shall not quarrel. I never yet repented patronising a man of science, and I am sure I never shall. The prince you see is violent, but generous. I would not cure her too soon, eh?"

"You take a most discreet view of affairs," responded Iskander, with an air of complete assent, and they entered the chamber of the tower.

Iduna performed her part with great dexterity; but indeed it required less skill than herself and her advisers had at first imagined. Her malady, although it might have ended fatally, was, in its origin, entirely mental, and the sudden prospect of freedom, and of restoration to her country and her family, at a moment when she had delivered herself up to despair, afforded her a great and instantaneous benefit. She could not indeed sufficiently restrain her spirits, and smiled incredulously when Iskander mentioned the impending exertion and fatigues, with doubt and apprehension. His anxiety to return immediately to Epirus, determined him to adopt the measures for her rescue without loss of time, and on his third visit, he prepared her for making the great attempt on the ensuing morn. Hitherto Iskander had refrained from revealing himself to Iduna. He was induced to adopt this conduct by various considerations. He could no longer conceal from himself that the daughter of Hunniades exercised an influence over his feelings which he was unwilling to encourage. His sincere friendship for Nicæus, and his conviction that it was his present duty to concentrate all his thought and affection in the cause of his country, would have rendered him anxious to have resisted any emotions of the kind, even could he have flattered himself that there was any chance of their being returned by the object of his rising passion. But Iskander was as modest as he was brave and gifted. The disparity of age between himself and Iduna appeared an insuperable barrier to his hopes, even had there been no other obstacles

Iskander struggled with his love, and with his strong mind the struggle, though painful, was not without success. He felt that he was acting in a manner which must ultimately tend to the advantage of his country, the happiness of his friend, and perhaps the maintenance of his own self-respect; for he had too much pride not to be very sensible to the bitterness of rejection.

Had he perceived more indications of a very cordial feeling subsisting between Nicæus and Iduna, he would, perhaps, not have persisted in maintaining his disguise. But he had long suspected that the passion of the Prince of Athens was not too favourably considered by the daughter of Hunniades, and he was therefore exceedingly anxious that Nicæus should possess all the credit of the present adventure, which Iskander scarcely doubted, if successful, would allow Nicæus to urge irresistible claims to the heart of a mistress whom he had rescued, at the peril of his life, from slavery and dishonour, to offer rank, reputation, and love. Iskander took, therefore, several opportunities of leading Iduna to believe that he was merely a confidential agent of Nicæus, and that the whole plan of her rescue from the seraglio of Adrianople had been planned by his young friend. In the mean time, during the three days on which they had for short intervals met, very few words had been interchanged between Nicæus and his mistress. Those words, indeed, had been to him of the most inspiring nature, and expressed such a deep sense of gratitude, and such lively regard, that Nicæus could no longer resist the delightful conviction that he had at length created a permanent interest in her heart. Often he longed to rush to her couch, and press her hand to his lips. Even the anticipation of future happiness could not prevent him from envying the good fortune of Iskander, who was allowed to converse with her without restraint; and bitterly, on their return to the khan, did he execrate the pompous eunuch for all the torture which he occasioned him by his silly conversation, and the petty tyranny of office with which Kaffis always repressed his attempts to converse for a moment with Iduna.

In the mean time all Adrianople sounded with the preparations for the immediate invasion of Epirus, and the return of Iskander to his country became each hour more urgent. Every thing being prepared, the adventurers determined on the fourth morning to attempt the rescue. They repaired as usual to the serail, and were attended by Kaffis to the chamber of the tower, who congratulated Iskander on their way on the rapid convalescence of the captive. When they had fairly entered the chamber, the physician being somewhat in advance, Nicæus, who was behind, commenced proceedings by knocking down the eunuch, and Iskander instantly turning round to his assistance, they succeeded in gagging and binding the alarmed and astonished Kaffis. Iduna then habited herself in a costume exactly similar to that worn by Nicæus, and which her friends had brought to her in their bag. Iskander and Iduna then immediately quitted the serail without notice or suspicion, and hurried to the khan, where they mounted their horses, that were in readiness, and hastened without a moment's loss of time to a fountain without the gates, where they awaited the arrival of Nicæus with anxiety. After remaining a few minutes in the chamber of the tower, the Prince of Athens stole out, taking

care to secure the door upon Kaffis. He descended the staircase, and escaped through the serail without meeting any one, and had nearly reached the gate of the gardens, when he was challenged by some of the eunuch guard at a little distance.

"Hilloa!" exclaimed one, "I thought you passed just now!"

"So I did," replied Nicæus, with nervous effrontery; "but I came back for my bag, which I left behind," and giving them no time to reflect, he pushed his way through the gate with all the impudence of a page. He rushed through the burial ground, hurried through the streets, mounted his horse, and galloped through the gates. Iskander and Iduna were in sight, he waved his hand for them at once to proceed, and in a moment, without exchanging a word, they were all galloping at full speed, nor did they breathe their horses until sunset.

By nightfall they had reached a small wood of chestnut trees, where they rested for two hours, more for the sake of their steeds than their own refreshment, for anxiety prevented Iduna from indulging in any repose, as much as excitement prevented her from feeling any fatigue. Iskander lit a fire and prepared their rough meal, unharnessed the horses, and turned them out to their pasture. Nicæus made Iduna a couch of fern, and supported her head, while, in deference to his entreaties, she endeavoured in vain to sleep. Before midnight they were again on their way, and proceeded at a rapid pace towards the mountains, until a few hours before noon, when their horses began to sink under the united influence of their previous exertions and the increasing heat of the day. Iskander looked serious, and often threw a backward glance in the direction of Adrianople.

"We must be beyond pursuit," said Nicæus. "I dare say poor Kaffis is still gagged and bound."

"Could we but once reach the mountains," replied his companion, "I should have little fear, but I counted upon our steeds carrying us there without faltering. We cannot reckon upon more than three hours' start, prince. Our friend Kaffis is too important a personage to be long missed."

"The holy Virgin befriend us!" said the Lady Iduna. "I can urge my poor horse no more."

They had now ascended a small rising ground, which gave them a wide prospect over the plain. Iskander halted, and threw an anxious glance around him.

"There are some horsemen in the distance whom I do not like," said the physician.

"I see them," said Nicæus; "travellers like ourselves."

"Let us die sooner than be taken," said Iduna.

"Move on," said the physician, "and let me observe these horsemen alone. I would there were some forest at hand. In two hours we may gain the mountains."

The daughter of Hunniades and the Prince of Athens descended the rising ground. Before them, but at a considerable distance, was a broad and rapid river, crossed by a ruinous Roman bridge. The opposite bank of the river was the termination of a narrow plain, which led immediately to the mountains.

"Fair Iduna, you are safe," said the Prince of Athens.

"Dear Nicæus," replied his companion, "imagine what I feel. It is too wild a moment to express my gratitude."

"I trust that Iduna will never express her *gratitude* to Nicæus," answered the prince; "it is, not, I assure you, a favourite word with him."

Their companion rejoined them, urging his weary horse to its utmost speed.

"Nicæus!" he called out, "halt!"

They stopped their willing horses.

"How now!" my friend," said the prince; "you look grave!"

"Lady Iduna!" said the Armenian, "we are pursued."

Hitherto the prospect of success, and the consciousness of the terrible destiny that awaited failure, had supported Iduna under exertions which, under any other circumstances, must have proved fatal. But to learn, at the very moment that she was congratulating herself on the felicitous completion of their daring enterprise, that that dreaded failure was absolutely impending, demanded too great an exertion of her exhausted energies. She turned pale; she lifted up her imploring hands and eyes to heaven in speechless agony, and then bending down her head, wept with unrestrained and harrowing violence. The distracted Nicæus sprung from his horse, endeavoured to console the almost insensible Iduna, and then wofully glancing at his fellow-adventurer, wrung his hands in despair. His fellow-adventurer seemed lost in thought.

"They come," said Nicæus, starting; "methinks I see one on the brow of the hill. Away! fly! Let us at least die fighting. Dear, dear Iduna, would that my life could ransom thine. O God! this is indeed agony."

"Escape is impossible," said Iduna, in a tone of calmness which astonished them. "They must overtake us. Alas! brave friends, I have brought ye to this! Pardon me! pardon me! I am ashamed of my selfish grief. Ascribe it to other causes than a narrow spirit and a weak mind. One course is alone left to us. We must not be taken prisoners. Ye are warriors, and can die as such. I am only a woman, but I am the daughter of Hunniades. Nicæus, you are my father's friend; I beseech you, sheathe your dagger in my breast."

The prince in silent agony pressed his hands to his sight. His limbs quivered with terrible emotion. Suddenly he advanced and threw himself at the feet of his hitherto silent comrade. "O! Iskander!" exclaimed Nicæus, "great and glorious friend! my head and heart are both too weak for these awful trials—save her, save her!"

"Iskander!" exclaimed the thunderstruck Iduna. "Iskander!"

"I have, indeed, the misfortune to be Iskander, beloved lady," he replied. "This is, indeed, a case almost of desperation, but if I have to endure more than most men, I have, to inspire me, influences which fall to the lot of few—yourself and Epirus. Come! Nicæus, there is but one chance—we must gain the bridge." Thus speaking, Iskander caught Iduna in his arms, and remounting his steed, and followed by the Prince of Athens, hurried towards the river.

"The water is not fordable," said Iskander, when they had arrived at its bank. "The bridge I shall defend; and it will go hard if I do not keep them at bay long enough for you and Iduna to gain the mountains. Away; think no more of me; nay! no tear, dear lady, or you will unman me. An inspiring smile, and all will go well. Hasten to Croia, and let nothing tempt you to linger in the

vicinity, with the hope of my again joining you. Believe me, we shall meet again, but act upon what I say, as if they were my dying words. God bless you, Nicæus! No murmuring. For once let the physician, indeed, command his page. Gentle lady, commend me to your father. Would I had such a daughter in Epirus, to head my trusty brethren if I fall! Tell the great Hunniades, my legacy to him is my country. Farewell, farewell!"

"I will not say farewell," exclaimed Iduna, "I too can fight. I will stay and die with you."

"See, they come! Believe me, I shall conquer. Fly, fly, thou noble girl! Guard her well, Nicæus. God bless thee, boy! Live and be happy. Nay, nay, not another word. The farther ye are both distant, trust me, the stronger will be my arm. Indeed, indeed, I do beseech ye, fly!"

Nicæus placed the weeping Iduna in her saddle, and after leading her horse over the narrow and broken bridge, mounted his own, and then they ascended together the hilly and winding track. Iskander watched them as they went. Often Iduna waved her kerchief to her forlorn champion. In the mean time Iskander tore off his Armenian robes and flung them into the river, tried his footing on the position he had taken up, stretched his limbs, examined his daggers, flourished his cimeter.

The bridge would only permit a single rider to pass abreast. It was supported by three arches, the centre one of very considerable size, the others small, and rising out of the shallow water on each side. In many parts the parapet wall was broken, in some even the pathway was almost impassable, from the masses of fallen stone and the dangerous fissures. In the centre of the middle arch was an immense key-stone, on which was sculptured, in high relief, an enormous helmet, which indeed gave among the people of the country, a title to the bridge.

A band of horsemen dashed at full speed, with a loud shout, down the hill. They checked their horses, when to their astonishment they found Iskander with his drawn cimeter, prepared to resist their passage. But they paused only for a moment, and immediately attempted to swim the river. But their exhausted horses drew back with a strong instinct from the rushing waters: one of the band alone, mounted on a magnificent black mare, succeeding in his purpose. The rider was halfway in the stream, his high-bred steed snorting and struggling in the strong current. Iskander, with the same ease as if he were plucking the ripe fruit from a tree, took up a ponderous stone, and hurled it with fatal precision at his adventurous enemy. The rider shrieked and fell, and rose no more: the mare, relieved from her burden, exerted all her failing energies, and succeeded in gaining the opposite bank. There, rolling herself in the welcome pasture, and neighing with a note of triumph, she revelled in her hard escape.

"Cut down the Giaour!" exclaimed one of the horsemen, and he dashed at the bridge. His fragile blade shivered into a thousand pieces as it crossed the cimeter of Iskander, and in a moment his bleeding head fell over the parapet.

Instantly the whole band, each emulous of revenging his comrades, rushed without thought at Iskander, and endeavoured to overpower him by their irresistible charge. His cimeter flashed like lightning. The two foremost of his enemies fell.

but the impulse of the numbers prevailed, and each instant, although dealing destruction with every blow, he felt himself losing ground. At length he was on the centre of the centre arch, an eminent position, which allowed him for a moment to keep them at bay, and gave him breathing-time. Suddenly he made a desperate charge, clove the head of the leader of the band in two, and beat them back several yards; then swiftly returning to his former position, he summoned all his supernatural strength, and stamping on the mighty, but mouldering key-stone, he forced it from its form, and broke the masonry of a thousand years. Amid a loud and awful shriek, horses and horsemen, and the dissolving fragments of the scene for a moment mingled, as it were, in airy chaos, and then plunged with a horrible splash into the fatal depths below. Some fell, and, stunned by the massy fragments, rose no more; others struggled again into light, and gained with difficulty their old shore. Amid them, Iskander, unhurt, swam like a river-god, and stabbed to the heart the only strong swimmer that was making his way in the direction of Epirus. Drenched and exhausted, Iskander at length stood upon the opposite margin, and wrang his garments, while he watched the scene of strange destruction.

Three or four exhausted wretches were lying bruised and breathless on the opposite bank: one drowned horse was stranded near them, caught by the rushes. Of all that brave company the rest had vanished, and the broad, and blue, and sunny waters rushed without a shadow beneath the two remaining arches.

"Iduna! thou art safe," exclaimed Iskander. "Now for Epirus!" So saying, he seized the black mare, renovated by her bath and pasture, and vaulting on her back, was in a few minutes bounding over his native hills.

XIII.

IN the mean time let us not forget the Prince of Athens and the Lady Iduna. These adventurous companions soon lost sight of their devoted champion, and entered a winding ravine, which gradually brought them to the summit of the first chain of the Epirot mountains. From it they looked down upon a vast and rocky valley, through which several mule tracks led in various directions, and entered the highest barrier of the mountains which rose before them, covered with forests of chestnut and ilex. Nicæus chose the track which he considered least tempting to pursuit, and towards sunset they had again entered a ravine washed by a mountain stream. The course of the waters had made the earth fertile and beautiful. Wild shrubs of gay and pleasant colours refreshed their wearied eyesight, and the perfumes of aromatic plants invigorated their jaded senses. Upon the bank, too, of the river, a large cross of roughly carved wood brought comfort to their Christian hearts, and while the holy emblem filled them with hope and consolation, and seemed an omen of refuge from their Moslem oppressors, a venerable eremite, with a long white beard descending over his dark robes, and leaning on a staff of thorn; came forth from an adjoining cavern to breathe the evening air and pour forth his evening orisons.

Iduna and Nicæus had hitherto prosecuted their sorrowful journey almost in silence. Exhausted with anxiety, affliction, and bodily fatigue, with

difficulty the daughter of Hunniades could preserve her seat upon her steed. One thought alone interested her, and, by its engrossing influence, maintained her under all sufferings—the memory of Iskander. Since she first met him, at the extraordinary interview in her father's pavilion, often had the image of the hero recurred to her fancy, often had she mused over his great qualities and strange career. His fame, so dangerous to female hearts, was not diminished by his presence. And now, when Iduna recollected that she was indebted to him for all that she held dear, that she owed to his disinterested devotion, not only life, but all that renders life desirable,—honour and freedom, country and kindred,—that image was invested with associations and with sentiments, which, had Iskander himself been conscious of their existence, would have lent redoubled vigour to his arm, and fresh inspiration to his energy. More than once Iduna had been on the point of inquiring of Nicæus the reason which had induced alike him and Iskander to preserve so strictly the disguise of his companion. But a feeling which she did not choose to analyze, struggled successfully with her curiosity: she felt a reluctance to speak of Iskander to the Prince of Athens. In the mean time, Nicæus himself was not apparently very anxious of conversing upon the subject, and after the first rapid expressions of fear and hope as to the situation of their late comrade, they relapsed into silence, seldom broken by Nicæus, but to deplore the sufferings of his mistress,—lamentations which Iduna answered with a faint smile.

The refreshing scene wherein they had now entered, and the cheering appearance of the eremite were subjects of mutual congratulation, and Nicæus, somewhat advancing, claimed the attention of the holy man, announcing their faith, imprisonment, escape, and sufferings, and entreating hospitality and refuge. The eremite pointed with his staff to the winding path, which ascended the bank of the river to the cavern, and welcomed the pilgrims in the name of their blessed Saviour to his wild abode and simple fare.

The cavern widened when they entered, and comprised several small apartments. It was a work of the early Christians, who had found a refuge in their days of persecution, and art had completed the beneficent design of nature. The cavern was fresh, and sweet, and clean. Heaven smiled upon its pious inmate through an aperture in the roof; the floor was covered with rushes; in one niche rested a brazen cross, and in another a perpetual lamp burned before a picture, where Madonna smiled with meek tenderness upon her young divinity.

The eremite placed upon a block of wood, the surface of which he had himself smoothed, some honey, some dried fish, and a wooden bowl filled with the pure stream that flowed beneath them: a simple meal but welcome. His guests seated themselves upon a rushy couch, and while they refreshed themselves, he gently inquired the history of their adventures. As it was evident that the eremite, from her apparel, mistook the sex of Iduna, Nicæus thought fit not to deceive him, but passed her off as his brother. He described themselves as two Athenian youths, who had been captured while serving as volunteers under the great Hunniades, and who had effected their escape from Adrianople under circumstances of great peril and

dificulty; and when he had gratified the eremite's curiosity respecting their Christian brethren in Paynim lands, and sympathetically marvelled with him at the advancing fortunes of the crescent, Nicæus, who perceived that Iduna stood in great need of rest, mentioned the fatigues of his more fragile brother, and requested permission for him to retire. Whereupon the eremite himself, fetching a load of fresh rushes, arranged them in one of the cells, and invited the fair Iduna to repose. The daughter of Hunniades, first humbling herself before the altar of the Virgin, and offering her gratitude for all the late mercies vouchsafed unto her, and then bidding a word of peace to her host and her companion, withdrew to her hard-earned couch, and soon was buried in a sleep as sweet and innocent as herself.

But repose fell not upon the eyelids of Nicæus in spite of all his labours. The heart of the Athenian prince was distracted by the two most powerful of passions—love and jealousy—and when the eremite, pointing out to his guest his allotted resting-place, himself retired to his regular and simple slumbers, Nicæus quitted the cavern, and standing upon the bank of the river, gazed in abstraction upon the rushing waters foaming in the moonlight. The Prince of Athens, with many admirable qualities, was one of those men who are influenced only by their passions, and who, in the affairs of life, are invariably guided by their imagination instead of their reason. At present all thought and feeling, all considerations, and all circumstances, merged in the overpowering love he entertained for Iduna, his determination to obtain her at all cost and peril, and his resolution that she should never again meet Iskander, except as the wife of Nicæus. Compared with this paramount object, the future seemed to vanish. The emancipation of his country, the welfare of his friend, even the maintenance of his holy creed, all those great and noble objects for which, under other circumstances, he would have been prepared to sacrifice his fortune and his life, no longer interested or influenced him; and while the legions of the crescent were on the point of pouring into Greece to crush that patriotic and Christian cause over which Iskander and himself had so often mused, whose interests the disinterested absence of Iskander, occasioned solely by his devotion to Nicæus, had certainly endangered, and, perhaps, could the events of the last few hours be known, even sacrificed, the Prince of Athens resolved, unless Iduna would consent to become his, at once to carry off the daughter of Hunniades to some distant country. Nor, indeed, even with his easily excited vanity, was Nicæus sanguine of obtaining his purpose by less violent means. He was already a rejected suitor, and under circumstances which scarcely had left hope. Nothing but the sole credit of her chivalric rescue could perhaps have obtained for him the interest in the heart of Iduna which he coveted. For while this exploit professed an irresistible claim to her deepest gratitude, it indicated also, on the part of her deliverer, the presence and possession of all those great qualities, the absence of which in the character and conduct of her suitor, Iduna had not, at a former period, endeavoured to conceal to be the principal cause of his rejection. And now, by the unhappy course of circumstances, the very deed on which he counted, with sanguine hope, as the sure means of his success, seemed as it were to have placed him

in a still inferior situation than before. The constant society of his mistress had fanned the flame which, apart from her and hopeless, he had endeavoured to repress, to all its former force and ardour; while, on the other hand, he could not conceal from himself, that Iduna must feel that he had played in these great proceedings but a secondary part; that all the genius and all the generosity of the exploit rested with Iskander, who, after having obtained her freedom by so much energy, peril, sagacity, and skill, had secured it by a devoted courage which might shame all the knights of Christendom, perhaps, too, had secured it by his own life.

What if Iskander were no more? It was a great contingency. The eternal servitude of Greece, and the shameful triumph of the crescent, were involved, perhaps, in that single event. And could the possession of Iduna compensate for such disgrace and infamy? Let us not record the wild response of passion.

It was midnight ere the restless Nicæus, more exhausted by his agitating reverie, than by his previous exertions, returned into the cavern, and found refuge in sleep from all his disquietudes.

XIV.

THE eremite rose with the sun: and while he was yet at matins, was joined by Iduna, refreshed and cheerful after her unusual slumbers. After performing their devotions, her venerable host proposed that they should go forth and enjoy the morning air. So, descending the precipitous bank of the river, he led the way to a small glen, the bed of a tributary rivulet, now nearly exhausted. Beautiful clumps of birch trees, and tall thin poplars, rose on each side among the rocks, which were covered with bright mosses, and parasitical plants of gay and various colours. One side of the glen was touched with the golden and grateful beams of the rising sun, and the other was in deep shadow.

"Here you can enjoy nature and freedom in security," said the eremite; "for your enemies, if they have not already given up their pursuit, will scarcely search this sweet solitude."

"It is indeed sweet, holy father," said Iduna "but the captive, who has escaped from captivity, can alone feel all its sweetness."

"It is true," said the eremite; "I also have been a captive."

"Indeed! holy father. To the infidels?"

"To the infidels, gentle pilgrim."

"Have you been at Adrianople?"

"My oppressors were not the Paynim," replied the eremite, "but they were enemies far more dire—my own evil passions. Time was when my eye sparkled like thine, gentle pilgrim, and my heart was not as pure."

"God is merciful," said Iduna, "and without his aid, the strongest are but shadows."

"Ever think so," replied the eremite, "and you will deserve rather his love than his mercy. Thirty long years have I spent in this solitude, meditating upon the past, and it is a theme yet fertile in instruction. My hours are never heavy, and memory is to me what action is to other men."

"You have seen much, holy father?"

"And felt more. Yet you will perhaps think the result of all my experience very slight, for I can only say unto thee, Trust not in thyself."

"It is a great truth," remarked Iduna, "and leads to a higher one."

"Even so," replied the eremite. "We are full of wisdom in old age, as in winter this river is full of water, but the fire of youth, like the summer sun, dries up the stream."

Iduna did not reply. The eremite attracted her attention to a patch of cresses on the opposite bank of the stream. "Every morn I rise only to discover fresh instances of omnipotent benevolence," he exclaimed. "Yesterday ye tasted my honey and my fish. To-day I can offer ye a fresh dainty. We will break our fast in this pleasant glen. Rest thou here, gentle youth, and I will summon thy brother to our meal. I fear me much he does not bear so contented a spirit as thyself."

"He is older, and has seen more," replied Iduna.

The eremite shook his head, and leaning on his staff, returned to the cavern. Iduna remained seated on a mossy rock, listening to the awaking birds, and musing over the fate of Iskander. While she was indulging in this reverie, her name was called. She looked up with a blush, and beheld Nicæus.

"How fares my gentle comrade?" inquired the Prince of Athens.

"As well as I hope you are, dear Nicæus. We have been indeed fortunate in finding so kind a host."

"I think I may now congratulate you on your safety," said the prince. "This unfrequented pass will lead us in two days to Epirus, nor do I indeed now fear pursuit."

"Acts and not words must express in future how much we owe to you," said Iduna. "My joy would be complete if my father only knew of our safety, and if our late companion were here to share it."

"Fear not for my friend," replied Nicæus. "I have faith in the fortune of Iskander."

"If any one could succeed under such circumstances, he doubtless is the man," rejoined Iduna; "but it was indeed an awful crisis in his fate."

"Trust me, dear lady, it is wise to banish gloomy thoughts."

"We can give him only our thoughts," said Iduna, "and when we remember how much is dependent on his life, can they be cheerful?"

"Mine must be so, when I am in the presence of Iduna," replied Nicæus.

The daughter of Hunniades gathered moss from the rock and threw it into the stream.

"Dear lady," said the Prince of Athens, seating himself by her side, and stealing her gentle hand. "Pardon me if an irrepressible feeling at this moment impels me to recur to a subject, which, I would fain hope, were not so unpleasing to you, as once so unhappily you deemed it. O! Iduna, Iduna, best and dearest, we are once more together; once more I gaze upon that unrivalled form, and listen to the music of that matchless voice. I sought you, I perhaps violated my pledge, but I sought you in captivity and sorrow. Pardon me, pity me, Iduna! O! Iduna, if possible, love me!"

She turned away her head, she turned away her streaming eyes. "It is impossible not to love my deliverer," she replied, in a low and tremulous voice, "even could he not prefer the many other claims to affection which are possessed by the Prince of Athens. I was not prepared for this renewal of a most painful subject, perhaps under no circumstances; but least of all under those in which we now find ourselves.

"Alas!" exclaimed the prince; "I can no longer control my passion. My life, not my happiness merely, depends upon Iduna becoming mine. Bear with me, my beloved, bear with me! Were you Nicæus, you too would need forgiveness."

"I beseech you, cease!" exclaimed Iduna, in a firmer voice; and withdrawing her hand, she suddenly rose. "This is neither the time nor place for such conversation. I have not forgotten that, but a few days back, I was a hopeless captive, and that my life and fame are even now in danger. Great mercies have been vouchsafed to me; but still I perhaps need the hourly interposition of heavenly aid. Other than such worldly thoughts should fill my mind, and do. Dear Nicæus," she continued, in a more soothing tone, "you have nobly commenced a most heroic enterprise; fulfil it in like spirit."

He would have replied; but at this moment, the staff of the eremite sounded among the rocks. Baffled, and dark with rage and passion, the Prince of Athens quitted Iduna, and strolled towards the upper part of the glen, to conceal his anger and disappointment.

"Eat, gentle youth," said the eremite.

"Will not thy brother join us? What may be his name?"

"Nicæus, holy father."

"And thine?"

Iduna blushed and hesitated. At length, in her confusion, she replied "Iskander."

"Nicæus!" called out the eremite, "Iskander and myself await thee!"

Iduna trembled. She was agreeably surprised when the prince returned with a smiling countenance, and joined in the meal, with many cheerful words.

"Now, I propose," said the eremite, "that yourself and your brother Iskander should tarry with me some days, if, indeed, my simple fare have any temptation."

"I thank thee, holy father," replied Nicæus, "but our affairs are urgent; nor indeed could I have tarried here at all, had it not been for my young Iskander here, who, as you may easily believe, is little accustomed to his late exertions. But, indeed, towards sunset, we must proceed."

"Bearing with us," added Iduna, "a most grateful recollection of our host."

"God be with ye, wherever ye may proceed," replied the eremite.

"My trust is indeed in him," rejoined Iduna.

XV.

AND so, two hours before sunset, mounting their refreshed horses, Nicæus and Iduna quitted, with many kind words, the cavern of the eremite, and took their way along the winding of the river. Throughout the moonlit night they travelled, ascending the last and highest chain of mountains, and reaching the summit by dawn. The cheerful light of morning revealed to them the happy plains of a Christian country. With joyful spirits they descended into fertile land, and stopped at a beautiful Greek village, embowered in orchards and groves of olive trees.

The Prince of Athens instantly inquired for the primate, or chief personage of the village, and was conducted to his house; but its master, he was informed, was without, supervising the commence-

ment of the vintage. Leaving Iduna with the family of the primate, Nicæus went in search of him. The vineyard was full of groups, busied in the most elegant and joyous of human occupations, gathering, with infinite bursts of merriment, the harvest of the vine. Some mounted on ladders, fixed against the festooning branches, plucked the rich bunches, and threw them below, where girls, singing in chorus, caught them in panniers, or their extended drapery. In the centre of the vineyard, a middle-aged man watched with a calm, but vigilant eye, the whole proceedings, and occasionally stimulated the indolent, or prompted the inexperienced.

"Christo!" said the Prince of Athens, when he had approached him. The primate turned round, but evidently did not immediately recognise the person who addressed him.

"I see," continued the prince, "that my meditated caution was unnecessary. My strange garb is a sufficient disguise."

"The Prince Nicæus!" exclaimed the primate. "He is, indeed, disguised, but will, I am sure, pardon his faithful servant."

"Not a word, Christo!" replied the prince. "To be brief. I have crossed the mountains from Roumelia, and have only within this hour recognised the spot whither I have chanced to arrive. I have a companion with me. I would not be known. You comprehend! Affairs of state. I take it for granted that there are none here who will recognise me, after three years' absence, in this dress."

"You may feel secure, my lord," replied Christo. "If you puzzled me, who have known you since you were no bigger than this bunch of grapes, you will quite confound the rest."

"'Tis well. I shall stay here a day or two, in order to give them an opportunity to prepare for my reception. In the mean time, it is necessary to send on a courier at once. You must manage all this for me, Christo. How are your daughters?"

"So, so, please your highness," replied Christo. "A man with seven daughters has got trouble for every day in the week."

"But not when they are as pretty as yours are?"

"Poh! poh! Handsome is that handsome does; and as for Alexina, she wants to be married."

"Very natural. Let her marry, by all means."

"But Helena wants to do the same."

"More natural still; for, if possible, she is prettier. For my part, I could marry them both."

"Ay, ay! that is all very well; but handsome is that handsome does. I have no objection to Alexina marrying, and even Helena; but then there is Lais——"

"Hah! hah! hah!" exclaimed the prince. "I see, my dear Christo, that my foster sisters give you a proper portion of trouble. However, I must be off to my travelling companion. Come in as soon as you can, my dear fellow, and we will settle every thing. A good vintage to you, and only as much mischief as is necessary." So saying, the prince tripped away.

"Well! who would have thought of seeing him here!" exclaimed the worthy primate. "The same gay dog as ever! What can he have been doing in Roumelia! Affairs of state, indeed! I'll wager my new epiphany scarf, that, whatever the affairs are, there is a pretty girl in the case."

XVI.

THE fair Iduna, after all her perils and sufferings, was at length sheltered in safety under a kind and domestic roof. Alexina, and Helena, and Lais, and all the other sisters emulated each other in the attentions which they lavished upon the two brothers, but especially the youngest. Their kindness, indeed, was only equalled by their ceaseless curiosity, and had they ever waited for the answers of Iduna to their questions, the daughter of Hunniades might, perhaps, have been somewhat puzzled to reconcile her responses with probability. Helena answered the questions of Alexina: Lais anticipated even Helena. All that Iduna had to do, was to smile and be silent, and it was universally agreed that Iskander was singularly shy as well as excessively handsome. In the mean time, when Nicæus met Iduna in the evening of the second day of their visit, he informed her that he had been so fortunate as to resume an acquaintance with an old companion in arms in the person of a neighbouring noble, who had invited them to rest at his castle at the end of their next day's journey. He told her likewise that he had despatched a courier to Croia to inquire after Iskander, who, he expected, in the course of a very few days, would bring them intelligence to guide their future movements, and decide whether they should at once proceed to the capital of Epirus, or advance into Bulgaria, in case Hunniades was still in the field. On the morrow, therefore, they proceeded on their journey. Nicæus had procured a litter for Iduna, for which her delicate health was an excuse to Alexina and her sisters, and they were attended by a small body of well-armed cavalry, for, according to the accounts which Nicæus had received, the country was still disturbed. They departed at break of day, Nicæus riding by the side of the litter, and occasionally making the most anxious inquiries after the well-being of his fair charge. An hour after noon they rested at a well, surrounded by olive trees, until the extreme heat was somewhat allayed: and then remounting, proceeded in the direction of an undulating ridge of green hills, that partially intersected the wide plain. Towards sunset the Prince of Athens withdrew the curtains of the litter, and called the attention of Iduna to a very fair castle, rising on a fertile eminence and sparkling in the quivering beams of dying light.

"I fear," said Nicæus, "that my friend Justinian will scarcely have returned, but we are old comrades, and he desired me to act as his seneschal. For your sake I am sorry, Iduna, for I feel convinced that he would please you."

"It is, indeed, a fair castle," replied Iduna, "and none but a true knight deserves such a noble residence."

While she spoke, the commander of the escort sounded his bugle, and they commenced the ascent of the steep, a winding road, cut through a thick wood of evergreen shrubs. The gradual and easy ascent soon brought them to a portal flanked with towers, which admitted them into the outworks of the fortification. Here they found several soldiers on guard, and the commander again sounding his bugle, the gates of the castle opened, and the seneschal, attended by a suite of many domestics, advanced and welcomed Nicæus and Iduna. The Prince of Athens dismounting, assisted his fair

companion from the litter, and leading her by the hand, and preceded by the seneschal, entered the castle.

They passed through a magnificent hall, hung with choice armour, and ascending a staircase, of Pentelic marble, were ushered into a suite of lofty chambers, lined with oriental tapestry, and furnished with many costly couches and cabinets. While they admired a spectacle so different to any thing they had recently beheld or experienced, the seneschal, followed by a number of slaves in splendid attire, advanced and offered them rare and choice refreshments, coffee and confectionary, sherbets and spiced wines. When they had partaken of this elegant cheer, Nicæus intimated to the seneschal that the Lady Iduna might probably wish to retire, and instantly a discreet matron, followed by six most beautiful girls, each bearing a fragrant torch of cinnamon and roses, advanced and offered to conduct the Lady Iduna to her apartments.

The matron and her company of maidens conducted the daughter of Hunniades down a long gallery, which led to a suite of the prettiest chambers in the world. The first was an antechamber, painted like a bower, but filled with the music of living birds; the second, which was much larger, was entirely covered with Venetian mirrors, and resting on a bright Persian carpet, were many couches of crimson velvet, covered with a variety of sumptuous dresses; the third room was a bath, made in the semblance of a gigantic shell. Its roof was of transparent alabaster, glowing with shadowy light.

XVII.

A flourish of trumpets announced the return of the Lady Iduna, and the Prince of Athens, magnificently attired, came forward with a smile and led her, with a compliment on her resuming the dress of her sex, if not of her country, to the banquet. Iduna was not uninfluenced by that excitement which is insensibly produced by a sudden change of scene and circumstances, and especially by an unexpected transition from hardship, peril, and suffering, to luxury, security, and enjoyment. Their spirits were elevated and gay: she smiled upon Nicæus with a cheerful sympathy. They feasted, they listened to sweet music, they talked over their late adventures, and animated by their own enjoyment, they became more sanguine as to the fate of Iskander.

"In two or three days we shall know more," said Nicæus. "In the mean time, rest is absolutely necessary to you. It is only now that you will begin to be sensible of the exertion you have made. If Iskander be at Croia, he has already informed your father of your escape; if he have not arrived, I have arranged that a courier shall be despatched to Hunniades from that city. Do not be anxious. Fry to be happy. I am myself sanguine that you will find all well. Come, pledge me your father's health, fair lady, in this goblet of Tenedos!"

"How know I that at this moment he may not be at the point of death?" replied Iduna. "When I am absent from those I love, I dream only of their unhappiness."

"At this moment also," rejoined Nicæus, "he dreams perhaps of your imprisonment among barbarians. Yet how mistaken! Let that consideration support you. Come! here is to the hermite."

"As willing, if not as sumptuous a host as our

present one," said Iduna; and when, by-the-by, do you think that your friend, the Lord Justinian, will arrive?"

"O! never mind him," said Nicæus. "He would have arrived to-morrow, but the great news which I gave him has probably changed his plans. I told him of the approaching invasion, and he has perhaps found it necessary to visit the neighbouring chieftains, or even to go on to Croia."

"Well-a-day!" exclaimed Iduna, "I would we were in my father's camp!"

"We shall soon be there, dear lady," replied the prince. "Come, worthy seneschal," he added, turning to that functionary, "drink to this noble lady's happy meeting with her friends."

XVIII.

THREE or four days passed away at the castle of Justinian, in which Nicæus used his utmost exertions to divert the anxiety of Iduna. One day was spent in examining the castle, on another he amused her with a hawking-party, on a third he carried her to the neighbouring ruins of a temple, and read his favourite Æschylus to her amid its lone and elegant columns. It was impossible for any one to be more amiable and entertaining, and Iduna could not resist from recognising his many virtues and accomplishments. The courier had not yet returned from Croia, which Nicæus accounted for by many satisfactory reasons. The suspense, however, at length became so painful to Iduna, that she proposed to the Prince of Athens that they should, without further delay, proceed to that city. As usual, Nicæus was not wanting in many plausible arguments in favour of their remaining at the castle, but Iduna was resolute.

"Indeed, dear Nicæus," she said, "my anxiety to see my father, or hear from him, is so great, that there is scarcely any danger which I would not encounter to gratify my wish. I feel that I have already taxed your endurance too much. But we are no longer in a hostile land, and guards and guides are to be engaged. Let me then depart alone!"

"Iduna!" exclaimed Nicæus, reproachfully "Alas! Iduna, you are cruel, but I did not expect this!"

"Dear Nicæus!" she answered, "you always misinterpret me! It would infinitely delight me to be restored to Hunniades by yourself, but these are no common times, and you are no common person. You forget that there is one that has greater claims upon you even than a forlorn maiden—your country. And whether Iskander be at Croia or not, Greece requires the presence and exertions of the Prince of Athens."

"I have no country," replied Nicæus, mournfully, "and no object for which to exert myself."

"Nicæus! Is this the poetic patriot who was yesterday envying Themistocles!"

"Alas! Iduna, yesterday you were my muse. I do not wonder you are wearied of this castle," continued the prince, in a melancholy tone. "This spot contains nothing to interest you; but for me, it holds all that is dear, and—O! gentle maiden, one smile from you, one smile of inspiration, and I would not envy Themistocles, and might perhaps rival him."

They were walking together in the hall of the castle; Iduna stepped aside and affected to eva

mine a curious buckler. Nicæus followed her, and placing his arm gently in hers, led her away.

"Dearest Iduna," he said, "pardon me, but men struggle for their fate. Mine is in your power. It is a contest between misery and happiness, glory and perhaps infamy. Do not then wonder that I will not yield my chance of the brighter fortune without an effort. Once more I appeal to your pity if not to your love. Were Iduna mine, were she to hold out but the possibility of her being mine, there is no career—solemnly I avow what solemnly I feel—there is no career of which I could not be capable, and no conditions to which I would not willingly subscribe. But this certainty, or this contingency, I must have: I cannot exist without the alternative. And now, upon my knees, I implore her to grant it to me!"

"Nicæus," said Iduna, "this continued recurrence to a forbidden subject is most ungenerous."

"Alas! Iduna, my life depends upon a word, which you will not speak, and you talk of generosity! No! Iduna, it is not I that am ungenerous."

"Let me say then unreasonable, Prince Nicæus."

"Say what you like, Iduna, provided you say that you are mine."

"Pardon me, sir; I am free."

"Free! You have ever underrated me, Iduna. To whom do you owe this boasted freedom?"

"This is not the first time," remarked Iduna, "that you have reminded me of an obligation, the memory of which is indelibly impressed upon my heart, and for which even the present conversation cannot make me feel less grateful. I can never forget that I owe all that is dear to yourself and your companion."

"My companion!" replied the Prince of Athens, pale and passionate. "My companion! Am I ever to be reminded of my companion?"

"Nicæus!" said Iduna; "if you forget what is due to me, at least endeavour to remember what is due to yourself!"

"Beautiful being!" said the prince, advancing and passionately seizing her hand; "pardon me!—pardon me! I am not master of my reason; I am nothing, I am nothing while Iduna hesitates."

"She does not hesitate, Nicæus. I desire—I require that this conversation shall cease—shall never, never be renewed."

"And I tell thee, haughty woman," said the Prince of Athens, grinding his teeth, and speaking with violent action, "that I will no longer be despised with impunity. Iduna is mine, or is no one else's."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the daughter of Hunniades. "Is it indeed come to this? But why am I surprised? I have long known Nicæus. I quit this castle instantly."

"You are a prisoner," replied the prince, very calmly, and leaning with folded arms against the wall.

"A prisoner!" exclaimed Iduna, a little alarmed—"A prisoner! I defy you, sir. You are only a guest like myself. I will appeal to the seneschal in the absence of his lord. He will never permit the honour of his master's flag to be violated by the irrational caprice of a passionate boy."

"What lord?" inquired Nicæus.

"Your friend, the Lord Justinian," answered Iduna. "He could little anticipate such an abuse of his hospitality."

"My friend, the Lord Justinian!" replied Nicæus, with a malignant smile. "I am surprised that a personage of the Lady Iduna's deep discrimination should so easily be deceived by 'a passionate boy!' Is it possible that you could have supposed for a moment that there was any other lord of this castle, save your devoted slave?"

"What!" exclaimed Iduna, really frightened.

"I have indeed the honour of finding the Lady Iduna my guest," continued Nicæus, in a tone of bitter raillery. "This castle of Kallista, the fairest in all Epirus, I inherit from my mother. Of late I have seldom visited it; but indeed it will become a favourite residence of mine, if it be, as I anticipate, the scene of my nuptial ceremony."

Iduna looked around her with astonishment, then threw herself upon a couch, and burst into tears. The Prince of Athens walked up and down the hall with an air of determined coolness.

"Perfidious!" exclaimed Iduna between her sobs.

"Lady Iduna," said the prince, and he seated himself by her side. "I will not attempt to palliate a deception which your charms could alone inspire and can alone justify. Hear me, Lady Iduna, hear me with calmness. I love you; I love with a passion which has been as constant as it is strong. My birth, my rank, my fortunes, do not disqualify me for a union with the daughter of the great Hunniades. If my personal claims may sink in comparison with her surpassing excellence, I am yet to learn that any other prince in Christendom can urge a more effective plea. I am young; the ladies of the court have called me handsome; by your great father's side I have broken some lances in your honour; and even Iduna once confessed she thought me clever. Come, come, be merciful! Let my beautiful Athens receive a fitting mistress. A holy father is in readiness, dear maiden. Come now, one smile! In a few days we shall reach your father's camp, and then we will kneel, as I do now, and beg a blessing on our happy union." As he spoke, he dropped upon his knee, and stealing her hand, looked into her face. It was sorrowful and gloomy.

"It is vain, Nicæus," said Iduna, "to appeal to your generosity; it is useless to talk of the past; it is idle to reproach you for the present. I am a woman, alone and persecuted, where I could least anticipate persecution. Nicæus. I never can be yours; and now I deliver myself to the mercy of Almighty God."

"Tis well," replied Nicæus. "From the tower of the castle you may behold the waves of the Ionian sea. You will remain here a close prisoner, until one of my galleys arrives from Piræus, to bear us to Italy. Mine you must be, Iduna. It remains for you to decide under what circumstances. Continue in your obstinacy, and you may bid farewell for ever to your country and to your father. Be reasonable, and a destiny awaits you which offers every thing that has hitherto been considered the source or cause of happiness." Thus speaking, the prince retired, leaving Lady Iduna to her own unhappy thoughts.

XL.

THE Lady Iduna was at first inclined to view the conduct of the Prince of Athens as one of those passionate and passing ebullitions in which her

long acquaintance with him had taught her he was accustomed to indulge. But when on retiring soon after to her apartments, she was informed by her attendant matron that she must in future consider herself a prisoner, and not venture again to quit them without permission, she began to tremble at the possible violence of an ill-regulated mind. She endeavoured to interest her attendant in her behalf; but the matron was too well schooled to evince any feeling or express any opinion on the subject; and indeed, at length, fairly informed Iduna that she was commanded to confine her conversation to the duties of her office.

The Lady Iduna was very unhappy. She thought of her father, she thought of Iskander. The past seemed a dream; she was often tempted to believe that she was still, and had ever been, a prisoner in the serail of Adrianople; and that all the late wonderful incidents of her life were but the shifting scenes of some wild slumber. And then some slight incident, the sound of a bell, or the sight of some holy emblem, assured her she was in a Christian land, and convinced her of the strange truth that she was indeed in captivity, and a prisoner, above all others, to the fond companion of her youth. Her indignation at the conduct of Nicæus roused her courage; she resolved to make an effort to escape. Her rooms were only lighted from above; she determined to steal forth at night into the gallery; the door was secured. She hastened back to her chamber in fear and sorrow, and wept.

Twice in the course of the day the stern and silent matron visited Iduna with her food; and as she retired, secured the door. This was the only individual that the imprisoned lady ever beheld. And thus heavily rolled on upwards of a week. On the eve of the ninth day, Iduna was surprised by the matron presenting her a letter as she quitted the chamber for the night. Iduna seized it with a feeling of curiosity not unmingled with pleasure. It was the only incident that had occurred during her captivity. She recognised the handwriting of Nicæus, and threw it down with vexation at her silliness in supposing, for a moment, that the matron could have been the emissary of any other person.

Yet the letter must be read, and at length she opened it. It informed her that a ship had arrived from Athens at the coast, and that to-morrow she must depart for Italy. It told her also, that the Turks, under Mahomed, had invaded Albania; and that the Hungarians under the command of her father, had come to support the cross. It said nothing of Iskander. But it reminded her that little more than the same time that would carry her to the coast to embark for a foreign land, would, were she wise, alike enable Nicæus to place her in her father's arms, and allow him to join in the great struggle for his country and his creed. The letter was written with firmness, but tenderly. It left, however, on the mind of Iduna, an impression of the desperate resolution of the writer.

Now it so happened that as this unhappy lady jumped from her couch, and paced the room in the perturbation of her mind, the wind of her drapery extinguished her lamp. As her attendant or jailer, had paid her last visit for the day, there seemed little chance of its being again illumined. The miserable are always more unhappy in the dark. Light is the greatest of comforters. And this little misfortune seemed to the forlorn Iduna almost overwhelming. And as she attempted to look around,

and wrung her hands in very wo, her attention was attracted by a brilliant streak of light upon the wall, which greatly surprised her. She groped her way in its direction, and slowly stretching forth her hand, observed that it made its way through a chink in the frame of one of the great mirrors which were inlaid in the wall. As she pressed the frame, she felt to her surprise that it sprang forward. Had she not been very cautious the advancing mirror would have struck her with great force, but she had presence of mind to withdraw her hand very gradually, repressing the swiftness of the spring. The aperture occasioned by the opening of the mirror consisted of a recess, formed by a closed up window. An old wooden shutter, or blind, in so ruinous a state, that the light freely made its way, was the only barrier against the elements. Iduna seized the handle which remained, at once drew it open with little difficulty.

The captive gazed with gladdened feelings upon the free and beautiful scene. Beneath her rose the rich and aromatic shrubs tinged with the soft and silver light of eve: before her extended the wide and fertile champaign, skirted by the dark and undulating mountains: in the clear sky, glittering and sharp, sparkled the first crescent of the new moon, an auspicious omen to the Moslem invaders.

Iduna gazed with joy upon the landscape, and then hastily descending from the recess, she placed her hands to her eyes, so long unaccustomed to the light. Perhaps, too, she indulged in momentary meditation. For suddenly seizing a number of shawls which were lying on the couches, she knotted them together, and then striving with all her force, she placed the heaviest couch on one end of the costly cord, and then throwing the other out of the window, and intrusting herself to the merciful care of the holy Virgin, the brave daughter of Humniades successfully dropped down into the garden below.

She stopped to breathe, and to revel in her emancipated existence. It was a bold enterprise gallantly achieved. But the danger had now only commenced. She found that she had lighted at the back of the castle. She stole along upon tip-toe, timid as a fawn. She remembered a small wicket-gate that led into the open country. She arrived at it. It was of course guarded. The single sentinel was kneeling before an image of St. George beside him was an empty drinking-cup and an exhausted wine-skin.

"Holy saint!" exclaimed the pious sentinel, "preserve us from all Turkish infidels!" Iduna stole behind him. "Shall men who drink no wine conquer true Christians!" continued the sentinel. Iduna placed her hand upon the lock. "We thank thee for our good vintage," said the sentinel. Iduna opened the gate with the noiseless touch which a feminine finger alone can command. "And for the rise of Lord Iskander!" added the sentinel. Iduna escaped!

Now she indeed was free. Swiftly she ran over the wide plain. She hoped to reach some town or village before her escape could be discovered, and she hurried on for three hours without resting. She came to a beautiful grove of olive trees that spread in extensive ramifications about the plain. And through this beautiful grove of olive trees her path seemed to lead. So she entered and advanced. And when she had journeyed for about a mile, she came to an open and very verdant piece of ground,

which was, as it were, the heart of the grove. In its centre rose a fair and antique structure of white marble, shrouding from the noonday sun the perennial flow of a very famous fountain. It was near on midnight. Iduna was wearied, and she sat down upon the steps of the fountain for rest. And while she was musing over all the strange adventures of her life, she heard a rustling in the wood, and being alarmed, she rose and hid herself behind a tree.

And while she stood there, with palpitating heart, the figure of a man advanced to the fountain from an opposite direction of the grove. He went up the steps, and looked down upon the spring as if he were about to drink, but instead of doing that, he drew his cimeter and plunged it into the water, and called out with a loud voice the name of "Iskander!" three times. Whereupon Iduna, actuated by an irresistible impulse, came forward from her hiding-place, but instantly gave a loud shriek when she beheld—the Prince Mahomed!

"O! night of glory!" exclaimed the prince, advancing, "Do I indeed behold the fair Iduna! This is truly magic!"

"Away! away!" exclaimed the distracted Iduna, as she endeavoured to fly from him.

"He has kept his word, that cunning leech, better than I expected," said Mahomed, seizing her.

"As well as you deserve, ravisher!" exclaimed a majestic voice. A tall figure rushed forward from the wood and dashed back the Turk.

"I am here to complete my contract, Prince Mahomed," said the stranger, drawing his sword.

"Iskander!" exclaimed the prince.

"We have met before, prince. Let us so act now that we may meet for the last time."

"Infamous, infernal traitor," exclaimed Mahomed, "dost thou, indeed, imagine that I will sully my imperial blade with the blood of my runaway slave! No! I came here to secure thy punishment, but I cannot condescend to become thy punisher. Advance, guards, and seize him! Seize them both!"

Iduna flew to Iskander, who caught her in one arm, while he waved his cimeter with the other. The guards of Mahomed poured forth from the side of the grove whence the prince had issued.

"And dost thou, indeed, think, Mahomed," said Iskander, "that I have been educated in the seraglio to be duped by Moslem craft? I offer thee single combat if thou desirest it, but combat as we may, the struggle shall be equal." He whistled, and instantly a body of Hungarians, headed by Hunniades himself, advanced from the side of the grove whence Iskander had issued.

"Come on, then," said Mahomed; "each to his man." Their swords clashed, but the principal attendants of the son of Amurath, deeming the affair, under the present circumstances, assumed the character of a mere rash adventure, bore away the Turkish prince.

"To-morrow, then, this fray shall be decided, on the plains of Kallista," said Mahomed.

"Epirus is prepared," replied Iskander.

The Turks withdrew. Iskander bore the senseless form of Iduna to her father. Hunniades embraced his long lost child. They sprinkled her face with water from the fountain. She revived.

"Where is Nicaeus," inquired Iskander; "and how came you again, dear lady, in the power of Mahomed?"

"Alas! noble sir, my twice deliverer," answered Iduna, "I have, indeed, again been doomed to captivity, but my persecutor, I blush to say, was this time a Christian prince."

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed Iskander. "Who can this villain be?"

"The villain, Lord Iskander, is your friend; and your pupil, dear father."

"Nicaeus of Athens!" exclaimed Hunniades.

Iskander was silent and melancholy.

Thereupon the Lady Iduna recounted to her father and Iskander, sitting between them on the margin of the fount, all that had occurred to her, since herself and Nicaeus parted with Iskander; nor did she omit to relate to Hunniades all the devotion of Iskander, respecting which, like a truly brave man, he had himself been silent. The great Hunniades scarcely knew which rather to do, to lavish his affection on his beloved child, or his gratitude upon Iskander. Thus they went on conversing for some time, Iskander placing his own cloak around Iduna, and almost unconsciously winding his arm around her unresisting form.

Just as they were preparing to return to the Christian camp, a great noise was heard in the grove, and presently, in the direction whence Iduna had arrived, there came a band of men, bearing torches and examining the grove in all directions in great agitation. Iskander and Hunniades stood upon their guard, but soon perceived they were Greeks. Their leader, seeing a group near the fountain, advanced to make inquiries respecting the object of his search, but when he indeed recognised the persons who formed the group, the torch fell from his grasp, and he turned away his head and hid his face in his hands.

Iduna clung to her father; Iskander stood with his eyes fixed upon the ground, but Hunniades, stern and terrible, disembarassing himself of the grasp of his daughter, advanced and laid his hand upon the stranger.

"Young man," said the noble father, "were it contrition instead of shame that inspired this attitude, it might be better. I have often warned you of the fatal consequences of a reckless indulgence of the passions. More than once I have predicted to you, that however great might be your confidence in your ingenuity and your resources, the hour would arrive when such a career would place you in a position as despicable as it was shameful. That hour has arrived, and that position is now filled by the Prince of Athens. You stand before the three individuals in this world whom you have most injured, and whom you were most bound to love and to protect. Here is a friend, who has hazarded his property and his existence for your life and your happiness. And you have made him a mere pander to your lusts, and then deserted him in his greatest necessities. This maiden was the companion of your youth, and entitled to your kindest offices. You have treated her infinitely worse than her Turkish captor. And for myself, sir, your father was my dearest friend. I endeavoured to repay his friendship by supplying his place to his orphan child. How I discharged my duty, it becomes not me to say: how you have discharged yours, this lady here, my daughter, your late prisoner, sir, can best prove."

"O! spare me, spare me, sir," said the Prince of Athens, turning and falling upon his knee. "I am most wretched. Every word cuts to my very core

Just Providence has baffled all my arts, and I am grateful. Whether this lady can, indeed, forgive me, I hardly dare to think, or even hope. And yet forgiveness is a heavenly boon. Perhaps the memory of old days may melt her. As for yourself, sir—but I'll not speak, I cannot. Noble Iskander, if I mistake not, you may whisper words in that fair ear, less grating than my own. May you be happy! I will not profane your prospects with my vows. And yet I'll say farewell!"

The Prince of Athens turned away with an air of complete wretchedness, and slowly withdrew. Iskander followed him.

"Nicæus," said Iskander; but the prince entered the grove, and did not turn round.

"Dear Nicæus," said Iskander. The prince hesitated.

"Let us not part thus," said Iskander. "Iduna is most unhappy. She bade me tell you she had forgotten all."

"God bless her, and God bless you too!" replied Nicæus. "I pray you let me go."

"Nay! dear Nicæus, are we not friends?"

"The best and truest, Iskander. I will to the camp, and meet you in your tent ere morning break. At present, I would be alone."

"Dear Nicæus, one word. You have said upon one point, what I could well wish unsaid, and dared to prophesy what may never happen. I am not made for such supreme felicity. Epirus is my mistress, my Nicæus. As there is a living God, my friend, most solemnly I vow, I have had no thoughts in this affair, but for your honour."

"I know it, my dear friend, I know it," replied Nicæus. "I keenly feel your admirable worth. Say no more, say no more! She is a fit wife for a hero, and you *are* one!"

XX.

AFTER the battle of the bridge, Iskander had hurried to Croia without delay. In his progress, he had made many fruitless inquiries after Iduna and Nicæus, but he consoled himself for the unsatisfactory answers he received by the opinion that they had taken a different course, and the conviction that all must now be safe. The messenger from Croia that informed Hunniades of the escape of his daughter, also solicited his aid in favour of Epirus against the impending invasion of the Turks, and stimulated by personal gratitude as well as by public duty, Hunniades answered the solicitation in person, at the head of twenty thousand lances.

Hunniades and Iskander had mutually flattered themselves when apart, that each would be able to quell the anxiety of the other on the subject of Iduna. The leader of Epirus flattered himself that his late companions had proceeded at once to Transylvania, and the vaivode himself had indulged in the delightful hope that the first person he should embrace at Croia would be his long-lost child. When, therefore, they met, and were mutually incapable of imparting any information on the subject to each other, they were filled with astonishment and disquietude. Events, however, gave them little opportunity to indulge in anxiety or grief. On the day that Hunniades and his lances arrived at Croia, the invading army of the Turks under the Prince Mahomed crossed the

mountains, and soon after pitched their camp on the fertile plain of Kallista.

As Iskander, by the aid of Hunniades and the neighbouring princes, and the patriotic exertions of his countrymen, was at this moment at the head of a force which the Turkish prince could not have anticipated, he resolved to march at once to meet the Ottomans, and decide the fate of Greece by a pitched battle.

The night before the arrival of Iduna at the famous fountain, the Christian army had taken up its position within a few miles of the Turks. The turbaned warriors wished to delay the engagement until the new moon, the eve of which was at hand. And it happened on that said eve that Iskander, calling to mind his contract with the Turkish prince made in the gardens of the seraglio at Adrianople, and believing from the superstitious character of Mahomed that he would not fail to be at the appointed spot, resolved, as we have seen, to repair to the fountain of Kallista.

And now from that fountain the hero retired, bearing with him a prize scarcely less precious than the freedom of the country, for which he was to combat on the morrow's morn.

Ere the dawn had broken, the Christian power was in motion. Iskander commanded the centre, Hunniades the right wing. The left was intrusted at his urgent request to the Prince of Athens. A mist that hung about the plain, allowed Nicæus to charge the right wing of the Turks almost unperceived. He charged with irresistible fury, and soon disordered the ranks of the Moslem. Mahomed with the reserve hastened to their aid. A mighty multitude of janissaries, shouting the name of Allah and his prophet, penetrated the Christian centre. Hunniades endeavoured to attack them on their flank, but was himself charged by the Turkish cavalry. The battle was now general, and raged with terrible fury. Iskander had secreted in his centre a new and powerful battery of cannon, presented to him by the pope, and which had just arrived from Venice. This battery played upon the janissaries with great destruction. He himself mowed them down with his irresistible cimeter.

Infinite was the slaughter! awful the uproar! But of all the Christian knights, this day, no one performed such mighty feats of arms as the Prince of Athens. With a reckless desperation, he dashed about the field, and every thing seemed to yield to his inspiring impulse. His example animated his men with such a degree of enthusiasm, that the division to which he was opposed, although encouraged by the presence of Mahomed himself, could no longer withstand the desperate courage of the Christians, and they fled in all directions. Then, rushing to the aid of Iskander, Nicæus, at the head of a body of picked men, dashed upon the rear of the janissaries, and nearly surrounded them. Hunniades instantly made a fresh charge upon the left wing of the Turks. A panic fell upon the Moslem, who were little prepared for such a demonstration of strength on the part of their adversaries. In a few minutes their order seemed generally broken, and their leaders in vain endeavoured to rally them. Waving his bloody cimeter, and bounding on his black charger, Iskander called upon his men to secure the triumph of the cross and the freedom of Epirus. Pursuit was now general.

XXI.

THE Turks were massacred by thousands. Mahomed, when he found that all was lost, fled to the mountains, with a train of guards and eunuchs, and left the care of his dispersed host to his pashas. The hills were covered with the fugitives and their pursuers. Some also fled to the sea-shore, where the Turkish fleet was at anchor. The plain was strewn with corpses and arms, and tents and standards. The sun was now high in the heavens. The mist had cleared away; but occasional clouds of smoke still sailed about.

A solitary Christian knight entered a winding pass in the green hills, apart from the scene of strife. The slow and trembling step of his wearied steed would have ill qualified him to join in the triumphant pursuit, even had he himself been physically enabled; but the Christian knight was covered with gore, unhappily not alone that of his enemies. He was, indeed, streaming with desperate wounds, and scarcely could his fainting form retain its tottering seat.

The winding pass, which, for some singular reason, he now pursued in solitude, instead of returning to the busy camp for aid and assistance, conducted the knight to a small green valley, covered with sweet herbs, and entirely surrounded by hanging woods. In the centre rose the ruins of a Doric fane: three or four columns gray and majestic. All was still and silent, save that in the clear blue sky an eagle flew, high in the air, but whirling round the temple.

The knight reached the ruins of the Doric fane, and with difficulty dismounting from his charger, fell upon the soft and flowery turf, and for some moments was motionless. His horse stole a few yards away, and, though scarcely less injured than its rider, instantly commenced cropping the inviting pasture.

At length the Christian knight slowly raised his head, and leaning on his arm, sighed deeply. His face was very pale; but as he looked up and perceived the eagle in the heaven, a smile played upon his pallid cheek, and his beautiful eye gleamed with a sudden flash of light.

"Glorious bird!" murmured the Christian warrior, "once I deemed that my career might resemble thine! 'Tis over now; and Greece, for which I would have done so much, will soon forget my immemorial name. I have stolen here to die in silence and in beauty. This blue air, and these green woods, and these lone columns, which oft to me have been a consolation, breathing of the poetic past, and of the days wherein I fain had lived, I have escaped from the fell field of carnage to die among them. Farewell! my country! Farewell to one more beautiful than Greece—farewell, Idu-na!"

These were the last words of Nicæus, Prince of Athens!

XXII.

WHILE the unhappy lover of the daughter of Hunniades breathed his last words to the solitary elements, his more fortunate friend received, in the centre of his scene of triumph, the glorious congratulations of his emancipated country. The discomfiture of the Turks was complete, and this overthrow, coupled with their recent defeat in Bulgaria, secured Christendom from their assaults during the remainder of the reign of Amurath the Second. Surrounded by his princely allies, and the chieftains of Epirus, the victorious standards of Christendom, and the triumphant trophies of the Moslem, Iskander received from the great Hunniades the hand of his beautiful daughter.—"Thanks to these brave warriors," said the hero, "I can now offer to your daughter a safe, an honourable, and a Christian home."

"It is to thee, great sir, that Epirus owes its security," said an ancient chieftain, addressing Iskander, "its national existence, and its holy religion. All that we have to do now is to preserve them; nor indeed do I see that we can more effectually obtain these great objects than by entreating thee to mount the redeemed throne of thy ancestors. Therefore I say, GOD SAVE ISKANDER, KING OF EPIRUS!"

And all the people shouted and said, "GOD SAVE THE KING! GOD SAVE ISKANDER, KING OF EPIRUS!"

HENRIETTA TEMPLE.

A LOVE STORY.



HENRIETTA TEMPLE.

"Quoth Sancho, 'Read it out, by all means; for I mightly delight in hearing of love-stories.'"

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE FAMILY OF ARMINE, AND ESPECIALLY OF SIR FERDINAND AND SIR RATCLIFFE.

THE family of Armine entered England with William the Norman. Ralph D'Ermyne was standard bearer of the Conqueror, and shared prodigally in the plunder, as appears by Domesday Book. At the time of the general survey, the family of Ermyne, or Armyne, possessed numerous manors in Nottinghamshire, and several in the shire of Lincoln. William d'Armyne, lord of the honour of Armyne, was one of the subscribing barons to the Great Charter. His predecessor died in the Holy Land before Ascalon. A succession of stout barons and valiant knights maintained the high fortunes of the family; and, in the course of the various struggles with France, they obtained possession of several fair castles in Guienne and Gascony. In the wars of the Roses the Armynes sided with the house of Lancaster. Ferdinand Armyne, who shared the exile of Henry the Seventh, was knighted on Bosworth Field, and soon after created Earl of Tewkesbury. Faithful to the Church, the second Lord Tewkesbury became involved in one of those numerous risings that harassed the last years of Henry the Eighth. The rebellion was unsuccessful, Lord Tewkesbury was beheaded, his blood attainted, and his numerous estates forfeited to the crown. A younger branch of the family, who had adopted Protestantism, married the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, and attracted, by his talents in negotiation, the notice of Queen Elizabeth. He was sent on a secret mission to the Low Countries, where, having greatly distinguished himself, he obtained on his return the restoration of the family estate of Armine, in Nottinghamshire, to which he retired after an eminently prosperous career, and amused the latter years of his life in the construction of a family mansion, built in that national style of architecture since described by the name of his royal mistress, at once magnificent and convenient. His son, Sir Walsingham Armine, figured in the first batch of baronets under James the First.

During the memorable struggle between the crown and the Commons, in the reign of the unhappy Charles, the Armine family became most distinguished cavaliers. The second Sir Walsing-

ham raised a troop of horse, and gained great credit by charging at the head of his regiment, and defeating Sir Arthur Haselrigg's cuirassiers. It was the first time that that impenetrable band had been taught to fly; but the conqueror was covered with wounds. The same Sir Walsingham also successfully defended Armine House against the Commons, and commanded the cavalry at the battle of Newbury, where two of his brothers were slain. For these various services and sufferings Sir Walsingham was advanced to the dignity of a baron of the realm, by the title of Lord Armine, of Armine, in the county of Nottingham. He died without issue, but the baronetcy devolved on his youngest brother, Sir Ferdinando.

The Armine family, who had relapsed into popery, followed the fortunes of the second James, and the head of the house died at St. Germain's. His son, however, had been prudent enough to remain in England and support the new dynasty, by which means he contrived to secure his title and estates. Roman Catholics, however, the Armines always remained, and this circumstance accounts for this once distinguished family no longer figuring in the history of their country. As far, therefore, as the house of Armine was concerned, time flew during the next century with immemorable wing. The family led a secluded life on their estate, intermarrying only with the great Catholic families, and duly begetting baronets.

At length arose, in the person of the last Sir Ferdinand Armine, one of those extraordinary and rarely gifted beings who require only an opportunity to influence the fortunes of their nation, and to figure as a Cæsar or an Alcibiades. Beautiful, brilliant, and ambitious, the young and restless Armine quitted, in his eighteenth year, the house of his fathers, and his stepdame of a country, and entered the Imperial service. His blood and creed gained him a flattering reception; his skill and valour soon made him distinguished. The world rang with stories of his romantic bravery, his gallantries, his eccentric manners, and his political intrigues, for he nearly contrived to be elected King of Poland. Whether it were disgust at being foiled in this high object by the influence of Austria, or whether, as was much whispered at the time, he had dared to urge his insolent and unsuccessful suit on a still more delicate subject to the Empress Queen herself, certain it is that Sir Ferdinand suddenly quitted the Imperial service, and appeared at Constantinople in person. The man, whom a point of honour prevented from becoming a Pro-

testant in his native country, had no scruples about his profession of faith at Stamboul; certain it is, that the English baronet soon rose high in the favour of the sultan, assumed the Turkish dress, conformed to the Turkish customs, and, finally, led against Austria a division of the Turkish army. Having gratified his pique by defeating the Imperial forces in a sanguinary engagement, and obtaining a favourable peace for the Porte, Sir Ferdinand Armine doffed his turban, and suddenly reappeared in his native country. After the sketch we have given of the last ten years of his life, it is unnecessary to observe that Sir Ferdinand Armine immediately became what is called extremely fashionable, and, as he was now in Protestant England, the empire of fashion was the only one in which the young Catholic could distinguish himself. Let us then charitably set down to the score of his political disabilities the fantastic dissipation and the frantic prodigality in which the liveliness of his imagination, and the energy of his soul, exhausted themselves. After three startling years he married the Lady Barbara Ratcliffe, whose previous divorce from her husband, the Earl of Faulconville, Sir Ferdinand had occasioned. He was, however, separated from his lady during the first year of their more hallowed union, and, retiring to Rome, Sir Ferdinand became apparently very devout. At the end of a year he offered to transfer the whole of his property to the Church, provided the Pope would allow him an annuity, and make him a Cardinal. His Holiness not deeming it fit to consent to the proposition, Sir Ferdinand quitted his capital in a huff, and, returning to England, laid claim to the peerages of Tewkesbury and Armine. Although assured of failing in these claims, and himself, perhaps, as certain of ill success as his lawyers, Sir Ferdinand, nevertheless, expended upwards of 60,000*l.* in their promotion, and was amply repaid for the expenditure in the gratification of his vanity in keeping his name before the public. He was, indeed, never content, except when he was astonishing mankind, and while he was apparently exerting all his efforts to become a King of Poland, a Roman cardinal, or an English peer, the crown, the coronet, and the scarlet hat, were in truth ever secondary points with him, compared to the sensation throughout Europe, which the effort was contrived and calculated to ensure.

On his second return to his native country, Sir Ferdinand had not re-entered society. For such a man, indeed, society, with all its superficial excitement, and all the shadowy variety with which it attempts to cloud the essential monotony of its nature, was intolerably dull and commonplace. Sir Ferdinand, on the contrary, shut himself up in Armine, having previously announced to the world that he was going to write his memoirs. This history, the construction of a castle, and the prosecution of his claims before the House of Lords, apparently occupied his time to his satisfaction, for he remained quiet for several years, until, on the breaking out of the French Revolution, he hastened to Paris, became a member of the Jacobin Club, and of the National Convention. The name of Citizen Armine appears among the regicides. Perhaps in this vote he avenged the loss of the crown of Poland, and the still more mortifying repulse he received from the mother of Marie Antoinette. After the execution of the royal victims, however,

it was discovered that Citizen Armine had made them an offer to save their lives and raise an insurrection in La Vendee, provided he was made lieutenant-general of the kingdom. At his trial, which from the nature of the accusation and the character of the accused, occasioned to his gratification a great sensation, he made no effort to defend himself; but seemed to glory in the chivalric crime. He was hurried to the guillotine, and met his fate with the greatest composure, assuring the public with a mysterious air, that, had he lived four-and-twenty hours longer every thing would have been arranged, and the troubles which he foresaw impending for Europe prevented. So successfully had Armine played his part, that his mysterious and doubtful career occasioned a controversy, from which only the appearance of Napoleon distracted universal attention, and which, indeed, only wholly ceased within these few years. What were his intentions? Was he or was not he a sincere Jacobin? If he made the offer to the royal family, why did he vote for their death? Was he resolved, at all events, to be at the head of one of the parties? A middle course would not suit such a man; and so on. Interminable were the queries and their solutions, the pamphlets and the memoirs, which the conduct of this vain man occasioned, and which must assuredly have appeased his manes. Recently it has been discovered that the charge brought against Armine was perfectly false and purely malicious. Its victim, however, could not resist the dazzling celebrity of the imaginary crime, and he preferred the reputation of closing his career by conduct which at once perplexed and astonished mankind, to a vindication which would have deprived his name of some brilliant accessories, and spared him to a life of which he was, perhaps, wearied.

By the unhappy victim of his vanity and passion Sir Ferdinand Armine left one child, a son, whom he had never seen, now Sir Ratcliffe. Brought up in sadness and seclusion, education had faithfully developed the characteristics of a reserved and melancholy mind. Pride of lineage and sentiments of religion, which even in early youth darkened into bigotry, were not incompatible with strong affections, a stern sense of duty, and a spirit of chivalric honour. Limited in capacity, he was, however, firm in purpose. Trembling at the name of his father, and devoted to the unhappy parent whose presence he had scarcely ever quitted, a word of reproach had never escaped his lips against the chieftain of his blood, and one too whose career, how little soever his child could sympathize with it, still maintained, in men's mouths and minds, the name and memory of the house of Armine. At the death of his father, Sir Ratcliffe had just attained his majority, and he succeeded to immense estates encumbered with mortgages, and to considerable debts, which his feelings of honour would have compelled him to discharge, had they indeed been enforced by no other claim. The estates of the family, on their restoration, had not been entailed; but, until Sir Ferdinand, no head of the house had abused the confidence of his ancestors, and the vast possessions of the house of Armine has descended unimpaired; and unimpaired, as far as he was concerned, Sir Ratcliffe determined they should remain. Although, by the sale of the estates, not only the incumbrances and liabilities

might have been discharged, but himself left in possession of a moderate independence, Sir Ratcliffe at once resolved to part with nothing. Fresh sums were raised for the payment of the debts, and the mortgages now consumed nearly the whole rental of the lands on which they were secured. Sir Ratcliffe obtained for himself only an annuity of three hundred per annum, which he presented to his mother, in addition to the small portion which she had received on her first marriage; and for himself, visiting Armine Place for the first time, he roamed for a few days with sad complacency about that magnificent demesne, and then, taking down from the walls of the magnificent hall the sabre with which his father had defeated the Imperial host, he embarked for Cadiz, and very shortly after his arrival obtained a commission in the Spanish service.

Although the hereditary valour of the Armines had descended to their forlorn representative, it is not probable that, under any circumstances, Sir Ratcliffe would have risen to any particular eminence in the country of his temporary adoption. His was not one of those minds born to command and to create; and his temper was too proud to serve and to solicit. His residence in Spain, however, was not altogether without satisfaction. It was during this sojourn that he gained the little knowledge of life and human nature he possessed; and the creed and solemn manners of the land harmonized with his faith and habits. Among these strangers, too, the proud young Englishman felt not so keenly the degradation of his house; and sometimes—though his was not the fatal gift of imagination—sometimes he indulged in day-dreams of its rise. Unpractised in business, and not gifted with that intuitive quickness which supplies experience and often baffles it, Ratcliffe Armine, who had not quitted the domestic hearth even for the purposes of education, was yet fortunate enough to possess a devoted friend; and this was Glastonbury, his tutor, and confessor to his mother. It was to him that Sir Ratcliffe intrusted the management of his affairs, with a confidence which was deserved; for Glastonbury sympathized with all his feelings, and was so wrapped up in the glory of the family, that he had no greater ambition in life than to become their historiographer, and had been for years employed in amassing materials for a great work dedicated to their celebrity.

When Ratcliffe Armine had been absent about three years, his mother died. Her death was unexpected. She had not fulfilled two-thirds of the allotted period of the Psalmist, and in spite of many sorrows she was still beautiful. Glastonbury, who communicated to him the intelligence in a letter in which he vainly attempted to suppress his own overwhelming affliction, counselled his immediate return to England, if but for a season, and the unhappy Ratcliffe followed his advice. By the death of his mother Sir Ratcliffe Armine became possessed, for the first time, of a very small but still an independent income; and having paid a visit, soon after his return to his native country, to a Catholic nobleman, to whom his acquaintance had been of some use when travelling in Spain, he became enamoured of one of his daughters, and his passion being returned, and not disapproved by the father, he was soon after married to Constance, the eldest daughter of Lord Grandison.

CHAPTER II.

ARMINE DESCRIBED.

AFTER his marriage Sir Ratcliffe determined to reside at Armine. In one of the largest parks in England there yet remained a fragment of a vast Elizabethan pile, that in old days bore the name of Armine Place. When Sir Ferdinand had commenced building Armine Castle, he had pulled down the old mansion, partly for the sake of its site, and partly for the sake of its materials. Long lines of turreted and many-windowed walls, tall towers, and lofty arches now rose in picturesque confusion on the green ascent where heretofore old Sir Walsingham had raised the fair and convenient dwelling, which he justly deemed might have served the purpose of a long posterity. The hall and chief staircase of the castle, and a gallery, alone were finished; and many a day had Sir Ferdinand passed in arranging the pictures, the armour, and choice rarities, of these magnificent apartments. The rest of the building was a mere shell; nor was it in all parts even roofed in. Heaps of bricks and stone, and piles of timber, appeared in all directions; and traces of the sudden stoppage of the great work might be observed in the temporary saw-pits still remaining, the sheds for the workmen, and the kilns and furnaces, which had never been removed. Time, however, that had stained the neglected towers with an antique tint, and had permitted many a generation of birds to build their sunny nests on all the coignes of vantage of the unfinished walls, had exercised a mellowing influence even on these rude accessories, and in the course of years they had been so drenched by the rain, and so buffeted by the wind, and had become so covered with moss and ivy, that they rather added to, than detracted from the picturesque character of the whole mass.

A few hundred yards from the castle, but situate on the same verdant rising ground, and commanding, although well sheltered, an extensive view over the wide park, was the fragment of the old Place that we have noticed. The rough and undulating rent which marked the severance of the building was now thickly covered with ivy, which in its gamesome luxuriance had contrived also to climb up a remaining stack of tall chimneys, and to spread over the covering of the large oriel window. This fragment contained a set of very pleasant chambers which, having been occupied by the late baronet, were of course furnished with great taste and comfort; and there was, moreover, accommodation sufficient for a small establishment. Armine Place, before Sir Ferdinand, unfortunately for his descendants, determined in the eighteenth century on building a feudal castle, had been situate in very famous pleasure-grounds, which extended at the back of the mansion over a space of several hundred acres. The grounds in the immediate vicinity of the buildings had of course suffered severely, but the far greater portion had only been neglected; and there were some indeed who deemed, as they wandered through the arbour walks of this enchanting wilderness, that its beauty had been materially enhanced even by this very neglect. It seemed like a forest in a beautiful romance; a green and bowery wilderness where Boccaccio would have loved to woo, and Watteau to paint. So artfully, indeed,

had the walks been planned, that they seemed interminable, nor was there a single point in the whole plaisance where the keenest eye could have detected a limit. Sometimes you wandered in those arched and winding walks dear to pensive spirits; sometimes you emerged on a plot of turf, blazing in the sunshine, a small and bright savannah, and gazed with wonder on the group of black and mighty cedars that rose from its centre, with their sharp and spreading foliage. The beautiful and the vast blended together; and the moment after you had beheld with delight a bed of geraniums or of myrtles, you found yourself in an amphitheatre of Italian pines. A strange exotic perfume filled the air; you trod on the flowers of other lands; and shrubs and plants, that usually are only trusted from their conservatories like sultanas from their jealousies, to sniff the air and recall their bloom, here learning from hardship the philosophy of endurance, had struggled successfully even against northern winters, and wanted now in native and unpruned luxuriance. Sir Ferdinand, when he resided at Armine, was accustomed to fill these pleasure-grounds with macaws, and other birds of gorgeous plumage; but these had fled away with their master, all but two swans, which still floated on the surface of an artificial lake, narrow, but of great and unswerving length, and which marked the centre of this Paradise.

In the remains of the ancient seat of his father, Sir Ratcliffe Armine and his bride now sought a home. The principal chamber of Armine Place was a large irregular room, a low but richly-carved oaken roof, studded with achievements. This apartment was lighted by the oriel window we have mentioned, the upper panes of which contained some very ancient specimens of painted glass, and, having been fitted up by Sir Ferdinand as a library, contained a large collection of valuable books. From the library, you entered through an arched door of painted glass into a small room, of which, it being much out of repair when the family arrived, Lady Armine had seized the opportunity of gratifying her taste in the adornment. She had hung it with some old-fashioned pea-green damask, that exhibited to advantage several copies of Spanish paintings by herself, for her ladyship was a very skilful artist. The third and remaining chamber was the dining-room, a somewhat gloomy chamber, being shadowed by a neighbouring chestnut. A portrait of Sir Ferdinand, when a youth, in a Venetian dress, was suspended over the old-fashioned fireplace; and opposite hung a fine hunting piece by Schneiders. Lady Armine was a very amiable and accomplished woman. She had enjoyed all the advantage of foreign education under the inspection of a cautious parent; and a residence on the Continent, while it had afforded her many graces, had not, as unfortunately sometimes is the case, divested her of those more substantive though less showy qualities of which the husband knows the value. She was pious and dutiful: her manners were graceful, for she had visited courts and mixed in the most polished circles, but she had fortunately not learned to affect insensibility as a system, or to believe that the essence of good breeding consists in showing your fellow-creatures that you despise them. Her cheerful temper soaced the constitutional gloom of Sir Ratcliffe, and, indeed, had originally won his heart even more than her remarkable beauty; and while at the same time she loved a country life, she possessed, in a lettered taste, in a

beautiful and highly-cultivated voice, and in a scientific knowledge of music and of painting, all those resources which prevent retirement degenerating into loneliness. Her foibles, if we must confess that she was not faultless, endeared her to her husband, for her temper reflected his own pride, and she possessed the taste for splendour which was also his native mood, although circumstances had compelled him to stifle its gratification.

Love, pure and profound, had alone prompted the union between Ratcliffe Armine and Constance Grandison. Doubtless, like all of her race, she might have chosen amid the wealthiest of the Catholic nobles and gentry one who would have been proud to have mingled his life with hers; but, with a soul not insensible to the splendid accidents of existence, she yielded her heart to one who could repay the rich sacrifice only with devotion. His poverty, his pride, his dangerous and hereditary gift of beauty, his mournful life, his illustrious lineage, his reserved and romantic mind, had at once attracted her fancy and captivated her heart. She shared all his aspirations and sympathized with all his hopes; and the old glory of the house of Armine, and its revival and restoration, were the object of her daily thoughts, and often of her nightly dreams.

With these feelings Lady Armine settled herself at her new home scarcely with a pang that the whole park in which she lived was let out as a grazing ground, and only trusting, as she beheld the groups of ruminating cattle, that the day might yet come for the antlered tenants of the bowers to resume their shady dwellings. The good man and his wife who hitherto had inhabited the old Place, and shown the castle and the plaisance to passing travellers, were, under the new order of affairs, promoted to the respective offices of serving-man and cook, or butler and housekeeper, as they styled themselves in the village. A maiden brought from Grandison to wait on Lady Armine completed the establishment, with her young brother, who, among numerous duties, performed the office of groom, and attended to a pair of beautiful white ponies which Sir Ratcliffe drove in a phaeton. This equipage, which was remarkable for its elegance, was the especial delight of Lady Armine, and certainly the only piece of splendour in which Sir Ratcliffe indulged. As for neighbourhood, Sir Ratcliffe, on his arrival, of course received a visit from the rector of the parish, and, by the courteous medium of this gentleman, he soon occasioned it to be generally understood that he was not anxious that the example of his rector should be followed. The intimation, in spite of much curiosity, was of course respected. Nobody called upon the Armines. This happy couple, however, were too much engrossed with their own society to require amusement from any other sources than themselves. The honeymoon was passed in wandering in the pleasure-grounds, and in wondering at their own marvellous happiness. Then Lady Armine would sit on a green bank and sing her choicest songs, and Sir Ratcliffe repaid her for her kindness by speeches even softer than serenades. The arrangement of their dwelling occupied the second month: each day witnessed some felicitous yet economical alteration of her creative taste. The third month Lady Armine determined to make a garden.

"I wish," said her affectionate husband, as he toiled with delight in her service, "I wish, my dear

Constance, that Glastonbury was here; he was such a capital gardener."

"Let us ask him, dear Ratcliffe; and, perhaps, for such a friend, we have already allowed too great a space of time to elapse without sending an invitation."

"Why, we are so happy," said Sir Ratcliffe, smiling; "and yet Glastonbury is the best creature in the world. I hope you will like him, dear Constance."

"I am sure I shall, dear Ratcliffe. Give me that geranium, love. Write to him to-day; write to Glastonbury to-day."

CHAPTER III.

ARRIVAL OF GLASTONBURY.

ADRIAN GLASTONBURY was a younger son of an old but decayed English family. He had been educated at a college of Jesuits in France, and had entered at an early period of life the service of the Romish church, whose communion his family had never quitted. At college young Glastonbury had been alike distinguished for his assiduous talents, and for the extreme benevolence of his disposition. He was one of those minds to which refinement is natural, and which learning and experience never deprive of simplicity. Apparently, his passions were not violent; perhaps they were restrained by his profound piety. Next to his devotion, Glastonbury was most remarkable for his taste. The magnificent temples, in which the mysteries of the Deity and saints he worshipped were celebrated, developed the latent predisposition for the beautiful, which became almost the master sentiment of his life. In the inspired and inspiring paintings that crowned the altars of the churches and the cathedrals in which he ministered, Glastonbury first studied art; and it was as he glided along the solemn shade of those Gothic aisles, gazing on the brave groining of the vaulted roofs, whose deep and sublime shadows so beautifully contrasted with the sparkling shrines and the delicate chancies below, that he first imbibed that passion for the architecture of the middle ages that afterwards led him on many a pleasant pilgrimage, with no better companions than a wallet and a sketch-book. Indeed, so very sensible was Glastonbury of the influence of the early and constant scene of his youth on his imagination, that he was wont to trace his love of heraldry, of which he possessed a remarkable knowledge, to the emblazoned windows that perpetuated the memory and the achievements of many a pious founder.

When Glastonbury was about twenty-one years of age, he unexpectedly inherited from an uncle a sum which, though by no means considerable, was for him a sufficient independence; and as no opening in the service of the church at this moment offered itself, which he considered it a duty to pursue, he determined to gratify that restless feeling which seems inseparable from the youth of men gifted with fine sensibilities, and which probably arises in an unconscious desire to quit the commonplace, and to discover the ideal. He wandered on foot throughout the whole of Switzerland and Italy; and after more than three years' absence, returned to England with several thousand sketches,

and a complete Alpine Hortus Siccus. He was even more proud of the latter than of having kissed the pope's toe. In the next seven years the life of Glastonbury was nearly equally divided between the duties of a sacred profession and the gratification of his simple and elegant taste. He resided principally in Lancashire, where he became librarian to a Catholic nobleman of the highest rank, whose notice he had first attracted by publishing a description of his grace's residence, illustrated by his drawings. The duke, who was a man of fine taste and antiquarian pursuits, and an exceedingly benevolent person, sought Glastonbury's acquaintance in consequence of the publication, and from that moment a close and cherished intimacy subsisted between them.

In the absence of the family, however, Glastonbury found time for many excursions; by means of which he at last completed drawings of all our cathedrals. There remained for him still the abbeys and minsters of the West of England, a subject on which he was ever very eloquent. Glastonbury performed all these excursions on foot, armed only with an ashen staff, which he had cut in his early travels, and respecting which he was very superstitious; so that he would have no more thought of journeying without this stick than most other people without their hat. Indeed, to speak the truth, Glastonbury has been known to quit a house occasionally without that necessary appendage, for, from living much alone, he was not a little absent; but, instead of piquing himself on such eccentricities, they ever occasioned him mortification. Yet Glastonbury was a universal favourite, and ever a welcome guest. In his journeys he had no want of hosts; for there was not a Catholic family which would not have been hurt had he passed them without a visit. He was indeed a rarely accomplished personage. An admirable scholar and profound antiquary, he possessed also a considerable practical knowledge of the less severe sciences, was a fine artist, and no contemptible musician. His pen, too, was that of a ready writer;—if his sonnets be ever published, they will rank among the finest in our literature.

Glastonbury was about thirty when he was induced by Lady Barbara Armine to quit a roof where he had passed some happy years, and to undertake the education of her son Ratcliffe, a child of eight years of age. From this time Glastonbury in a great degree withdrew himself from his former connexions, and so completely abandoned his previous mode of life, that he never quitted his new home. His pupil repaid him for his zeal rather by the goodness of his disposition, and his unblemished conduct, than by any remarkable brilliancy of talents or acquirements: but Ratcliffe, and particularly his mother, were capable of appreciating Glastonbury; and certain it is, whatever might be the cause, he returned their sympathy with deep emotion, for every thought and feeling of his existence seemed dedicated to their happiness and prosperity.

So great indeed was the shock which he experienced at the unexpected death of Lady Barbara, that for some time he meditated assuming the cowl; and, if the absence of his pupil prevented the accomplishment of this project, the plan was only postponed, not abandoned. The speedy marriage of Sir Ratcliffe followed. Circumstances had prevented Glastonbury from being present at the cere-

mony. It was impossible for him to retire to the cloister without seeing his pupil. Business, if not affection, rendered an interview between them necessary. It was equally impossible for Glastonbury to trouble a bride and bridegroom with his presence. When, however, three months had elapsed, he began to believe that he might venture to propose a meeting to Sir Ratcliffe; but while he was yet meditating on this step, he was anticipated by the receipt of a letter containing a very warm invitation to Armine.

It was a beautiful sunshiny afternoon in June. Lady Armine was seated in front of the place looking towards the park, and busied with her work; while Sir Ratcliffe, stretched on the grass, was reading to her the last poem of Scott, which they had just received from the neighbouring town.

"Ratcliffe, my dear," said Lady Armine, "some one approaches."

"A trumper, Constance?"

"No, no, my love, rise; it is a gentleman."

"Who can it be?" said Sir Ratcliffe, rising; "perhaps it is your brother, love. Ah! no, it is—it is Glastonbury!"

And at these words, he ran forward, jumped over the iron hurdle which separated their lawn from the park, nor stopped his quick pace until he reached a middle-aged man of very prepossessing appearance, though certainly not unsullied by the dust, for assuredly the guest had travelled far and long.

"My dear Glastonbury," exclaimed Sir Ratcliffe, embracing him, and speaking under the influence of an excitement in which he rarely indulged, "I am the happiest fellow alive. How do you do? I will introduce you to Constance directly. She is dying to know you, and quite prepared to love you as much as myself. O! my dear Glastonbury, you have no idea how happy I am. She is a perfect angel."

"I am sure of it," said Glastonbury, very seriously.

Sir Ratcliffe hurried his tutor along. "Here is my best friend, Constance," he eagerly exclaimed. Lady Armine rose and welcomed Mr. Glastonbury very cordially. "Your presence, my dear sir, has, I assure you, been long desired by both of us," she said, with a delightful smile.

"No compliments, believe me," added Sir Ratcliffe, "Constance never pays compliments. Do you, sweet? She fixed upon your own room, herself. She always calls it Mr. Glastonbury's room; she does, upon my word. Is not she an angel?"

"Ah! madam," said Mr. Glastonbury, laying his hand very gently on the shoulder of Sir Ratcliffe, and meaning to say something very felicitous, "I know this dear youth well; and I have always thought whoever could claim his heart should be counted a very fortunate woman."

"And such the possessor esteems herself," replied Lady Armine, with a smile.

Sir Ratcliffe, after a quarter of an hour or so had passed in conversation, said, "Come, Glastonbury, you have arrived at a good time; for dinner is at hand. Let me show you to your room. I fear you have had a hot day's journey—thank God, we are together again—Give me your staff—I will take care of it—no fear of that—so, this way—you have seen the old Place before?—Take care of that step—I say, Constance," said Sir Ratcliffe, in a suppressed voice, and running back to his wife, "how do you like him?"

"Very much, indeed."

"But do you really?"

"Really, truly."

"Angel!" exclaimed the gratified Sir Ratcliffe.

CHAPTER IV.

PROGRESS OF AFFAIRS AT ARMINE.

LIFE is adventurous. Events are perpetually occurring, even in the calmness of domestic existence, which change in an instant the whole train and tenor of our thoughts and feelings, and often materially influence our fortunes and our character. It is strange, and sometimes as profitable as it is singular, to recall our state on the eve of some acquaintance which transfigures our being; with some man whose philosophy revolutionizes our minds; with some woman whose charms metamorphose our career. These retrospective meditations are fruitful of self-knowledge.

The visit of Glastonbury was one of those incidents, which, from the unexpected results that they occasion, swell into events. He had not been long a guest at Armine before Sir Ratcliffe and his lady could not refrain from mutually communicating to each other the gratification they should feel could Glastonbury be induced to cast his lot among them. His benevolent and placid temper, his many accomplishments, and the entire affection which he evidently entertained for everybody that bore the name and for every thing that related to the fortunes of Armine, all pointed him out as a friend alike to be cherished and to be valued. Under his auspices the garden of the fair Constance soon flourished; his taste guided her pencil and his voice accompanied her lute. Sir Ratcliffe, too, thoroughly enjoyed his society; Glastonbury was with him the only link, in life, between the present and the past. They talked over old times together; and sorrowful recollections lost half their bitterness from the tenderness of his sympathetic reminiscences. Sir Ratcliffe, too, was conscious of the value of such a companion for his gifted wife. And Glastonbury, moreover, among his many accomplishments, had the excellent quality of never being in the way. He was aware that young people, and especially young lovers, are not averse sometimes to being alone; and his friends, in his absence, never felt that he was neglected, because his pursuits were so various, and his resources so numerous, that they were sure he was employed and amused.

In the pleasure of Armine, at the termination of a long turfen avenue of purple beeches, there was a turreted gate, flanked by round towers, intended by Sir Ferdinand for one of the principal entrances of his castle. Over the gate were small but convenient chambers, to which you ascend by a winding staircase in one of the towers; the other was a mere shell. It was sunset; the long vista gleamed in the dying rays, that shed also a rich breadth of light over the bold and baronial arch. Our friends had been examining the chambers, and Lady Armine, who was a little wearied by the exertion, stood opposite the building, leaning on her husband and his friend.

"A man might go far, and find a worse dwelling than that portal," said Glastonbury, musingly. "Methinks life might glide away pleasantly enough in those little rooms, with one's

books and drawings, and this noble avenue for a pensive stroll."

"I wish to heaven, my dear Glastonbury, you would try the experiment," said Sir Ratcliffe. "Ah! do, Mr. Glastonbury," added Lady Armine, "take pity upon us!"

"At any rate, it is not so dull as a cloister," added Sir Ratcliffe, "and, say what they like, there is nothing like living among friends."

"You will find me very troublesome," replied Glastonbury with a smile, and then, turning the conversation, evidently more from embarrassment than distaste, he remarked the singularity of the purple beeches.

Their origin was uncertain; but one circumstance is sure; that, before another month had passed, Glastonbury was tenant for life of the portal of Armine Castle, and all his books and collections were safely stowed and arranged in the rooms with which he had been so much pleased.

The course of time for some years flowed on happily at Armine. In the second year of their marriage Lady Armine presented her husband with a son. Their family was never afterwards increased, but the proud father was consoled by the sex of his child for the recollection that the existence of his line depended upon the precious contingency of a single life. The boy was christened Ferdinand. With the exception of an annual visit to Lord Grandison, the Armine family never quitted their home. Necessity as well as taste induced this regularity of life. The affairs of Sir Ratcliffe did not improve. His mortgagees were more strict in their demands of interest, than his tenants in payment of their rents. His man of business, who had made his fortune in the service of the family, was not wanting in accommodation to his client; but he was a man of business: he could not sympathize with the peculiar feelings and fancies of Sir Ratcliffe, and he persisted in seizing every opportunity of urging on him the advisability of selling his estates. However, by strict economy and temporary assistance from his lawyer, Sir Ratcliffe, during the first ten years of his marriage, managed to carry on affairs, and though occasional embarrassment sometimes caused him fits of gloom and despondency, the sanguine spirit of his wife, and the confidence in the destiny of their beautiful child which she regularly enforced upon him, maintained on the whole his courage. All their hopes and joys were indeed centered in the education of the little Ferdinand. At ten years of age he was one of those spirited, and at the same time docile, boys, who seem to combine with the wild and careless grace of childhood the thoughtfulness and self-discipline of maturer age. It was the constant and truthful boast of his parents, that in spite of all his liveliness, he had never in the whole course of his life disobeyed them. In the village, where he was idolized, they called him "the little prince;" he was so gentle and so generous; so kind, and yet so dignified in his demeanour. His education was very remarkable; for though he never quitted home, and lived indeed in such extreme seclusion, so richly gifted were those few persons with whom he passed his life, that it would have been difficult to have fixed upon a youth, however favoured by fortune, who enjoyed greater advantages for the cultivation of his mind and manners. From the first dawn of the intellect of the young Armine, Glastonbury had devoted himself to its culture; and the kind scholar,

who had not shrunk from the painful and patient task of impregnating a young mind with the seeds of knowledge, had bedewed its budding promise with all the fertilizing influence of his learning and his taste. As Ferdinand advanced in years, he had participated in the accomplishments of his mother; from her he derived not only a taste for the fine arts, but no unskilful practice. She, too, had cultivated the rich voice with which nature had endowed him; and it was his mother who taught him not only to sing, but to dance. In more manly accomplishments Ferdinand could not have found a more skilful instructor than his father, a consummate sportsman, and who, like all his ancestors, was remarkable for his finished horsemanship, and the certainty of his aim. Under a roof, too, whose inmates were distinguished for their sincere piety and unaffected virtue, the higher duties of existence were not forgotten; and Ferdinand Armine was early and ever taught to be sincere, dutiful, charitable, and just; and to have a deep sense of the great account hereafter to be delivered to his Creator. The very foibles of his parents which he imbibed tended to the maintenance of his magnanimity. His illustrious lineage was early impressed upon him, and inasmuch as little now was left to them but their honour, so was it doubly incumbent upon him to preserve that chief treasure, of which fortune could not deprive them, unscathed.

This much of the education of Ferdinand Armine. With great gifts of nature, with lively and highly cultivated talents, and a most affectionate and disciplined temper, he was adored by the friends, who nevertheless had too much sense to spoil him. But for his character, what was that? Perhaps, with all their anxiety and all their care, and all their apparent opportunities for observation, the parents and the tutor are rarely skilful in discovering the character of their child or charge. Custom blunts the fineness of psychological study: those with whom we have lived long and early, are apt to blend our essential and our accidental qualities in one bewildering association. The consequences of education and of nature are not sufficiently discriminated. Nor is it, indeed, marvellous, that for a long time temperament should be disguised and even stifled by education; for it is, as it were, a contest between a child and a man.

There were moments when Ferdinand Armine loved to be alone; when he could fly from all the fondness of his friends, and roam in solitude amid the wild and desolate pleasure-grounds, or wander for hours in the halls and galleries of the castle, gazing on the pictures of his ancestors. He ever experienced a strange satisfaction in beholding the portrait of his grandfather. He would stand sometimes abstracted for many minutes before the portrait of Sir Ferdinand, in the gallery, painted by Reynolds, before his grandfather left England, and which the child already singularly resembled. But was there any other resemblance between them than form and feature? Did the fiery imagination and the terrible passions of that extraordinary man lurk in the innocent heart and the placid mien of his young descendant? Awful secrets these, which this history shall unfold. No matter now! Behold, he is a light-hearted and airy child! Thought passes over his brow like a cloud in a summer-sky, or the shadow of a bird over the sunshiny earth; and he skims away from the silent hall and his momentary reverie, to fly a kite or chase a butterfly!

CHAPTER V.

A DOMESTIC SCENE.

YEARS glided away without any remarkable incidents in the life of young Ferdinand. He seldom quitted home, except as companion to Glastonbury in his pedestrian excursions, when he witnessed a different kind of life to that displayed in an annual visit which he paid to Grandison. The boy amused his grandfather, with whom, therefore, he became a favourite. The old lord, indeed, would have had no objection to his grandson passing half the year with him; and he always returned home with a benediction, a letter full of praises, and a ten-pound note. Lady Armine was quite delighted with these symptoms of affection on the part of her father towards her child; and augured from them the most important future results. But Sir Ratcliffe, who was not blessed with so sanguine a temperament as his amiable lady, and who, unbiassed by blood, was perhaps better qualified to form an opinion of the character of his father-in-law, never shared her transports, and seldom omitted an opportunity of restraining.

"It is all very well, my dear," he would observe, "for Ferdinand to visit his relations. Lord Grandison is his grandfather. It is very proper that he should visit his grandfather. I like him to be seen at Grandison. That is all very right. Grandison is a first-rate establishment, where he is certain of meeting persons of his own class, with whom circumstances unhappily"—and here Sir Ratcliffe sighed—"debar him from mixing: and your father, Constance, is a very good sort of man. I like your father, Constance, you know, very much. No person ever could be more courteous to me than your father has ever been. I have no complaints to make of your father, Constance; or your brother, or indeed of any member of your family. I like them all; I like them very much. Persons more kind, or more thoroughly bred, I am sure I never knew. And I think they like us—I do indeed—I think they like us very much. They appear to me to be always really glad to see us, and to be unaffectedly sorry when we quit them. I am sure I should be very happy if it were in my power to return their hospitality, and welcome them at Armine: but it is useless to think of that. God only knows whether we shall be able to remain here ourselves. All I want to make you feel, my love, is, that if you are building any castle in that little brain of yours on the ground of expectations from Grandison, trust me, you will be disappointed, my dear, you will indeed."

"But my love—"

"If your father die to-morrow, my dear, he will not leave us a shilling. And who can complain? I cannot. He has always been very frank. I remember when we were going to marry, and I was obliged to talk to him about your portion—I remember it as if it were only yesterday—I remember his saying, with the most flattering smile in the world, 'I wish the £5,000, Sir Ratcliffe, were £50,000, for your sake; particularly, as it never will be in my power to increase it.'"

"But my dear Ratcliffe, surely he may do something for his favourite, Ferdinand?"

"My dear Constance—there you are again! Why *favourite*? I hate the very word. Your

father is a good-natured man, a very good-natured man—your father is one of the best-natured men I ever was acquainted with. He has not a single care in the world, and he thinks nobody else has; and what is more, my dear, nobody ever could persuade him that anybody else has. He has no idea of our situation; he never could form an idea of our situation. If I chose to attempt to make him understand it, he would listen with the greatest politeness, shrug his shoulders at the end of the story, tell me to keep up my spirits, and order another bottle of Madeira, in order that he might illustrate his precept by practice. He is a good natured selfish man. He likes us to visit him, because you are gay and agreeable, and because I never asked a favour of him in the whole course of our acquaintance: he likes Ferdinand to visit him, because he is a handsome, fine-spirited boy, and his friends congratulate him on having such a grandson. And so Ferdinand is his *favourite*; and next year I should not be surprised were he to give him a pony; and perhaps, if he die, he will leave him fifty guineas to buy a gold watch."

"Well, I dare say you are right, Ratcliffe; but still nothing that you can say, will ever persuade me that Ferdinand is not papa's decided favourite."

"Well! we shall soon see what this favour is worth," retorted Sir Ratcliffe, rather bitterly. "Regularly every visit for the last three years, your father has asked me what I intended to do with Ferdinand. I said to him last year, more than I thought I ever could say to any one—I told him that Ferdinand was now fifteen, and that I wished to get him a commission; but that I had no influence to get him a commission, and no money to pay for it, if it were offered me. I think that was pretty plain; and I have been surprised ever since, that I ever could have placed myself in such a degrading position as to say so much."

"Degrading, my dear Ratcliffe," said his wife.

"I felt it as such; and such I still feel it."

At this moment Glastonbury, who was standing at the other end of the room, examining a large folio, and who had evidently been very uneasy during the whole conversation, attempted to quit the room.

"My dear Glastonbury," said Sir Ratcliffe, with a forced smile, "you are alarmed at our domestic broils. Pray, do not leave the room. You know we have no secrets from you."

"No, indeed, do not go, Mr. Glastonbury," added Lady Armine: "and if indeed there be a domestic broil,"—and here she rose and kissed her husband,—"at any rate witness our reconciliation."

Sir Ratcliffe smiled, and returned his wife's embrace with much feeling.

"My own Constance," he said, "you are the dearest wife in the world; and if I ever feel unhappy, believe me it is only because I do not see you in the position to which you are entitled."

"I know no fortune to be compared to your love, Ratcliffe; and as for our child, nothing will ever persuade me that all will not go right, and that he will not restore the fortunes of the family."

"Amen!" said Glastonbury, closing the book with a reverberating sound. "Nor indeed can I believe that Providence will ever desert a great and pious line!"

CHAPTER VI.

CONTAINING ANOTHER DOMESTIC SCENE.

LADY ARMINE and Glastonbury were both too much interested in the welfare of Sir Ratcliffe, not to observe with deep concern that a great, although gradual, change had occurred in his character during the last five years. He had become moody and querulous, occasionally even irritable. His constitutional melancholy, long diverted by the influence of a vigorous youth, the society of a charming woman, and the interesting feelings of a father, began to reassert its ancient and essential sway, and at times even to deepen into gloom. Sometimes whole days elapsed without his ever indulging in conversation; his nights, once tranquil, were now remarkable for their restlessness; his wife was alarmed at the sighs and agitation of his dreams. He quite abandoned also his field sports, and none of those innocent sources of amusement, in which it was once his boast their retirement was so rich, now interested him. In vain Lady Armine sought his society in her walks, or consulted him about her flowers. His frigid and monosyllabic replies discouraged all her efforts. No longer did he lean over her easel, or call for a repetition of his favourite song. At times these dark fits passed away, and if not cheerful, he was at least serene. But, on the whole, he was an altered man; and his wife could no longer resist the miserable conviction, that he was an unhappy one.

She, however, was at least spared the mortification, the bitterest that a wife can experience, of feeling that this change in his conduct was occasioned by any indifference towards her; for, averse as Sir Ratcliffe was to converse on a subject so hopeless and ungrateful as the state of his fortune, still there were times in which he could not refrain from communicating to the partner of his bosom all the causes of his misery, and these, indeed, too truly had she divined.

"Alas!" she would sometimes say, as she tried to compose his restless pillow; "what is this pride, to which you men sacrifice every thing? For me, who am a woman, love is sufficient. O! my Ratcliffe, why do you not feel like your Constance? What if these estates be sold, still we are Armines! and still our dear Ferdinand is spared to us! Believe me, love, that if deference to your feelings has prompted my silence, I have long felt that it would be wiser for us at once to meet a necessary evil. For God's sake, put an end to the tortures of this life, which is destroying us both. Poverty, absolute poverty, with you and with your love, I can meet even with cheerfulness; but indeed, my Ratcliffe, I can bear our present life no longer; I shall die, if you be unhappy. And O! dearest Ratcliffe, if that were to happen which sometimes I fear has happened, if you were no longer to love me—"

But here Sir Ratcliffe assured her of the reverse. "Only think," she would continue, "if when we married we had voluntarily done that which we may now be forced to do, we really should have been almost rich people; at least we should have had quite enough to live in ease, and even elegance. And now we owe thousands to that horrible Bagster, who, I am sure, cheated your father out of nose and home, and, I dare say, after all, wants to buy Armine for himself."

"He buy Armine! An attorney buy Armine!

Never, Constance, never—I will be buried in its ruins first. There is no sacrifice that I would not sooner make—"

"But, dearest love, suppose we sell it to some one else, and suppose, after paying every thing, we have thirty thousand pounds left. How well we could live abroad on the interest of thirty thousand pounds!"

"There would not be thirty thousand pounds left now!"

"Well, five-and-twenty, or even twenty. I could manage on twenty. And then we could buy a commission for dear Ferdinand."

"But to leave our child!"

"Could not he go into the Spanish service. Perhaps you could get a commission in the Spanish Guards for nothing. They must remember you there. And such a name is Armine! I have no doubt that the king would be quite proud to have another Armine in his guard. And then we could live at Madrid; and that would be so delightful; because you speak Spanish so beautifully, and I could learn it very quickly. I am very quick at learning languages. I am indeed."

"I think you are very quick at every thing, dear Constance. I am sure you are really a treasure of a wife; I have cause every hour to bless you; and if it were not for my own sake, I should say that I wished you had made a happier marriage."

"O! do not say that, Ratcliffe; say any thing but that, Ratcliffe. If you love me, I am the happiest woman that ever lived. Be sure always of that."

"I wonder if they do remember me at Madrid!"

"To be sure they do. How could they forget you—how could they forget my Ratcliffe! I dare say, you go to this day by the name of the handsome Englishman."

"Poh! I remember when I left England before—I had no wife then, no child, but I remembered who I was—and when I thought I was the last of our race, and that I was in all probability going to spill the little blood that was spared of us in a foreign soil—O! Constance, I do not think I ever could forget the agony of that moment. Had it been for England, I would have met my fate without a pang. No! Constance, I am an Englishman—I am proud of being an Englishman. My fathers helped to make this country what it is; no one can deny that, and no consideration in the world shall ever induce me again to quit this island."

"But suppose we do not quit England. Suppose we buy a small estate, and live at home."

"A small estate at home! A small, new estate! Bought of a Mr. Hopkins, a great tallow-chandler, or some stock-jobber about to make a new flight from a lodge to a park. O no! that would be too degrading."

"But suppose we keep one of our own manors?"

"And be reminded every instant of every day of those we have lost; and hear of the wonderful improvements of our successors. I should go mad."

"But suppose we live in London?"

"Where?"

"I am sure I do not know, but I should think we might get a nice little house somewhere."

"In a suburb! a fitting lodgment for Lady Armine. No! at any rate we will have no witness to our fall."

"But could not we try some place near my father's?"

"And be patronised by the great family with whom I had the good fortune of being connected. No! my dear Constance, I like your father very well, but I could not stand his cleemosynary haunches of venison, and great baskets of apples and cream cheeses sent with the housekeeper's duty."

"But what shall we do, dear Ratchliffe?"

"My love, there is no resisting fate. We must live or die at Armine, even if we starve."

"Perhaps something will turn up. I dreamed the other night that dear Ferdinand married an heiress. Suppose he were? What do you think?"

"Why, even then, that he would not be as lucky as his father. Good night, love!"

CHAPTER VII.

CONTAINING AN UNEXPECTED VISIT TO LONDON AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE day after the conversation in the library to which Glastonbury had been an unwilling listener, he informed his friends that it was necessary for him to visit the metropolis; and as young Ferdinand had never yet seen London, he proposed that he should accompany him. Sir Ratchliffe and Lady Armine cheerfully assented to this proposition; and as for Ferdinand, it is difficult to describe the delight which the anticipation of his visit occasioned him. The three days that were to elapse before his departure did not seem sufficient to ensure the complete packing of his portmanteau; and his excited manner, the rapidity of his conversation, and the restlessness of his movements, were very diverting.

"Mamma! is London twenty times bigger than Nottingham? How big is it, then? Shall we travel all night! What o'clock is it now? I wonder if Thursday will ever come? I think I shall go to bed early, to finish the day sooner. Do you think my cap is good enough to travel in? I shall buy a hat in London. I shall get up early the very first morning, and buy a hat. Do you think my uncle is in London? I wish Augustus were not at Eton, perhaps he would be there. I wonder if Mr. Glastonbury will take me to see St. Paul's! I wonder if he will take me to the play! I'd give any thing to go to the play. I should like to go to the play and St. Paul's! Mamma! do you think six shirts are enough? I think I had better take eight. I am sure there must be room for eight. What fun it will be dining on the road!"

It did indeed seem that Thursday never would come; yet it came at last. The travellers were obliged to rise before the sun, and drive over to Nottingham to meet their coach; so they bade their adieus the previous eve. As for Ferdinand, so fearful was he of losing the coach that he scarcely slept, and was never convinced that he was really in time until he found himself planted in breathless agitation outside of the Dart light post-coach. It was the first time in his life that he had ever travelled outside of a coach. He felt all the excitement of expanding experience and advancing manhood. They whirled along: at the end of every stage Ferdinand followed the example of his fellow-travellers and dismounted, and then with sparkling eyes hurried to Glastonbury, who was inquiring

how he sped. "Capital travelling, isn't it, sir? Did the ten miles within the hour. You have no idea what a fellow our coachman is; and the guard, such a fellow our guard!—Don't wait here a moment. Can I get any thing for you? We dine at Millfield. What fun!"

Away whirled the dashing Dart over the rich plains of our merry midland; a quick and dazzling vision of golden corn-fields, and lawn pasture land; farmhouses embowered in orchards and hamlets shaded by the straggling members of some vast and ancient forest. Then rose in the distance the dim blue towers or the graceful spire of some old cathedral, and soon the spreading causeways announce their approach to some provincial capital. The coachman flanks his leaders, who break into a gallop; the guard sounds his triumphant bugle; the coach bounds over the noble bridge that spans a stream covered with craft; public buildings, guildhalls, and county jails, rise on each side. Rattling through many an inferior way, they at length emerge into the High Street, the observed of all observers, and mine host of the Red Lion or the White Hart, followed by all his waiters, advances from his portal with a smile to receive the "gentlemen passengers."

"The coach stops here half an hour, gentlemen: dinner quite ready!"

'Tis a delightful sound. And what a dinner! What a profusion of substantial delicacies! What mighty and Iris-tinted rounds of beef! What vast and marble-veined ribs! What gelatinous veal pies! What colossal hams! Those are evidently prize cheeses! And how invigorating is the perfume of those various and variegated pickles! Then the bustle emulating the plenty; the ringing of bells, the clash of thoroughfare, the summoning of ubiquitous waiters, and the all-pervading feeling of omnipotence, from the guests, who order what they please, to the landlord, who can produce and execute every thing they can desire. 'Tis a wondrous sight! Why should a man go and see the pyramids and cross the desert, when he has not beheld York Minster or travelled on the Road!

Our little Ferdinand, amid all this novelty, heartily enjoyed himself, and did ample justice to mine host's good cheer. They were soon whirling again along the road, but at sunset, Ferdinand, at the instance of Glastonbury, availed himself of his inside place, and, wearied by the air and the excitement of the day, he soon fell soundly asleep.

Several hours had elapsed when, awaking from a confused dream, in which Armine and all he had lately seen were blended together; he found his fellow-travellers slumbering, and the mail dashing along through the illuminated streets of a great city. The streets were thickly thronged. Ferdinand stared at the magnificence of the shops blazing with lights, and the multitude of men and vehicles moving in all directions. The guard sounded his bugle with treble energy, and the coach suddenly turned through an arched entrance into the court-yard of an old-fashioned inn. His fellow-passengers started, and rubbed their eyes.

"So! we have arrived. I suppose," grumbled one of these gentlemen, taking off his night-cap.

"Yes, gentlemen, I am happy to say our journey is finished," said a more polite voice; "and a very pleasant one I have found it. Porter, have you goodness to call me a coach."

"And one for me," added the gruff voice.

"Mr. Glastonbury," whispered the awe-struck Ferdinand, "is this London!"

"This is London; but we have yet two or three miles to go before we reach our quarters. I think we had better alight and look after our luggage. Gentlemen, good evening!"

It was ten o'clock. Mr. Glastonbury hailed a coach, in which, having safely deposited their portmanteaus, he and Ferdinand entered: but our young friend was so entirely overcome by his feelings and the genius of the place, that he was quite unable to make an observation. Each minute the streets seemed to grow more spacious and more brilliant, and the multitude more dense and more excited. Beautiful buildings, too, rose before him; palaces, and churches, and streets, and squares of imposing architecture; to his inexperienced eye and unsophisticated spirit, their route appeared a never-ending triumph. To the hackney-coachman, however, who had no imagination, and who was quite satiated with metropolitan experience, it only appeared that he had an exceedingly good fare, and that he was jogging up from Bishopgate street to Charing Cross.

When Jarvis, therefore, had safely deposited his charge at Morley's Hotel, in Cockspur street, and had extorted from them an extra shilling, in consideration of their evident rustication, he bent his course to the Opera House, for clouds were gathering, and, with the favour of Providence, there seemed a chance about midnight of picking up some helpless beau, or desperate eabless dandy, the choicest victim in a midnight shower of these public conveyances.

The coffee-room at Morley's was a new scene of amusement to Ferdinand, and he watched with great diversion the two evening papers portioned out among twelve eager quidnuncs, and the evident anxiety which they endured, and the nice diplomacies to which they resorted to obtain the envied journals. The entrance of our two travellers, so alarmingly increasing the demand over the supply, at first seemed to attract considerable and not very friendly notice; but when a malignant half-pay officer, in order to revenge himself for the restless watchfulness of his neighbour, a very political doctor of divinity, offered the journal, which he had long finished, to Glastonbury, and it was declined, the general alarm visibly diminished. Poor Mr. Glastonbury had never looked into a newspaper in his life, save the County Chronicle, to which he occasionally contributed a communication giving an account of the digging up of some old coins, signed Antiquarius; or of the exhumation of some fossil remains, to which he more boldly appended his initials.

In spite of the strange clatter in the streets, Ferdinand slept well, and the next morning, after an early breakfast, himself and his fellow-traveller set out on their peregrinations. Young and sanguine, full of health and enjoyment, innocent and happy, it was with difficulty that Ferdinand could restrain his spirits, as he mingled in the bustle of the streets. It was a bright sunny morning, and, although the end of June, the town was yet quite full.

"Is this Charing Cross, sir?—I wonder if we shall ever be able to get over.—Is this the fullest part of the town, sir?—What a fine day, sir!—How lucky we are in the weather?—We are lucky

in every thing!—Whose house is that?—Northumberland House!—Is it the Duke of Northumberland's! Does he live there! How I should like to see it!—Is it very fine!—Who is that!—What is this!—The Admiralty; O! let me see, the Admiralty!—The Horse Guards.—O! where, where? Let us set our watches by the Horse Guards. The guard of our coach always sets his watch by the Horse Guards.—Mr. Glastonbury, which is the best clock, the Horse Guards or St. Paul's!—Is that the Treasury! Can we go in!—That is Downing street, is it!—I never heard of Downing street.—What do they do in Downing street!—Is this Charing Cross still, or is it Parliament street!—Where does Charing Cross end, and where does Parliament street begin!—By Jove, I see Westminster Abbey!"

After visiting Westminster Abbey, and the two Houses of Parliament, Mr. Glastonbury, looking at his watch, said it was now time to call upon a friend of his who lived in St. James's Square. This was the nobleman with whom early in life Glastonbury had been connected, and with whom and whose family he had become so great a favourite, that, notwithstanding his retired life, they had never permitted the connexion entirely to subside. During the very few visits which he had made to the metropolis, he always called in St. James's Square, and his reception always assured him that his remembrance imparted pleasure.

When Glastonbury sent up his name he was instantly admitted, and ushered up stairs. The room was very full, but it consisted only of a family party. The old dutchess, who was a most interesting personage, with fine gray hair, a clear blue eye, and a most soft voice, was surrounded by her grandchildren, who were at home for the midsummer holidays, and who had gathered together at her house this morning to consult upon amusements. Among them was her grandson, the heir presumptive of the house, a youth of the age of Ferdinand, and of a very prepossessing appearance. It was difficult to meet a more amiable and agreeable family, and nothing could exceed the kindness with which they all welcomed Glastonbury. The duke himself soon appeared in his morning gown. "My dear, dear Glastonbury," said the kind-hearted old gentleman, "I heard you were here, and I would come. Caroline will not let me enter her rooms in these rags, but to-day I am to be excused. This shall be a holiday for us all. Why, man, you bury yourself alive!"

"Mr. Armine," said the dutchess, pointing to Ferdinand.

"Mr. Armine, how do you do? Your grandfather and I were very well acquainted. I am proud and glad to know his grandson. I hope your father, Sir Rutcliffe, and Lady Armine are quite well. Well, my dear Glastonbury, I hope you have come to stay a long, long time. You must dine with us every day, you must indeed. You know we are very old-fashioned people; we do not go much into the world; so you will find us at home every day; and we will do what we can to amuse your young friend. Why! I should think he was about the same age as Digby! Is he at Eton? His grandfather was! I never shall forget the time he cut off old Barnard's pigtail. He was a wonderful man—Poor Sir Ferdinand!—He was indeed!"

While his grace and Glastonbury maintained

their conversation, Ferdinand conducted himself with so much spirit and propriety towards the rest of the party, and gave them such a lively and graceful narrative of all his travels up to town, and the wonders he had already witnessed, that they were quite delighted with him; and, in short, from this moment, during his visit to London, he was scarcely ever out of their society, and every day became a greater favourite with them. His letters to his mother, for he wrote to her almost every day, recounted all their successful efforts for his amusement, and it seemed that he passed his mornings in a round of sight-seeing, and that he went to the play every night of his life. Perhaps there never existed a human being who at this moment more thoroughly enjoyed life than Ferdinand Armine.

In the mean time, while he thought only of amusement, Mr. Glastonbury was not inattentive to his more important interests; for the truth is that this excellent man had introduced him to the family only with the hope of interesting the feelings of the duke in his behalf. His grace was a man of a very generous disposition. He sympathized with the recital of Glastonbury, as he detailed to him the unfortunate situation of this youth, sprung from so illustrious a lineage, and yet cut off by a combination of unhappy circumstances, from almost all those natural sources whence he might have expected support and countenance. And when Glastonbury, seeing that the duke's heart was moved, added, that all he required for him, Ferdinand, was a commission in the army, for which his parents were prepared to advance the money, his grace instantly declared that he would exert all his influence to obtain their purpose.

Mr. Glastonbury was, therefore, more gratified than surprised when, a few days after the conversation which we have mentioned, his noble friend informed him, with a smile, that he believed all might be arranged, provided his young charge could make it convenient to quit England at once. A vacancy had unexpectedly occurred in a regiment just ordered to Malta, and an ensigncy had been promised to Ferdinand Armine. Mr. Glastonbury gratefully closed with the offer. He sacrificed a fourth part of his moderate independence in the purchase of the commission and the outfit of his young friend, and had the supreme satisfaction, ere the third week of their visit was completed, of forwarding a gazette to Armine, containing the appointment of Ferdinand Armine as ensign in the Royal Fusiliers.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VISIT TO GLASTONBURY'S CHAMBER.

It was arranged that Ferdinand should join his regiment by the next Mediterranean packet, which was not to quit Palmouth for a fortnight. Glastonbury and himself, therefore, lost no time in bidding adieu to their kind friends in London, and hastening to Armine. They arrived the day after the gazette. They found Sir Ratcliffe waiting for them at the town, and the fond smile and cordial embrace with which he greeted Glastonbury, more than repaid that good man for all his exertions. There was, notwithstanding, a perceptible degree of constraint both on the part of the baronet and his former tutor. It was very evident that Sir Ratcliffe

had something on his mind, of which he wished to disburden himself; and it was equally apparent that Glastonbury was very unwilling to afford him an opportunity. Under these rather awkward circumstances, it was perhaps fortunate that Ferdinand talked without ceasing, giving his father an account of all he had seen, done, and heard, and of all the friends he had made, from the good Duke of —, to that capital fellow, the guard of the coach.

They were at the park gates: Lady Armine was there to meet them. The carriage stopped; Ferdinand jumped out and embraced his mother. She kissed him, and ran forward and extended both her hands to Mr. Glastonbury. "Deeds, not words, must show her feelings," she said; and the tears glittered in her beautiful eyes; Glastonbury, with a blush, pressed her hand to his lips. After dinner, during which Ferdinand recounted all his adventures, Lady Armine invited him, when she rose, to walk with her in the garden. It was then with an air of considerable confusion, clearing his throat, and filling his glass at the same time, that Sir Ratcliffe said to his remaining guest,

"My dear Glastonbury, you cannot suppose that I believe that the days of magic have returned. This commission—both Constance and myself feel, that is, we are certain—that you are at the bottom of it all. The commission is purchased. I could not expect the duke, deeply as I feel his generous kindness, to purchase a commission for my son: I could not permit it. No, Glastonbury," and here Sir Ratcliffe became more animated, "you could not permit it; my honour is safe in your hands?" Sir Ratcliffe paused for a reply.

"On that score my conscience is very clear," replied Glastonbury.

"It is then, it must be then as I suspect," rejoined Sir Ratcliffe. "I am your debtor for this great service."

"It is easy to count your obligations to me," said Glastonbury; "but mine to you and yours are incalculable."

"My dear Glastonbury," said Sir Ratcliffe, pushing his glass away, as he rose from his seat and walked up and down the room, "I may be proud, but I have no pride for you. I owe you too much—indeed, my dear friend, there is nothing that I would not accept from you, were it in your power to grant what you would desire. It is not pride, my dear Glastonbury, do not mistake me, it is not pride that prompts this explanation—but, but, had I your command of language, I would explain myself more readily—but the truth is, I—I cannot permit that you should suffer for us, Glastonbury, I cannot indeed."

Mr. Glastonbury looked at Sir Ratcliffe steadily; then rising from his seat, he took the baronet's arm, and without saying a word walked slowly towards the gates of the castle where he lodged, and which we have before described. When he had reached the steps of the tower, he withdrew his arm, and saying, "let me be pioneer," invited Sir Ratcliffe to follow him. They accordingly entered his chamber.

It was a small room lined with shelves of books except in one spot, where was suspended a portrait of Lady Barbara, which she had bequeathed him in her will. The floor was covered with so many boxes and cases, that it was not very easy to steer a course when you had entered. Glastonbury however, beckoned to his companion to seat him-

self in one of his two chairs, while he unlocked a small cabinet, from a drawer of which he brought forth a paper.

"It is my will," said Glastonbury, handing it to Sir Ratcliffe, who laid it down on the table.

"Nay, I wish you, my dear friend, to peruse it, for it concerns yourself."

"I would rather learn its contents from yourself, if you positively desire me," replied Sir Ratcliffe.

"I have left every thing to our child," said Glastonbury; for thus, when speaking to the father alone, he would often style the son.

"May it be long before he enjoys the bequest," said Sir Ratcliffe, brushing away a tear, "long, very long."

"As the Almighty pleases," said Glastonbury, crossing himself with great devotion. "But living or dead, I look upon all as Ferdinand's, and hold myself but the steward of his inheritance, which I will never abuse."

"O! Glastonbury, no more of this, I pray; you have wasted a precious life upon our forlorn race. Alas! how often and how keenly do I feel, that had it not been for the name of Armine, your great talents and goodness might have gained for you an enviable portion of earthly felicity; yes, Glastonbury, you have sacrificed yourself to us."

"Would that I could!" said the old man, with brightening eyes and an unaccustomed energy of manner. "Would that I could! would that any act of mine—I care not what—could revive the fortunes of the house of Armine. Honoured forever be the name, which with me is associated with all that is great and glorious in man, and (here his voice faltered, and he turned away his face) exquisite and enchanting in woman!"

"No, Ratcliffe," he resumed, "by the memory of one I cannot name—by that blessed and sainted being from whom you derived your life, you will not, you cannot, deny this last favour I ask, I entreat, I supplicate you to accord me—me, who have ever eaten of your bread, and whom your roof hath ever shrouded!"

"My friend, I cannot speak," said Sir Ratcliffe, throwing himself back in the chair, and covering his face with his right hand. "I know not what to say; I know not what to feel."

Glastonbury advanced and gently took his other hand. "Dear Sir Ratcliffe," he observed, in his usual calm, sweet voice, "if I have erred you will pardon me. I did believe that, after my long and intimate connexion with your house; after having for nearly forty years sympathized as deeply with all your fortunes as if, indeed, your noble blood flowed in these old veins; after having been honoured on your side with a friendship which has been the consolation and charm of my existence—indeed, too great a blessing, I did believe, more especially when I reminded myself of the unrestrained manner in which I had availed myself of the advantages of that friendship, I did believe—actuated by feelings which perhaps I cannot describe, and thoughts to which I cannot now give utterance—that I might venture, without offence, upon this slight service. Ay, that the offering might be made in the spirit of the most respectful affection, and not altogether be devoid of favour in your sight."

"Excellent, kind-hearted man!" said Sir Ratcliffe, pressing the hand of Glastonbury in his own; "I accept your offering in the spirit of per-

fect love. Believe me, dearest friend, it was no feeling of false pride that for a moment influenced me; I only felt—"

"That in venturing upon this humble service, I deprived myself of some portion of my means of livelihood; you have mistaken. When I cast my lot at Armine, I sank a portion of my capital on my life; so slender are my wants here, and so little does your dear lady permit me to desire, that, believe me, I have never yet expended upon myself this apportioned income; and, as for the rest, it is, as you have seen, destined for our Ferdinand. Yet a little time, and Adrian Glastonbury must be gathered to his fathers. Why, then, deprive him of the greatest gratification of his remaining years? the consciousness that, to be really serviceable to those he loves, it is not necessary for him to cease to exist."

"May you never repent your devotion to our house!" said Sir Ratcliffe, rising from his seat. "Time was we could give them who served us something better than thanks; but, at any rate, these come from the heart."

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST DAY AND THE LAST NIGHT.

IN the mean time, the approaching departure of Ferdinand was the great topic of interest at Armine. It was settled that his father should accompany him to Falmouth, where he was to embark; and that they should pay a visit on their way to his grandfather, whose seat was situated in the west of England. This separation, now so near at hand, occasioned Lady Armine the deepest affliction, but she struggled to suppress her emotion. Yet often, while apparently busied with the common occupations of the day, the tears trickled down her cheek; and often she rose from her restless seat, while surrounded by those she loved, to seek the solitude of her chamber, and indulge her overwhelling sorrow. Nor was, indeed, Ferdinand less sensible of the bitterness of this separation. With all the excitement of his new prospects, and the feeling of approaching adventure and fancied independence, so flattering to inexperienced youth, he could not forget that his had been a very happy home. Nearly seventeen years of an innocent existence had passed, undisturbed by a single bad passion, and un sullied by a single action that he could regret. The river of his life had glided along, reflecting only a cloudless sky. But if he, indeed, had been dutiful and happy—if at this moment of severe examination his conscience were indeed serene—he could not but feel how much this enviable state of mind was to be attributed to those who had, as it were, imbued his life with love; whose never-varying affection had developed all the kindly feelings of his nature, had anticipated all his wants, and listened to all his wishes; had assisted him in difficulty, and guided him in doubt; had invited confidence by kindness, and deserved it by sympathy; had robbed instruction of all its labour, and discipline of all its harshness.

It was the last day; on the morrow he was to quit Armine. He strolled about among the mouldering chambers of the castle, and a host of thoughts and passions, like clouds in a stormy sky, coursed

over his hitherto serene and light-hearted breast. In this first great struggle of his soul, some symptoms of his latent nature developed themselves, and, amid the rifts of the mental tempest, occasionally he caught some glimpses of self-knowledge. Nature, that had endowed him with a fiery imagination and a reckless courage, had tempered those dangerous, and hitherto those undeveloped and untried gifts, with a heart of infinite sensibility. Ferdinand and Armine was, in truth, a singular blending of the daring and the soft; and now, as he looked around him, and thought of his illustrious and fallen race, and especially of that extraordinary man, of whose splendid and ruinous career—that man's own creation—the surrounding pile seemed a fitting emblem, he asked himself if he had not inherited the energies with the name of his grand-sire, and if their exertion might not yet revive the glories of his line. He felt within him alike the power and the will: and while he indulged in magnificent reveries of fame, and glory, and heroic action, of which career, indeed, his approaching departure was to be the commencement, the association of ideas led his recollection to those beings from whom he was about to depart. His fancy dropped like a bird of paradise in full wing, tumbling exhausted in the sky; he thought of his innocent and happy boyhood; of his father's thoughtful benevolence, his sweet mother's gentle assiduities, and Glastonbury's devotion; and he demanded aloud, in a voice of misery, whether fate indeed could supply a lot more exquisite than to pass existence in these calm and beauteous bowers with such beloved companions.

His name was called: it was his mother's voice. He dashed away a desperate tear, and came forth with a smiling face. His mother and father were walking together at a little distance. He joined them.

"Ferdinand," said Lady Armine, with an air of affected gayety, "we have just been settling that you are to send me a gazelle from Malta." And in this strain, speaking of slight things, yet all in some degree touching upon the mournful incident of the morrow, did Lady Armine for some time converse, as if she were all this time trying the fortitude of her mind, and accustoming herself to a catastrophe which she was resolved to meet with fortitude.

While they were walking together, Glastonbury, who was hurrying from his rooms to the Place, for the dinner hour was at hand, joined them, and they entered their home together. It was singular at dinner, too, in what excellent spirits everybody determined to be. The dinner, also, generally a very simple repast, was almost as elaborate as the demeanour of the guests, and, although no one felt inclined to eat, consisted of every dish and delicacy which was supposed to be a favourite with Ferdinand. Sir Ratcliffe, in general so grave, was to-day quite joyous, and produced a magnum of claret, which he had himself discovered in the old cellars, and of which even Glastonbury, an habitual water-drinker, ventured to partake. As for Lady Armine, she scarcely ever ceased talking; she found a jest in every sentence, and seemed only uneasy when there was silence. Ferdinand, of course, yielded himself to the apparent spirit of the party; and, had a stranger been present, he could only have supposed that they were celebrating some anniversary of domestic joy. It seemed rather a birthday

feast than the last social meeting of those who had lived together so long, and loved each other so dearly.

But, as the evening drew on, their hearts began to grow heavy, and every one was glad that the early departure of the travellers on the morrow was an excuse for speedily retiring.

"No adieu to-night!" said Lady Armine with a gay air, as she scarcely returned the habitual embrace of her son. "We shall be all up to-morrow."

So wishing his last good night, with a charged heart and faltering tongue, Ferdinand Armine took up his candle and retired to his chamber. He could not refrain from exercising an unusual scrutiny when he had entered the room. He held up the light to the old accustomed walls, and threw a parting glance of affection at the curtains. There was the glass vase which his mother had never omitted each day to fill with fresh flowers, and the counterpane that was her own handiwork. He kissed it; and, flinging off his clothes, was glad when he was surrounded by darkness, and buried in his bed.

There was a gentle tap at his door. He started.

"Are you in bed, my Ferdinand?" inquired his mother's voice.

Ere he could reply he heard the door open, and he observed a tall white figure approaching him.

Lady Armine, without speaking, knelt down by his bedside, and took him in her arms. She buried her face in his breast. He felt her tears upon his heart. He could not move; he could not speak. At length he sobbed aloud.

"May our Father that is in heaven bless you, my darling child; may He guard over you; may He preserve you!" Very weak was her still solemn voice. "I would have spared you this, my darling. For you, not for myself, have I controlled my feelings. But I knew not the strength of a mother's love. Alas! what mother has a child like thee? O! Ferdinand, my first, my only-born—child of love, and joy, and happiness, that never cost me a thought of sorrow, so kind, so gentle, and so dutiful!—must we, O! must we indeed part?"

"It is too cruel," continued Lady Armine, kissing with a thousand kisses her weeping child. "What have I done to deserve such misery as this? Ferdinand, beloved Ferdinand, I shall die."

"I will not go, mother, I will not go," wildly exclaimed the boy, disengaging himself from her embrace, and starting up in his bed. "Mother, I cannot go. No, no, it never can be good to leave a home like this."

"Hush! hush! my darling. What words are these? How unkind, how wicked is it of me to say all this! Would that I had not come! I only meant to listen at your door a minute, and hear you move, perhaps to hear you speak—and like a fool—how naughty of me!—never, never shall I forgive myself—like a miserable fool I entered."

"My own, own mother—what shall I say!—what shall I do? I love you, mother, with all my heart, and soul, and spirit's strength; I love you, mother. There is no mother loved as you are loved!"

"Tis that that makes me mad. I know it. O! why are you not like other children, Ferdinand? When your uncle left us, my father said 'Good-bye,' and shook his hand, and he, he scarcely kissed us, he was so glad to leave his home; but you—To-morrow—no, not to-morrow. Can it be to-morrow!"

"Mother, let me get up and call my father, and tell him I will not go."

"Good God! what words are these? Not go! 'Tis all your hope to go; all ours, dear child. What would your father say were he to hear me speak thus? O! that I had not entered! What a fool I am!"

"Dearest, dearest mother, believe me we shall soon meet."

"Shall we soon meet? God! how joyous will be the day!"

"And I—I will write to you by every ship."

"O! never fail, Ferdinand, never fail."

"And send you a gazelle, and you shall call it by my name, dear mother."

"Darling child!"

"You know I have often stayed a month at grandpapa's, and once six weeks. Why! eight times six weeks, and I shall be home again."

"Home! home again! eight times six weeks—A year, nearly a year! It seems eternity. Winter, and spring, and summer, and winter again—all to pass away. And for seventeen years he has scarcely been out of my sight. O! my idol, my beloved, my darling Ferdinand, I cannot believe it; I cannot believe that we are to part."

"Mother, dearest mother, think of my father, dearest; think how much his hopes are placed on me—think, dearest mother, how much I have to do. All now depends on me, you know. I must restore our house."

"O! Ferdinand, I dare not express the thoughts that rise upon me; yet I would say that, had I but my child, I could live in peace, how or where I care not."

"Dearest mother, you unman me."

"It is very wicked. I am a fool—I never, no! never shall I pardon myself for this night, Ferdinand."

"Sweet mother, I beseech you calm yourself. Believe me we shall indeed meet very soon, and, somehow or other, a little bird whispers to me we shall yet be very happy."

"But will you be the same Ferdinand to me as before! Ay! there it is, my child. You will be a man when you come back, and be ashamed to love your mother. Promise me now," said Lady Armine with extraordinary energy, "promise me, Ferdinand, you will always love me. Do not let them make you ashamed of loving me. They will joke, and jest, and ridicule all home affections. You are very young, sweet love, very, very young, and very inexperienced and susceptible. Do not let them spoil your frank and beautiful nature. Do not let them lead you astray. Remember Armine, sweetest dear, dear Armine, and those who live there. Trust me, O! yes, indeed believe me, darling, you will never find friends in this world like those you leave at Armine."

"I know it," exclaimed Ferdinand, with streaming eyes; "God be my witness how deeply I feel that truth. If I forget thee and them, dear mother, may God indeed forget me."

"My darling, darling Ferdinand," said Lady Armine, in a calm tone, "I am better now. I hardly am sorry that I did come now. It will be a consolation to me in your absence to remember all you have said. Good night, my beloved child, my darling love, good night. I shall not come down to-morrow, dear. We will not meet again—I will say good-bye to you from the window. Be happy, O!

be happy, my dear Ferdinand, and as you say, indeed, we shall soon meet again. Eight-and-forty weeks! Why that are eight-and-forty weeks! It is not quite a year. Courage, my sweet boy! let us keep up each other's spirits, love. Who knows what may yet come from this your first venture in the world! I am full of hope. I trust you will find all that you want. I packed up every thing myself. Whenever you want any thing write to your mother. Mind you have eight packages; I have written them down on a card, and placed it on the hall table. And take the greatest care of old Sir Ferdinand's sword. I am very superstitious about that sword, and while you have it I am sure you will succeed. I have ever thought that, had he taken it with him to France, all would have gone right with him. God bless, God Almighty bless you, child. Be of good heart. I will write you every thing that takes place, and, as you say, we shall soon meet. Indeed after to-night," she added in a mournful tone, "we have naught else to think of but of meeting. I fear it is very late. Your father will be surprised at my absence." She rose from his bed and walked up and down the room several times in silence; then again approaching him, she folded him in her arms and instantly quitted the chamber, without again speaking.

CHAPTER X.

THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING A FAVORITE GRANDSON.

THE exhausted Ferdinand found consolation in sleep. When he woke the dawn was just breaking. He dressed and went forth to look, for the last time, on his hereditary woods. The air was cold, but the sky was perfectly clear, and the beams of the rising sun soon spread over the blue heaven. How fresh, and glad, and sparkling was the surrounding scene! With what enjoyment did he inhale the soft and renovating breeze. The dew quivered on the grass, and the carol of the wakening birds, roused from their slumbers by the spreading warmth, resounded from the groves. From the green knoll on which he stood, he beheld the clustering village of Armine, a little agricultural settlement, formed of the peasants alone who lived on the estate. The smoke began to rise in blue curls from the cottage chimneys, and the church clock struck the hour of five. It seemed to Ferdinand that those labourers were far happier than he, since the setting sun would find them still at Armine: happy, happy Armine!

The sound of carriage-wheels aroused him from his reverie. The fatal moment had arrived. He hastened to the gate according to his promise, to bid farewell to Glastonbury. The good old man was up. He pressed his pupil to his bosom and blessed him with a choking voice.

"Dearest and kindest friend!" murmured Ferdinand.

Glastonbury placed around his neck a small golden crucifix that had belonged to Lady Barbara. "Wear it next your heart, my child," said he: "it will remind you of your God, and of us all." Ferdinand quitted the tower with a thousand blessings.

When he came in sight of the Place he saw his

father standing by the carriage, which was already packed. Ferdinand ran into the house to get the card which had been left on the hall table for him by his mother. He ran over the list with the old and faithful domestic, and shook hands with him. Nothing now remained. All was ready. His father was seated. Ferdinand stood a moment in thought.

"Let me run up to my mother, sir?"

"You had better not, my child," replied Sir Ratcliffe, "she does not expect you. Come, come along."

So he slowly seated himself, with his eyes fixed on the window of his mother's chamber; and, as the carriage drove off, the window opened, and a hand waved a white handkerchief. He saw no more; but as he saw it, he clenched his hand in agony.

How different was this journey to London from his last! He scarcely spoke a word. Nothing interested him but his own feelings. The guard and the coachman, and the bustle of the inn, and the passing spectacles of the road, appeared a collection of impertinences. All of a sudden it seemed that his boyish feelings had deserted him. He was glad when they arrived in London, and glad that they were to stay in it only a single day. Sir Ratcliffe and his son called upon the duke; but, as they had anticipated, the family had quitted town. Our travellers put up at Hatchett's, and the following night started for Exeter in the Devonport mail. Ferdinand arrived at the western metropolis without having interchanged with his father scarcely a hundred sentences. At Exeter, after a night of most welcome rest, they took a post-chaise, and proceeded by a cross-road to Grandison.

When Lord Grandison, who as yet perfectly unacquainted with the revolutions in the Armine family, had clearly comprehended that his grandson had obtained a commission without either troubling him for his interest, or putting him in the disagreeable predicament of refusing his money, there were no bounds to the extravagant testimonials of his affection, both towards his son-in-law and his grandson. He seemed, indeed, quite proud of such relations; he patted Sir Ratcliffe on his back, asked a thousand questions about his darling Constance, and hugged and slobbered over Ferdinand, as if he were a child of five years old. He informed all his guests daily (and the house was very full) that Lady Armine was his favourite daughter, and Sir Ratcliffe his favourite son-in-law, and Ferdinand especially his favourite grandchild. He insisted upon Sir Ratcliffe always sitting at the head of his table, and always placed Ferdinand on his own right hand. He asked his butler aloud at dinner why he had not given a particular kind of Burgundy, because Sir Ratcliffe Armine was here.

"Darbois," said the old nobleman, "have not I told you that that Clos de Vougoet is always to be kept for Sir Ratcliffe Armine? It is his favourite wine. Clos de Vougoet directly to Sir Ratcliffe Armine. I do not think, my dear madam, (turning to a fair neighbour,) that I have yet had the pleasure of introducing you to my son-in-law, my favourite son-in-law, Sir Ratcliffe Armine.—He married my daughter Constance, my favourite daughter Constance.—Only here for a few days, a very, very few days indeed.—Quite a flying visit.—I wish I could see the whole family oftener and longer.—Passing through to Falmouth

with his son, this young gentleman on my right my grandson, my favourite grandson, Ferdinand.—Just got his commission.—Ordered for Malta immediately.—He is in the Fusileers, the Royal Fusileers.—Very difficult, my dear madam, in these days to obtain a commission, especially a commission in the Royal Fusileers.—Very great interest required, very great interest indeed.—But the Armines are a most ancient family, very highly connected—very highly connected; and, between you and me, the Duke of —— would do any thing for them.—Come, come, Captain Armine, take a glass of wine with your old grandfather."

"How attached the old gentleman appears to be to his favourite grandson," whispered the lady to her neighbour.

"Delightful! yes!" was the reply; "I believe he is the favourite grandson."

In short, the old gentleman got so excited by the universal admiration lavished on his favourite grandson, that he finally insisted on seeing the young hero in his regimentals; and when Ferdinand took his leave, after a great many whispered blessings, his domestic feelings were worked up to such a pitch of enthusiasm, that he absolutely presented his grandson with a hundred-pound note.

"Thank you, my dear grandpapa," said the astonished Ferdinand, who really did not expect more than fifty—perhaps even a moiety of that more moderate sum; "thank you, my dear grandpapa; I am very much obliged to you, indeed."

"I wish I could do more for you; I do, indeed," said Lord Grandison; "but nobody ever thinks of paying his rent now. You are my grandson, my favourite grandson, my dear favourite daughter's only child. And you are an officer in his majesty's service—an officer in the Royal Fusileers—only think of that! It is the most unexpected thing that ever happened to me. To see you so well and so unexpectedly provided for, my dear child, has taken a very great load off my mind; it has indeed. You have no idea of a parent's anxiety in these matters; you have not indeed, especially of a grandfather. You will some day, I warrant you," continued the noble grandfather, with an expression between a giggle and a leer; "but do not be wild, my dear Ferdinand, do not be too wild, at least. Young blood must have its way; but be cautious; now, do; be cautious, my dear child. Do not get into any scrapes; at least do not get into any very serious scrapes; and, whatever happens to you," and here his lordship assumed a very serious, and even a solemn tone, "remember you have friends; remember, my dear boy, you have a grandfather, and that you, my dear Ferdinand, are his favourite grandson."

This passing visit to Grandison rather rallied the spirits of our travellers. When they arrived at Falmouth, they found, however, that the packet, which waited for government despatches, was not yet to sail. Sir Ratcliffe scarcely knew whether he ought to grieve or to rejoice at the reprieve; but he determined to be gay. So Ferdinand and himself passed their mornings, in visiting the mines, Pendennis Castle, and the other lions of the neighbourhood; and returned in the evening to their cheerful hotel, with good appetites for their agreeable banquet, the mutton of Dartmoor and the cream of Devon.

At length, however, the hour of separation approached; a message awaited them at the inn,

on their return from one of their rambles, that Ferdinand must be on board at an early hour on the morrow. That evening the conversation between Sir Ratcliffe and his son was of a graver nature than they usually indulged in. He spoke to him in confidence of his affairs. Dark hints, indeed, had before reached Ferdinand; nor, although his parents had ever spared his feelings, could his intelligent mind have altogether refrained from guessing much that had never been formally communicated. Yet the truth was worse even than he had anticipated. Ferdinand, however, was young and sanguine. He encouraged his father with his hopes, and supported him by his sympathy. He expressed to Sir Ratcliffe his confidence that the generosity of his grandfather would prevent him at present from becoming a burden to his own parent, and he inwardly resolved that no possible circumstances should never induce him to abuse the benevolence of Sir Ratcliffe.

The moment of separation arrived. Sir Ratcliffe pressed to his bosom his only, his loving, and his beloved child. He poured over Ferdinand the deepest, the most fervid blessing that a father ever granted to a son. But, with all this pious consolation, it was a moment of agony.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

PARTLY RETROSPECTIVE, YET VERY NECESSARY TO BE PERUSED.

THE courteous reader will have the kindness to understand that an interval of nearly five years had elapsed between the event which formed the subject of our last chapter and the recall to England of the regiment in which Captain Armine now commanded a company. This period of time had passed away not unfruitful of events in the experience of that family, in whose fate and feelings I have attempted to excite the interest of the reader. In this interval Ferdinand Armine had paid one short visit to his native land; a visit which had certainly been accelerated, if not absolutely occasioned, by the untimely death of his cousin Augustus, the presumptive heir of Grandison. This unforeseen event produced a very great revolution in the prospects of the family of Armine: for although the title and entailed estates of Grandison devolved to a very distant branch, the personal property of the old lord was of great amount; and, as he had no male heir now living, conjectures as to its probable dispositions were now rife among all those who could possibly become interested in it. Whatever arrangement the old lord might decide upon, it seemed nearly certain that the Armine family must be greatly benefited. Some persons even went so far as to express their conviction that every thing would be left to Mr. Armine, who everybody now discovered to have always been a particular favourite with his grandfather. At all events, Sir Ratcliffe, who ever maintained upon the subject a becoming silence, thought it as well that his son should remind his grandfather personally of his existence; and it was at his father's suggestion that Ferdinand had obtained a short leave of absence, at the first opportunity, to pay a hurried visit to Grandison and his grandfather.

The old lord yielded him a reception which might have flattered the most daring hopes. He embraced Ferdinand, and pressed him to his heart a thousand times; he gave him his blessing in the most formal manner every morning and evening; and assured everybody that he now was not only his favourite, but his only grandson. He did not even hesitate to affect a growing dislike for his own seat, because it was not in his power to leave it to Ferdinand; and he endeavoured to console that fortunate youth for this indispensable deprivation by mysterious intimations that he would, perhaps, find quite enough to do with his money in completing Armine castle, and maintaining its becoming splendour. The sanguine Ferdinand returned to Malta with the conviction that he was his grandfather's heir; and even Sir Ratcliffe was almost disposed to believe that his son's expectations were not without some show of probability, when he found that Lord Grandison had absolutely furnished him with the funds for the purchase of his company.

Ferdinand was fond of his profession. He had entered it, indeed, under the most favourable circumstances. He had joined a crack regiment in a crack garrison. Malta is certainly a most delightful station. Its city, Valetta, equals in its noble architecture, if it even do not exceed, any capital in Europe; and although it must be confessed that the surrounding region is little better than a rock, the vicinity, nevertheless, of Barbary, of Italy, and of Sicily, presents exhaustless resources to the lovers of the highest order of natural beauty. If that fair Valetta, with its streets of palaces, its picturesque fort and magnificent church, only crowned some green and azure island of the Ionian Sea, Corfu, for instance, I really think that the ideal of landscape would be realized.

To Ferdinand, who was inexperienced in the world, the dissipation of Malta, too, was delightful. It must be confessed that, under all circumstances, the first burst of emancipation from domestic routine hath in it something very fascinating. However you may be indulged at home, it is impossible to break the train of childish associations—it is impossible to escape from the feeling of dependence and the habit of submission. Charming hour when you first order your own servants and ride your own horses, instead of your father's! It is delightful even to kick about our own furniture; and there is something manly and magnanimous in paying our own taxes. Young, lively, kind, accomplished, good-looking, and well-bred, Ferdinand Armine had in him all the elements of popularity; and the novelty of popularity quite intoxicated a youth who had passed his life in a rural seclusion, where he had been appreciated, but not huzzaced. Ferdinand was not only popular, but proud of being popular. He was popular with the governor, he was popular with his colonel, he was popular with his mess, he was popular throughout the garrison. Never was a person so popular as Ferdinand Armine. He was the best rider among them, and the deadliest shot; and he soon became an oracle at the billiard-table, and a hero in the racket-court. His refined education, however, fortunately preserved him from the fate of many other lively youths; he did not degenerate into a mere hero of sports and brawls, the genius of male revels, the arbiter of roistering suppers, and the Comus of a club. His boyish feelings had their play; he soon exuded the wanton heat of

which a public school would have served as a safety valve. He returned to his books, his music, and his pencil. He became more quiet, but was not less liked. If he lost some companions, he gained many friends; and, on the whole, the most boisterous wassaillers were proud of the accomplishments of their comrade; and often an invitation to a mess dinner was accompanied by a hint that Armine dined there, and that there was a chance of hearing him sing. Ferdinand now became as popular with the governor's lady as with the governor himself, was quite idolized by his colonel's wife, while not a party throughout the island was considered perfect without the presence of Mr. Armine.

Excited by his situation, Ferdinand was soon tempted to incur expenses which his income did not justify. The facility of credit afforded him not a moment to pause; every thing he wanted was furnished him; and, until the regiment quitted the garrison, he was well aware that a settlement of accounts was never even desired. Amid this imprudence he was firm, however, in his resolution never to trespass on the resources of his father. It was with difficulty that he even brought himself to draw for the allowance which Sir Ratcliffe insisted on making him; and he would gladly have saved his father from making even this advance, by vague intimations of the bounty of Lord Grandison, had he feared not this conduct might have led to suspicious and disagreeable inquiries. It cannot be denied that his debts occasionally caused him anxiety, but they were not considerable; he quieted his conscience by the belief that, if he were pressed, his grandfather could scarcely refuse to discharge a few hundred pounds for his favourite grandson; and, at all events, he felt that the ultimate resource of selling his commission was still reserved for him. If these vague prospects did not drive away compunction, the qualms of conscience were generally allayed in the evening assembly, in which his vanity was gratified. At length he paid his first visit to England. That was a happy meeting. His kind father, his dear, dear mother, and the faithful Glastonbury, experienced some of the most transporting moments of their existence, when they beheld, with admiring gaze, the hero who returned to them. Their eyes were never satiated with beholding him; they hung upon his accents. Then came the triumphant visit to Grandison; and then Ferdinand returned to Malta, in the full conviction that he was the heir of fifteen thousand a-year.

Among many other, there is one characteristic of capitals in which Valetta is not deficient: the facility with which young heirs apparent, presumptive, or expectant, can obtain any accommodation they desire. The terms—never mind the terms—who ever thinks of them? As for Ferdinand Armine, who, as the only son of an old baronet, and the supposed future inheritor of Armine Park, had always been looked upon by tradesmen with a gracious eye, he found that his popularity in this respect was not at all diminished by his visit to England, and its supposed consequences, slight expressions, uttered on his return in the confidence of convivial companionship, were repeated, misrepresented, exaggerated, and circulated in all quarters. We like those whom we love to be fortunate. Everybody rejoices in the good luck of a popular character; and soon it was generally understood that Ferdinand Armine had become next in the entail of thirty thousand a-year and a peerage.

Moreover, he was not long to wait for his inheritance. The usurers pricked up their ears, and such numerous proffers of accommodation and assistance were made to the fortunate Mr. Armine, that he really found it quite impossible to refuse them, or to reject the loans that were almost forced on his acceptance.

Ferdinand Armine had passed the Rubicon. He was in debt. If youth but knew the fatal misery that they are entailing on themselves the moment they accept a pecuniary credit to which they are not entitled, how they would start in their career how pale they would turn! how they would tremble, and clasp their hands in agony at the precipice on which they are disporting! Debt is the prolific mother of folly and of crime; it taints the course of life in all its streams. Hence so many unhappy marriages, so many prostituted pens, and venal politicians! It hath a small beginning, but a giant's growth and strength. When we make the monster, we make our master, who haunts us at all hours, and shakes his whip of scorpions forever in our sight. The slave hath no overseer so severe. Faustus, when he signed the bond with blood, did not secure a doom more terrific. But when we are young, we must enjoy ourselves. True; and there are few things more gloomy than the recollection of a youth that has not been enjoyed. What prosperity of manhood, what splendour of old age, can compensate for it! Wealth is power; and in youth, of all seasons of life, we require power, because we can enjoy every thing that we can command. What, then, is to be done? I leave the question to the schoolmen, because I am convinced that to moralize with the inexperienced availeth nothing.

The conduct of men depends upon their temperament, not upon a bunch of musty maxims. No one had been educated with more care than Ferdinand Armine; in no heart had stricter precepts of moral conduct ever been instilled. But he was lively and impetuous, with a fiery imagination, violent passions, and a daring soul. Sanguine he was as the day; he could not believe in the night of sorrow, and the impenetrable gloom that attends a career that has failed. The world was all before him; and he dashed at it like a young charger in his first strife, confident that he must rush to victory, and never dreaming of death.

Thus would I attempt to account for the extreme imprudence of his conduct on his return from England. He was confident in his future fortunes; he was excited by the applause of the men, and the admiration of the women; he determined to gratify, even to satiety, his excited and restless vanity, he broke into profuse expenditure; he purchased a yacht; he engaged a villa; his racing horses and his servants exceeded all other establishments except the governor's in breeding, in splendour, and in number. Occasionally wearied with the monotony of Malta, he obtained a short leave of absence, and passed a few weeks at Naples, Palermo, and Rome, where he glittered in the most brilliant circles, and whence he returned laden with choice specimens of art and luxury, and followed by the report of strange and flattering adventures. Finally, he was the prime patron of the Maltese opera, and brought over a celebrated Prima Donna from San Carlos in his own vessel.

In the midst of his career, Ferdinand received intelligence of the death of Lord Grandison. For

tunately, when he received it, he was alone; there was no one, therefore, to witness his blank dismay when he discovered that, after all, he was not his grandfather's heir! After a vast number of the most trifling legacies to his daughters, and their husbands, and their children, and all his favourite friends, Lord Grandison left the whole of his personal property to his granddaughter Katherine, the only remaining child of his son, who had died early in life, and the sister of the lately deceased Augustus.

What was to be done now? His mother's sanguine mind—for Lady Armine broke to him the fatal intelligence—already seemed to anticipate the only remedy for this “unjust will.” It was a remedy delicately intimated, but the intimation fell upon a fine and ready ear. Yes! he must marry; he must marry his cousin; he must marry Katherine Grandison. Ferdinand looked around him at his magnificent rooms; the damask hangings of Tunis, the tall mirrors from Marseilles, the inlaid tables, the marble statues, and the alabaster vases that he had purchased at Florence and at Rome, and the delicate mats that he had himself imported from Algiers. He looked around and he shrugged his shoulders—“All this must be paid,” thought he; “and, alas! how much more!” And then came across his mind a recollection of his father and his cares, and innocent Armine, and dear Glastonbury, and his sacrifice. Ferdinand shook his head and sighed.

“How have I repaid them!” thought he. “Thank God they know nothing. Thank God they have only to bear their own disappointments and their own privations; but it is in vain to moralize. The future, not the past, must be my motto. To retreat is impossible; I may yet advance and conquer. Katherine Grandison; only think of my little cousin Kate for a wife! They say that it is not the easiest task in the world to fan a lively flame in the bosom of a cousin. The love of cousins is proverbially not of a very romantic character. ’Tis well I have not seen her much in my life, and very little of late. Familiarity breeds contempt, they say. Will she dare to despise me?” He glanced at the mirror. The inspection was not unsatisfactory. Plunged in profound meditation, he paced the room.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE ACHIEVES WITH RAPIDITY A RESULT WHICH ALWAYS REQUIRES GREAT DELIBERATION.

It so happened that the regiment in which Captain Armine had the honour of commanding a company, was at this time under orders of immediate recall to England; and within a month of his receipt of the fatal intelligence of his being, as he styled it, disinherited, he was on his way to his native land. This speedy departure was fortunate, because it permitted him to retire before the death of Lord Grandison became generally known, and consequently commented upon and inquired into. Previous to quitting the garrison, Ferdinand had settled his affairs for the time without the slightest difficulty, as he was still able to raise any money that he required.

On arriving at Falmouth, Ferdinand learnt that his father and mother were at Bath, on a visit to his maiden aunt, Miss Grandison, with whom his cousin now resided. As the regiment was quartered at Exeter, he was enabled in a very few days to obtain leave of absence, and join them. In the first rapture of meeting all disappointment was forgotten, and in the course of a day or two, when this sentiment had somewhat subsided, Ferdinand perceived that the shock which his parents must have necessarily experienced, was already considerably softened by the prospect in which they secretly indulged, and which various circumstances combined in inducing them to believe was by no means a visionary one.

His cousin Katherine was about his own age; mild, elegant, and very pretty. Being very fair, she looked extremely well in her deep mourning. She was not remarkable for the liveliness of her mind, yet not devoid of observation, although easily influenced by those whom she loved, and with whom she lived. Her maiden aunt evidently exercised a powerful control over her conduct and opinions: and Lady Armine was a favourite sister of this maiden aunt. Without therefore apparently directing her will, there was no lack of effort from this quarter to predispose Katherine in favour of her cousin. She heard so much of her cousin Ferdinand, of his beauty, and his goodness, and his accomplishments, that she had looked forward to his arrival with feelings of no ordinary interest. And, indeed, if the opinions and sentiments of those with whom she lived could influence, there was no need of any artifice to predispose her in favour of her cousin. Sir Rateliff and Lady Armine were wrapped up in their son. They seemed scarcely to have another idea, feeling, or thought in the world, but his existence and his felicity; and although their good sense had ever preserved them from the silly habit of uttering his panegyric in his presence, they amply compensated for this painful restraint when he was away. Then he was ever the handsomest, the cleverest, the most accomplished, and the most kind-hearted and virtuous of his sex. Fortunate the parents blessed with such a son! thrice fortunate the wife blessed with such a husband!

It was, therefore, with no ordinary emotion that Katherine Grandison heard that this perfect cousin Ferdinand had at length arrived. She had seen little of him even in his boyish days, and even then he was rather a hero in their Lilliputian circle.

Ferdinand Armine was always looked up to at Grandison, and always spoken of by her grandfather as a very fine fellow indeed; a wonderfully fine fellow, his favourite grandson, Ferdinand Armine; and now he had arrived. His knock was heard at the door, his step was on the stairs, the door opened, and certainly his first appearance did not disappoint his cousin Kate. So handsome, so easy, so gentle, and so cordial; they were all the best friends in a moment. Then he embraced his father with such fervour, and kissed his mother with such fondness; it was very evident that he had an excellent heart. His arrival, indeed, was a revolution. Their mourning days seemed at once to disappear: and although they of course entered society very little, and never frequented any public amusement, it seemed to Katherine that all of a sudden she lived in a round of delightful gaiety. Ferdinand was so amusing and so accomplished!

He sang with her, he played with her; he was always projecting long summer rides, and long summer walks. Then his conversation was so different to every thing to which she had ever listened. He had seen so many things and so many persons; every thing that was strange, and everybody that was famous. His opinions were so original, his illustrations so apt and lively, his anecdotes so inexhaustible and sparkling! Poor, inexperienced, innocent Katherine! Her cousin in four-and-twenty hours found it quite impossible to fall in love with her; and so he determined to make her fall in love with him. He quite succeeded. She adored him. She did not believe that there was any one in the world so handsome, so good, so clever! No one, indeed, who knew Ferdinand Armine, could deny that he was a rare being; but, had there been any acute and unprejudiced observers who had known him in his younger and happier hours, they would perhaps have remarked some difference in his character and conduct, and not a favourable one. He was indeed more brilliant, but not quite so interesting as in old days; far more dazzling, but not quite so apt to charm. No one could deny his lively talents and his perfect breeding, but there was a restlessness about him, an excited and exaggerated style, which might have made some suspect that his demeanour was an effort, and that under a superficial glitter, by which so many are deceived, there was no little deficiency of the genuine and sincere. Katherine Grandison, however, was not one of those profound observers. She was easily captivated. Ferdinand, who really did not feel sufficient emotion to venture upon a scene, made his proposals to her when they were riding in a green lane; the sun just setting, and the evening star glittering through a vista. The lady blushed, and wept, and sobbed, and hid her fair and streaming face, but the result was as satisfactory as our hero could desire. The young equestrians kept their friends in the Crescent at least two hours for dinner, and then had no appetite for the repast when they had arrived. Nevertheless the maiden aunt, although a very particular personage, made this day no complaint, and was evidently far from being dissatisfied with anybody or any thing. As for Ferdinand, he called for a tumbler of Champagne, and secretly drank his own health, as the luckiest fellow of his acquaintance, with a pretty, amiable, and high-bred wife, with all his debts paid, and the house of Armine restored.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH FERDINAND RETURNS TO ARMINE.

It was settled that a year must clapse from the death of Lord Grandison before the young couple could be united, a reprieve which did not occasion Ferdinand any very acute grief. In the mean time the Grandisons were to pass at least the autumn at Armine, and thither the united families proposed soon to direct their progress. Ferdinand, who had been nearly two months at Bath, and was a little wearied of courtship, contrived to quit that city before his friends, on the plea of visiting London, to arrange about selling his commission; for it was agreed that he should quit the army.

On his arrival in London, having spoken to his

agent, and finding town quite empty, he set off immediately for Armine, in order that he might have the pleasure of being there a few days without the society of his intended; run through the woods on the approaching first of September; and, especially, embrace his dear Glastonbury. For it must not be supposed that Ferdinand had forgotten for a moment this invaluable friend; on the contrary, he had written to him several times since his arrival; always assuring him that nothing but important business could prevent him from instantly paying him his respects.

It was with feelings of no common emotion, it was with feelings even of agitation, that Ferdinand beheld the woods of his ancient home rise in the distance, and soon the towers and turrets of Armine Castle. Those venerable bowers, that proud and lordly house, were not then to pass away from their old and famous line? He had redeemed the heritage of his great ancestry; he looked with unmingled complacency on the magnificent landscape, once to him a source of as much anxiety as affection. What a change in the destiny of the Armines! Their glory restored; his own devoted and domestic hearth, once the prey of so much care and gloom, crowned with ease, and happiness, and joy; on all sides a career of splendour and felicity. And he had done all this! What a prophet was his mother! She had ever indulged the fond conviction that her beloved son would be their restorer. How wise and pious was the undeviating confidence of kind old Glastonbury in their fate! With what pure, what heartfelt delight, would that faithful friend listen to his extraordinary communication!

His carriage dashed through the park gates as if the driver were sensible of his master's pride and exultation. Glastonbury was ready to welcome him, standing in the flower-garden, which he had made so rich and beautiful, and which had been the charm and consolation of many of their humble hours.

"My dear, dear father," exclaimed Ferdinand, embracing him, for thus he ever styled his old tutor.

But Glastonbury could not speak; the tears quivered in his eyes and trickled down his faded cheek. Ferdinand led him into the house.

"How well you look, dear father," continued Ferdinand; "you really look younger and heartier than ever. You received all my letters, I am sure; and yours—how kind of you to remember and to write to me! I never forgot you, my dear, dear friend. I never forgot you. Do you know I am the happiest fellow in the world? I have the greatest news in the world to tell my Glastonbury! and we owe every thing to you, every thing. What would Sir Ratcliffe have been without you? what should I have been? Fancy the best news you can, dear friend, and it is not as good as I have got to tell. You will rejoice, you will be delighted! We shall furnish a castle! by Jove, we shall furnish a castle! we shall, indeed, and you shall build it! No more gloom; no more care. The Armines shall hold their heads up again, by Jove they shall! Dearest, dearest of men, I dare say you think me mad. I am mad; mad with joy. How that Virginian creeper has grown! I have brought you such lots of plants, my father! a complete Sicilian Hortus Siccus. Ah, John, faithful John! give me your hand. How is your wife? Take care of my pistol-case. Ask Louis; he knows all.

about every thing. Well, my dear, dear Glastonbury, and how have you been! how is the old tower! how are the old books, and the old staff, and old arms, and the old every thing? dear, dear, Glastonbury!"

While the carriage was unpacking, and the dinner table prepared, the friends walked in the garden, and from thence strolled towards the tower, where they remained some time pacing up and down the beechen avenue. It was very evident, on their return, that Ferdinand had communicated his great intelligence. The countenance of Glastonbury was quite radiant with delight. Indeed, although he had dined, he accepted with readiness Ferdinand's invitation to repeat the ceremony; nay, he quaffed more than one glass of wine: and, I believe, even drank the health of every member of the united families of Armine and Grandison. It was late, very late, before the companions parted, and retired for the night; and I think, before they bade each other good night, they must have talked over every circumstance that had occurred in their experience since the birth of Ferdinand.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH SOME LIGHT IS THROWN ON THE TITLE OF THIS WORK.

How delicious, after a long, long absence, to walk on a sunny morning, and find ourselves at home! Ferdinand could scarcely credit that he was really again at Armine. He started up in his bed, and rubbed his eyes, and stared at the unaccustomed, yet familiar sights, and, for a moment, Malta, and the Royal Fusiliers, Bath and his betrothed, were all a dream; and then he remembered the visit of his dear mother to this very room on the eve of his first departure. He had returned; in safety he had returned, and in happiness, to accomplish all her hopes, and to reward her for all her solicitude. Never felt any one more content than Ferdinand Armine—more content and more grateful.

He rose and opened the casement; a rich and exhilarating perfume filled the chamber; he looked with a feeling of delight and pride over the broad and beautiful park; the tall trees rising and flinging their taller shadows over the bright and dewy turf, and the last mists clearing away from the distant woods, and blending with the spotless sky. Every thing was sweet and still, save, indeed, the carol of the birds, or the tinkle of some restless bell-wether. It was a rich autumnal morn. And yet, with all the excitement of his new views in life, and the blissful consciousness of the happiness of those he loved, he could not but feel that a great change had come over his spirit since the days he was wont to ramble in this old haunt of boyhood. His innocence was gone. Life was no longer that deep unbroken trance of duty and of love from which he had been roused to so much care; and if not remorse, at least to so much compunction. He had no secrets then. Existence was not then a subterfuge, but a calm and candid state of serene enjoyment. Feelings then were not compromised for interests; and then it was the excellent that was studied, not the expedient. "Yet such I sup-

pose is life," murmured Ferdinand; "we moralize when it is too late; nor is there any thing more silly than to regret. One event makes another: what we anticipate seldom occurs; what we least expect generally happens; and time can only prove which is most for our advantage. And surely I am the last person who should look grave. Our ancient house rises from its ruins; the beings I love most in the world are not only happy, but indebted to me for their happiness, and I—I myself, with every gift of fortune suddenly thrown at my feet—what more can I desire? Am I not satisfied? Why do I even ask the question? I am sure I know not. It rises like a devil in my thoughts, and spoils every thing. The girl is young, noble, and fair—and loves me. And her—I love her—at least I suppose I love her. I love her at any rate as much as I love, or ever did love, woman. There is no great sacrifice, then, on my part; there should be none; there is none; unless, indeed, it be that a man does not like to give up without a struggle all his chance of romance and rapture.

"I know not how it is, but there are moments I almost wish that I had no father and no mother; ay! not a single friend or relative in the world, and that Armine was sunk into the very centre of the earth. If I stood alone in the world, methinks I might find a place that suits me;—now every thing seems ordained for me, as it were, beforehand. My spirit has had no play. Something whispers me that, with all its flush prosperity, this is neither wise nor well. God knows that I am not heartless, and would be grateful; and yet, if life can afford me no deeper sympathy than I have yet experienced, I cannot but hold it, even with all its sweet affections, as little better than a dull delusion."

While Ferdinand was thus moralizing at the casement, Glastonbury appeared beneath; and his appearance dissipated in an instant this gathering gloom. "Let us breakfast together," proposed Ferdinand. "I have breakfasted these two hours," replied the hermit of the gate. "I hope that on the first night of your return to Armine you have proved auspicious dreams."

"My bed and I are old companions," said Ferdinand; "and we agreed very well. I tell you what, my dear Glastonbury, we will have a stroll together this morning, and talk over our plans of last night. Go into the library and look over my sketch-books. You will find them on my pistol-case, and I will be with you anon."

In due time the friends commenced their ramble. Ferdinand soon became excited by Glastonbury's various suggestions for the completion of the castle; and as for the old man himself, between his architectural creation and the restoration of the family, to which he had been so long devoted, he was in a rapture of enthusiasm, which afforded an amusing contrast to his usual meek and subdued demeanour.

"Your grandfather was a great man," said Glastonbury, who in old days seldom ventured to mention the name of the famous Sir Ferdinand: "there is no doubt he was a very great man. He had great ideas. How he would glory in our present prospects! 'Tis strange what a strong confidence I have ever had in the destiny of your house. I felt sure that Providence would not desert you. There is no doubt we must have a portcullis." "Decidedly a portcullis," said Ferdinand.

shall make all the drawings yourself, my dear Glastonbury, and supervise every thing. We will not have a single anachronism. It shall be perfect."

"Perfect," echoed Glastonbury; "really perfect! It shall be a perfect Gothic castle. I have such treasures for the work. All the labours of my life have tended to this object. I have all the emblazonings of your house since the conquest. There shall be three hundred shields in the hall. I will paint them myself. O! there is no place in the world like Armine!"

"Nothing," said Ferdinand; "I have seen a great deal, but, after all, there is nothing like Armine."

"Had we been born to this splendour," said Glastonbury, "we should have thought little of it. We have been mildly and wisely chastened. I cannot sufficiently admire the wisdom of Providence, which has tempered, by such a wise dispensation, the too eager blood of your race."

"I should be sorry to pull down the old Place," said Ferdinand.

"It must not be," said Glastonbury; "we have lived there happily, though humbly."

"I would we could move it to another part of the park, like the house of Loretto," said Ferdinand with a smile.

"We can cover it with ivy," observed Glastonbury, looking somewhat grave.

The morning stole away in these agreeable plans and prospects. At length the friends parted, agreeing to meet again at dinner. Glastonbury repaired to his tower, and Ferdinand, taking his gun, sauntered into the surrounding wilderness.

But he felt no inclination for sport. The conversation with Glastonbury had raised a thousand thoughts over which he longed to brood. His life had been a scene of such constant excitement, since his return to England, that he had enjoyed little opportunity of indulging in calm self-communion; and now that he was at Armine, and alone, the contrast between his past and his present situation struck him so forcibly, that he could not refrain from falling into a reverie upon his fortunes. It is wonderful—all wonderful—very, very wonderful. There seemed, indeed, as Glastonbury affirmed, a providential dispensation in the whole transaction. The fall of his family—the heroic, and, as it now appeared, prescient firmness with which his father had elung, in all their deprivations, to his unproductive patrimony—his own education—the extinction of his mother's house—his very follies, once to him a cause of so much unhappiness, but which it now seemed were all the time compelling him, as it were, to his prosperity;—all these, and a thousand other traits and circumstances, flitted over his mind, and were each in turn the subject of his manifold meditation. Willing was he to credit that destiny had reserved for him the character of restorer: that duty, indeed, he had accepted, and yet—

He looked around him as if to see what devil was whispering in his ear. He was alone. No one was there or near. Around him rose the silent bowers, and scarcely the voice of a bird or the hum of an insect disturbed the deep tranquillity. But a cloud seemed to rest on the fair and pensive brow of Ferdinand Armine. He threw himself on the turf, leaning his head on one arm, and with the other plucking wild flowers, which he as hastily, almost as fretfully, flung away.

"Conceal it as I will," he exclaimed, "I am a

victim; disguise them as I may, all the considerations are worldly. There is, there must be, something better in this world than power, and wealth, and rank; and surely there must be felicity more rapturous even than securing the happiness of a parent. Ah! dreams in which I have so oft and so fondly indulged, are yet, indeed, after all, but fantastical and airy visions? Is love, indeed, a delusion, or am I marked out from men alone to be exempted from its delicious bondage? It must be a delusion. All laugh at it, all jest about it, all agree in stigmatizing it the vanity of vanities. And does my experience contradict this harsh but common fame? Alas! what have I seen or known to give the lie to this ill-report? No one—nothing. Some women I have met more beautiful, assuredly, than Kate, and many, many less fair; and some have crossed my path with a wild and brilliant grace, that has for a moment dazzled my sight, and, perhaps, for a moment lured me from my way. But these shooting stars have but glittered transiently in my heaven, and only made me, by their evanescent brilliancy, more sensible of its gloom. Let me believe then, O! let me of all men then believe, that the forms that inspire the sculptor and the painter have no models in nature; that that combination of beauty and grace, of fascinating intelligence and fond devotion, over which men brood in the soft hours of their young loneliness, is but the promise of a better world and not the charm of this one.

"But, what terror in that truth! what despair! what madness! Yes! at this moment of severest scrutiny, how profoundly I feel that life without love is worse than death! How vain and void, how flat and fruitless, appear all those splendid accidents of existence for which men struggle, without this essential and pervading charm! What a world without a sun! Yes! without this transcendent sympathy, riches and rank, and even power and fame, seem to me at best but jewels set in a coronet of lead!

"And who knows whether that extraordinary being, of whose magnificent yet ruinous career this castle is in truth a fitting emblem, I say who knows whether the secret of his wild and restless course is not hidden in this same sad lack of love! Perhaps, while the world, the silly superficial world, marvelled and moralized of his wanton life, and poured forth their anathemas against his heartless selfishness, perchance he all the time was sighing for some soft bosom whereon to pour his overwhelming passion—even as I am!

"O! nature! why art thou beautiful! My heart requires not, imagination cannot paint, a sweeter or a fairer scene than these surrounding bowers. This azure vault of heaven, this golden sunshine, this deep and blending shade, these rare and fragrant shrubs, yon grove of green and tallest pines, and the bright gliding of this swan-crowned lake—my soul is charmed with all this beauty and this sweetness! I feel no disappointment here; my mind does not here outrun reality; here there is no cause to mourn over ungratified hopes and fanciful desires. Is it then my destiny that I am to be baffled only in the dearest desires of my heart?"

At this moment the loud and agitated barking of his dogs at some little distance roused Ferdinand from his reverie. He called them to him, and soon one of them obeyed his summons, but instantly returned to his companion with such significant ge-

cures, panting and yelping, that Ferdinand supposed that Basto was caught perhaps in some trap; so, taking up his gun, he proceeded to the dog's rescue.

To his great surprise, as he was about to emerge from a bower on to a plot of turf, in the centre of which grew a very large cedar, he beheld a lady in a riding-habit standing before the tree, and evidently admiring its beautiful proportions.

Her countenance was raised and motionless. It seemed to him that it was more radiant than the sunshine. He gazed with rapture on the dazzling brilliancy of her complexion, the delicate regularity of her features, and the large violet-tinted eyes, fringed with the longest and the darkest lashes that he had ever beheld. From her position her hat had fallen to the very back of her head, revealing her lofty and pellucid brow, and the dark and lustrous locks that were braided over her temples. The whole countenance combined that brilliant health and that classic beauty which we associate with the idea of some nymph tripping over the dew-bespangled meads of Ida, or glancing amid the hallowed groves of Greece. Although the lady could scarcely have seen eighteen summers, her stature was above the common height; but language cannot describe the startling symmetry of her superb figure.

There is no love but love at first sight. This is the transcendent and surpassing offspring of sheer and unpolluted sympathy. All other is the illegitimate result of observation, of reflection, of compromise, of comparison, of expediency. The passions that endure flash like the lightning: they scorch the soul, but it is warmed forever. Miserable man whose love rises by degrees upon the frigid morning of his mind! Some hours indeed of warmth and lustre may perchance fall to his lot; some moments of meridian splendour, in which he basks in what he deems eternal sunshine. But then how often overcast by the clouds of care, how often dusked by the blight of misery and misfortune! And certain as the gradual rise of such affection is its gradual decline, and melancholy set. Then, in the chill dim twilight of his soul, he execrates custom; because he has madly expected that feelings could be habitual that were not homogeneous, and because he has been guided by the observation of sense, and not by the inspiration of sympathy.

Amid the gloom and travail of existence suddenly to behold a beautiful being, and, as instantaneously, to feel an overwhelming conviction that with that fair form forever our destiny must be entwined; that there is no more joy but in her joy, no sorrow but when she grieves; that in her sight of love, in her smile of fondness, hereafter is all bliss; to feel our flaunting ambition fade away like a shrivelled gourd before her visions; to feel fame a juggle and posterity a lie; and to be prepared at once, for this great object, to forfeit and fling away all former hopes, ties, schemes, views; to violate in her favour every duty of society;—this is a lover, and this is love! Magnificent, sublime, divine sentiment! An immortal flame burns in the breast of that man who adores and is adored. He is an ethereal being. The accidents of earth touch him not. Revolutions of empires, changes of creed, mutations of opinion, are to him but the clouds and meteors of a stormy sky. The schemes and struggles of mankind are, in his thinking, but the anxieties of pigmies, and the fantastical achievements of apes. Nothing can subdue him. He laughs alike at loss

of fortune, loss of friends, loss of character. The deeds and thought of men are to him equally indifferent. He does not mingle in their paths of callous bustle, or hold himself responsible to the airy impostures before which they bow down. He is a mariner, who, in the sea of life, keeps his gaze fixedly on a single star; and, if that do not shine, he lets go the rudder, and glories when his bark descends into the bottomless gulf.

Yes! it was this mighty passion that now raged in the heart of Ferdinand Armine, as, pale, trembling, panting, he withdrew a few paces from the overwhelming spectacle, and leaned against a tree in a chaos of emotion. What had he seen? What ravishing vision had risen upon his sight? What did he feel? What wild, what delicious, what maddening impulse now pervaded his frame? A storm seemed raging in his soul—a mighty wind, dispelling in its course the sullen clouds and vapours of long years. He was, indeed, as one possessed, waving his agitated arm to heaven, and stamping his restless foot upon the uncongenial earth. Silent he was, indeed, for he was speechless; though the big drop that quivered on his brow, and the slight foam that played upon his lip, proved the difficult triumph of passion over expression. But, as the wind clears the heaven, passion eventually tranquillizes the soul. The tumult of the mind gradually subsided; the flitting memories, the scudding thoughts, that for a moment had coursed about in such wild order, vanished and melted away, and a feeling of bright serenity succeeded, a sense of beauty and of joy, and of hovering and circumambient happiness.

He advanced, he gazed again; the lady was still there. Changed, indeed, her position; her front was towards him. She had gathered a flower, and was examining its beauty.

"Henrietta!" exclaimed a manly voice from the adjoining wood. Before she could answer, a stranger came forward, a man of middle age, but of an appearance remarkably prepossessing. He was tall and dignified, fair, with a very aquiline nose. One of Ferdinand's dogs followed him barking.

"I cannot find the gardener anywhere," said the stranger; "I think we had better remount."

"Ah, me! what a pity," exclaimed the lady.

"Let me be your guide," said Ferdinand, advancing.

The lady rather started; the gentleman, not at all discomposed, welcomed Ferdinand with great elegance, and said, "I feel that we are intruders, sir. But we were informed by the woman at the lodge that the family were not here present, and that we should find her husband in the grounds."

"The family are not at Armine," replied Ferdinand; "I am sure, however, Sir Rateliff would be most happy for you to walk about the grounds as much as you please; and as I am well acquainted with them, I should feel delighted to be your guide."

"You are really too courteous, sir," replied the gentleman; and his beautiful companion rewarded Ferdinand with a smile like a sunbeam, that played about her countenance till it finally settled into two exquisite dimples, and revealed to him rows of teeth that, for a moment, he believed to be even the most beautiful feature of the surpassing visage.

They sauntered along, every one developing new beauties in their progress, and deriving from his companions renewed expressions of rapture. The dim bowers, the shining glades, the tall rare trees,

the luxuriant shrubs, the silent and sequestered lake, in turn enchanted them, until, at length, Ferdinand, who had led them with experienced taste through all the most striking points of the pleasure, brought them before the walls of the castle.

"And here is Armine Castle," he said; "it is little better than a shell, and yet contains something which you might like to see."

"O! by all means," exclaimed the lady.

"But we are spoiling your sport," suggested the gentleman.

"I can always kill partridges," replied Ferdinand, laying down his gun; "but I cannot always find agreeable companions."

So saying, he opened the massy portal of the castle, and they entered the hall. It was a lofty chamber, of dimensions large enough to feast a thousand vassals, with a dais and a rich Gothic screen, and a gallery for the musicians. The walls were hung with arms and armour admirably arranged; but the parti-coloured marble floor was so covered with piled-up cases of furniture, that the general effect of the scene was not only greatly marred, but it was even difficult in some parts to trace a path.

"Here," said Ferdinand, jumping upon a huge case, and running to the wall, "here is the standard of Ralph D'Ermy, who came over with the Conqueror, and founded the family in England. Here is the sword of William D'Army, who signed Magna Charta. Here is the complete coat armour of the second Ralph, who died before Ascalon. This case contains a diamond-hilted sword, given by the empress to the great Sir Ferdinand, for defeating the Turks; and here is a Mameluke sabre, given to the same Sir Ferdinand by the sultan, for defeating the empress."

"O! I have heard so much of that great Sir Ferdinand," said the lady, "I think he must have been the most interesting character that ever existed."

"He was a marvellous being," answered her guide, with a peculiar look, "and yet I know not whether his descendants have not cause to rue his genius."

"O! never, never!" said the lady; "what is wealth to genius? How much prouder, were I an Armine, should I be of such an ancestor, than of a thousand others, even if they had left me this castle as complete as he wished it to be!"

"Well, as to that," replied Ferdinand, "I believe I am somewhat of your opinion; though I fear he lived in too late an age for such order of minds. It would have been better for him, perhaps, if he had succeeded in becoming King of Poland."

"I hope there is a portrait of him," said the lady; "there is nothing I long so much to see. I feel quite in love with the great Sir Ferdinand."

"I rather think there is a portrait," replied her companion, somewhat dryly. "We will try to find it out. Do not you think I make an excellent cicero?"

"Indeed, most excellent," replied the lady.

"I perceive you are master of your subject," replied the gentleman, thus affording Ferdinand an easy opportunity of telling them who he was. The hint, however, was not accepted.

"And now," said Ferdinand, "we will ascend the staircase."

Accordingly they mounted a large spiral staircase, which indeed filled the space of a round

tower, and was lighted from the top by a lantern of rich coloured glass, on which were emblazoned the arms of the family. Then they entered the vestibule,—an apartment spacious enough for a saloon; which, however, was not fitted up in the Gothic style, but of which the painted ceiling, the gilded panels, and inlaid floor, were more suitable indeed to a French palace. The brilliant doors of this vestibule opened in many directions upon long suites of state-chambers, which indeed merited the description of shells. They were nothing more: of many the flooring was not even laid down; the walls of all were rough and plastered.

"Ah!" said the lady, "what a pity it is not finished!"

"It is indeed desolate," observed Ferdinand, "but here perhaps is something more to your taste." So saying, he opened another door, and ushered them into the picture gallery.

It was a superb chamber, nearly two hundred feet in length, and contained only portraits of the family, or pictures of their achievements. It was of a pale green colour, lighted from the top; and the floor, of oak and ebony, was partially covered with a single Persian carpet, of the most fanciful pattern and brilliant die, a present from the sultan to the great Sir Ferdinand. The earlier annals of the family were illustrated by a series of paintings, by modern masters, representing the battle of Hastings, the siege of Ascalon, the meeting at Runnymede, the various invasions of France, and some of the most striking incidents in the wars of the Roses, in all of which a valiant Army prominently figured. At length they stood before the first contemporary portrait of the Army family, one of Cardinal Stephen Army, by an Italian master. The great dignitary was legate of the pope in the time of the seventh Henry, and in his scarlet robes and ivory chair, looked like a papal Jupiter, not unworthy himself of wielding the thunder of the Vatican. From him the series of the family portraits was unbroken; and it was very interesting to trace, in this excellently arranged collection, the history of national costume. Holbein had commemorated the Lords Tewkesbury rich in velvet, and golden chains, and jewels. The statesmen of Elizabeth and James, and their beautiful and gorgeous dames, followed; and then came many a gallant cavalier by Vandyke. One admirable picture contained Lord Armine and his brave brothers, seated together in a tent round a drum, on which his lordship was apparently planning the operations of the campaign. Then followed a long series of unmemorable baronets, and their more interesting wives and daughters, touched by the pencil of Kneller, of Lely, or of Hudson, squires in wigs and scarlet jackets, and powdered dames in hoops and farthingales.

They stood before the crowning effort of the room, the masterpiece of Reynolds. It represented a full-length portrait of a young man, apparently just past his minority. The side of the figure was alone exhibited, and the face glanced at the spectator over the shoulder, in a favourite position of Vandyke. It was a countenance of ideal beauty. A profusion of dark brown curls was dashed aside from a lofty forehead of dazzling brilliancy. The face was perfectly oval; the nose, though small, was high and aquiline, and exhibited a remarkable dilation of the nostril; the curling lip was shaded by a very delicate mustachio; and the general

expression, indeed, of the mouth and of the large gray eyes, would have been perhaps arrogant and imperious, had not the extraordinary beauty of the whole countenance rendered it fascinating.

It was indeed a picture to gaze upon and to return to; one of those visages which, after having once beheld, haunt us at all hours, and flit across our mind's eye unexpected and unbidden. So great indeed was the effect that it produced upon the present visitors to the gallery, that they stood before it for some minutes in silence; the scrutinizing glance of the gentleman indeed was more than once diverted from the portrait to the countenance of his conductor, and the silence was eventually broken by our hero.

"And what think you," he inquired, "of the famous Sir Ferdinand?"

The lady started, looked at him, withdrew her glance, and appeared somewhat confused. Her companion replied, "I think, sir, I cannot err in believing that I am indebted for much courtesy to his descendant."

"I believe," said Ferdinand, laughing, "that I should not have much trouble in proving my pedigree. I am generally considered an ugly likeness of my grandfather."

The gentleman smiled, and then said, "I hardly know whether I can style myself your neighbour, for I live nearly ten miles distant. It would, however, afford me sincere gratification to see you at Ducie Bower. I cannot welcome you in a castle. My name is Temple," he continued, offering his card to Ferdinand. "I need not now introduce you to my daughter. I was not unaware that Sir Ratcliffe Armine had a son, but I understood that he was abroad."

"I have returned to England within these two months," replied Ferdinand, "and to Armine within these two days. I deem it fortunate that my return has afforded me an opportunity of welcoming you and Miss Temple. But you must not talk of our castle, for that you know is our folly. Pray come now and visit our older and humbler dwelling; and take some refreshment after your long ride."

This offer was declined, but with great courtesy. They quitted the castle, and Mr. Temple was about to direct his steps towards the lodge, where he had left his own and his daughter's horses; but Ferdinand persuaded them to return through the park, which he proved to them very satisfactorily must be the nearest way. He even asked permission to accompany them; and, while his groom was saddling his horse, he led them to the old Place, and the flower-garden.

"You must be very fatigued, Miss Temple. I wish that I could persuade you to enter and rest yourself."

"Indeed, no: I love flowers too much to leave them."

"Here is one that has the recommendation of novelty as well as beauty," said Ferdinand, plucking a strange rose, and presenting it to her. "I sent it to my mother from Barbary."

"You live amidst beauty."

"I think that I never remember Armine looking so well as to-day."

"A silvan scene requires sunshine," replied Miss Temple. "We have, indeed, been most fortunate in our visit."

"It is something brighter than the sunshine that makes it so fair," replied Ferdinand; but at this moment the horses appeared.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE IS VERY ABSENT DURING DINNER.

"You are well mounted," said Mr. Temple to Ferdinand.

"'Tis a barb—I brought it over with me."

"'Tis a beautiful creature," said Miss Temple.

"Hear that, Selim," said Ferdinand; "prick up thine ears, my steed. I perceive that you are an accomplished horsewoman, Miss Temple. You know our country, I dare say, well?"

"I wish I knew it better. This is only the second summer that we have passed at Ducie."

"By-the-by; I suppose you know my landlord, Captain Armine?" said Mr. Temple.

"No," said Ferdinand; "I do not know a single person in the county. I have myself scarcely been at Armine for these five years, and my father and mother do not visit any one."

"What a beautiful oak!" exclaimed Miss Temple, desirous of turning the conversation.

"It has the reputation of being planted by Sir Francis Walsingham," said Ferdinand. "An ancestor of mine married his daughter. He was the father of Sir Walsingham, the portrait in the gallery with the white stick. You remember it?"

"Perfectly: that beautiful portrait! It must be at all events a very old tree."

"There are few things more pleasing to me than an ancient place," said Mr. Temple.

"Doubly pleasing when in possession of an ancient family," added his daughter.

"I fear such feelings are fast wearing away," said Ferdinand.

"There will be a reaction," said Mr. Temple.

"They cannot destroy the poetry of time," said the lady.

"I hope I have no very inveterate prejudices," said Ferdinand; "but I should be sorry to see Armine in any other hands than our own, I confess."

"I never would enter the park again," said Miss Temple.

"As far as worldly considerations are concerned," continued Ferdinand, "it would, perhaps, be much better for us if we were to part with it."

"It must, indeed, be a costly place to keep up," said Mr. Temple.

"Why, as far as that is concerned," said Ferdinand, "we let the kine rove and the sheep browse where our fathers hunted the stag and slew their falcons. I think if they were to rise from their graves, they would be ashamed of us."

"Nay!" said Miss Temple, "I think yonder cattle are very picturesque. But the truth is, any thing would look well in such a park as this. There is such a variety of prospect."

The park of Armine, indeed, differed very materially from those vamped-up sheep-walks and ambitious paddocks which are now honoured with the title. It was, in truth, the old chase, and little shorn of its original proportions. It was many miles in circumference, abounding in hill and dale, and offering much variety of appearance. Sometimes it was studded with ancient timber, single trees of extraordinary growth, and rich clumps that seemed coeval with the foundation of the family. Tracts of wild champaign succeed these, covered with gorse and fern. Then came stately avenues of

sycamore or Spanish chestnut, fragments of stately woods, that in old days, doubtless, reached the vicinity of the mansion house. And these were in turn succeeded by modern coverts.

At length our party reached the gate whence Ferdinand had calculated that they should quit the park. He would willingly have accompanied them. He bade them farewell with regret, which was softened by the hope expressed by all of a speedy meeting.

"I wish, Captain Armine," said Miss Temple, "we had your turf to canter home upon. Now, mind you do not get locked up in the picture gallery, by mistake, and forget to come to Ducie."

"That is, indeed, impossible," said Ferdinand.

"By-the-by, Captain Armine," said Mr. Temple, "ceremony should scarcely subsist between country neighbours, and certainly we have given you no cause to complain of our reserve. As you are alone at Armine, perhaps you would come over and dine with us to-morrow. If you can manage to come early, we will see whether we may not contrive to kill a bird together; and pray remember we can give you a bed, which I think, all things considered, it would be but wise to accept."

"I accept every thing," said Ferdinand, smiling; "all your offers. Good morning, my dearest sir; good morning, Miss Temple."

"Miss Temple, indeed!" exclaimed Ferdinand, when he had watched them out of sight. "Exquisite, enchanting, adored being! Without thee, what is existence? How dull, how blank does every thing even now seem! It is as if the sun had just set. O! that form! that radiant countenance! that musical and thrilling voice! Those tones still vibrate on my ear, or I should deem it all a vision! Will to-morrow ever come? O! that I could express to you, my love, my overwhelming, my absorbing, my burning passion! Beautiful, beautiful Henrietta! Thou hast a name, methinks, I ever loved. Where am I!—what do I say!—what wild, what maddening words are these? Am I not Ferdinand Armine, the betrothed—the victim? Even now methinks I hear the chariot wheels of my bride. God! if she be there—if she indeed be at Armine on my return—I'll not see her—I'll not speak to them—I'll fly. I'll cast to the winds all ties and duties—I will not be dragged to the altar, a miserable sacrifice, to redeem, by my forfeited felicity, the worldly fortunes of my race. O! Armine, Armine—she would not enter thy walls again, if other blood but mine swayed thy fair demesne: and I, shall I give thee another mistress, Armine? It would indeed be treason! Without her I cannot live. Without her form bounds over this turf, and glances in these arbours, I never wish to view them. All the inducements to make the wretched sacrifice once meditated then vanish; for Armine without her is a desert—a tomb—a hell. I am free then. Excellent logician! But this woman—I am bound to her. Bound? The word makes me tremble. I shiver: I hear the clank of my fetters. Am I, indeed, bound? Ay! in honour, honour and love. A contest! Pah! The idol must yield to the divinity!"

With these wild words and wilder thoughts bursting from his lips and dashing through his mind; his course as irregular, and as reckless as his fancies; now fiercely galloping, now breaking into a sudden halt, Ferdinand at length arrived at

home; and his quick eye perceived, in a moment, that the dreaded arrival had not taken place. Glastonbury was in the flower-garden, on one knee before a vase, over which he was training a creeper. He looked up as he heard the approach of Ferdinand. His presence and benignant smile in some degree stilled the fierce emotions of his pupil. Ferdinand felt that the system of dissimulation must now commence; besides, he was always careful to be most kind to Glastonbury. He would not allow that any attack of spleen, or even illness, could ever justify a careless look or expression to that dear friend.

"I hope, my dear father," said Ferdinand, "I am punctual to our hour?"

"The sun-dial tells me," said Glastonbury, "that you have arrived to the moment; and I rather think that yonder approaches a summons to our repast. I hope you have passed your morning agreeably?"

"If all days would pass as sweet, my father, I should indeed be blessed."

"I, too, have had a fine morning of it. You must come to-morrow, and see my grand emblazonry of the Ratchliffe and Armine coats; I mean it for the gallery." With these words they entered the Place.

"You do not eat, my child," said Glastonbury to his companion.

"I have taken too long a ride, perhaps," said Ferdinand; who, indeed, was much too excited to have an appetite, and so abstracted that any one but Glastonbury would have long before detected his absence.

"I have changed my hour to-day," continued Glastonbury, "for the pleasure of dining with you; and I think to-morrow you had better change your hour, and dine with me."

"By-the-by, my dear father, you, who know every thing, do you happen to know a gentleman of the name of Temple in this neighbourhood?"

"I think I heard that Mr. Ducie had let the Bower to a gentleman of that name."

"Do you know who he is?"

"I never asked; for I feel no interest except about proprietors, because they enter into my County History. But I think I once heard that this Mr. Temple had been our minister at some foreign court. You give me a fine dinner, and eat nothing yourself. This pigeon is very savoury."

"I will trouble you. I think there once was a Henrietta Armine, my father?"

"The beautiful creature!" said Glastonbury, laying down his knife and fork; "she died young. She was a daughter of Lord Armine, and the Queen, Henrietta Maria, was her god-mother. It grieves me much that we have no portrait of her. She was very fair, her eyes of a sweet light blue."

"O, no! dark, my father; dark and deep as the violet."

"My child, the letter-writer, who mentions her death, describes them as light blue. I know of no other record of her beauty."

"I wish they had been dark," said Ferdinand, recovering himself; "However, I am glad there was a Henrietta Armine; 'tis a beautiful name."

"I think that Armine makes any name sound well," said Glastonbury. "No more wine, indeed, my child. Nay! if I must," continued he with a benevolent smile, "I will drink to the health of Miss Grandison!"

"Ah!" almost shrieked Ferdinand.

"My child, what is the matter?" inquired Glastonbury.

"A gnat, a fly, a wasp; something stung me. O! pah!—it is better now," said Ferdinand.

"Try some remedy," said Glastonbury; "let me fetch my oil of lilies. 'Tis a specific."

"O! no; 'tis nothing; nothing indeed. A fly, only a fly; nothing more; only a venomous fly. Sharp at the moment; nothing more."

The dinner was over: they retired to the library. Ferdinand walked about the room restless and moody. At length he belaboured himself of the piano, and affecting an anxiety to hear some of the favourite compositions of Glastonbury, he contrived to occupy his companion. In time, however, his old tutor invited him to take his violoncello and join him in a concerto. Ferdinand, of course, complied with this invitation, but the result was not very satisfactory. After a series of blunders, which were the natural result of his thoughts being occupied on other objects, he was obliged to plead a headach, and was glad when he could escape to his chamber.

Rest, however, no longer awaited him on his old pillow. It was at first delightful to escape from the restraint upon his reveries which he had lately experienced. He leaned for an hour over his empty fire-place in mute abstraction. The cold, however, in time drove him to bed, but he could not sleep. His eyes indeed were closed, but the vision of Henrietta Temple was not less apparent to him. He recalled every feature of her countenance, every trait of her conduct, every word indeed that she had expressed. The whole series of her observations, from the moment he had first seen her, until the moment they had parted, were accurately repeated, her very tones considered, and her very attitudes pondered over. Many were the hours that he heard strike: he grew restless and feverish. Sleep would not be commanded. He jumped out of bed, he opened the casement, he beheld in the moonlight the Barbary rose-tree of which he had presented her a flower. This consoling spectacle assured him that he had not been, as he had almost imagined, the victim of a dream. He knelt down and invoked all heavenly and earthly blessings on Henrietta Temple and his love. The night air, and the earnest invocation together, cooled his brain, and nature soon delivered him exhausted to repose.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE PAYS HIS FIRST VISIT TO DUCIE.

YES! it is the morning. Is it possible? Shall he again behold her? That form of surpassing beauty, that bright, that dazzling countenance, again are they to bless his entranced vision. Shall he speak to her again? That musical and thrilling voice, shall it again sound and echo in his enraptured ear?

Ferdinand had reached Armine so many days before his calculated arrival, that he did not expect his family, and the Grandisons, to arrive for at least a week. What a respite did he not now feel this delay: if ever he could venture to think of

the subject at all. He drove it indeed from his thoughts. The fascinating present completely engrossed his existence. He waited until the post arrived. It brought no letters; letters now so dreaded! He jumped upon his horse and galloped towards Ducie.

Now while our hero directs his course towards the mansion of his beloved, the reader will perhaps not be displeased to learn something more of the lady and her father than Ferdinand gleaned from the scanty knowledge of Glastonbury. Mr. Temple was the younger son of a younger branch of a noble family. He inherited no patrimony, but had been educated for the diplomatic service, and the influence of his family had early obtained him very distinguished appointments. He was envoy to a German court, when a change of ministry occasioned his recall, and he retired after a long career of able and assiduous service, comforted by a pension and glorified by a privy-councillorship. He was an acute and accomplished man, practised in the world, with great self-control, yet devoted to his daughter, the only offspring of a wife whom he had lost early and loved much. Deprived at a very tender age of that parent of whom she would have become peculiarly the charge, Henrietta Temple found in the devotion of her father all that consolation of which her forlorn state was susceptible. She was not delivered over to the custody of a governess, or to the even less sympathetic supervision of relations. Mr. Temple never permitted his daughter to be separated from him; he cherished her life and he directed her education. Resident in a city which arrogates to itself, not without justice, the title of the German Athens, his pupil availed herself of all those advantages which were offered to her by the instruction of the most skilful professors. Few persons were more accomplished than Henrietta Temple, even at an early age, but her rare accomplishments were not her most remarkable characteristics. Nature, who had accorded to her that extraordinary beauty which we have attempted to describe, had endowed her with great talents, and a soul of sublime temper. It was often remarked of Henrietta Temple—and the circumstance may doubtless be in some degree accounted for by the little interference and influence of women in her education—that she never was a girl. She expanded at once from a charming child into a magnificent woman. She had entered life very early, and had presided at her father's table for a year before his recall from his mission. Few women, in so short a period, had received so much homage; but she listened to compliments with a careless, though courteous ear, and received more ardent aspirations with a smile. The men, who were puzzled, voted her cold and heartless; but men should remember that fineness of taste, as well as apathy of temperament, may account for an unsuccessful suit. Assuredly Henrietta Temple was not deficient in feeling. She entertained for her father sentiments almost of idolatry; and those more intimate or dependent acquaintances best qualified to form an opinion of her character, spoke of her always as a soul gushing with tenderness. Notwithstanding their mutual devotion to each other, there were not many points of resemblance between the characters of Mr. Temple and his daughter—for she was remarked for a frankness of demeanour and a simplicity, yet strength of thought which remarkably contrasted

with the artificial manners, and the conventional opinions and conversations of her sire. A mind at once thoughtful and energetic, permitted Henrietta Temple to form her own judgments; and an artless candour, which her father never could eradicate from her habits, generally impelled her to express them. It was, indeed, impossible, even for him long to find fault with these ebullitions, however the diplomatist might deplore them; for nature had so imbued the existence of this being with that indefinable charm which we call grace, that it was not in your power to behold her a moment without being enchanted. A glance, a movement, a sunny smile, a word of thrilling music, and all that was left to you was to adore. There was, indeed, in Henrietta Temple that rare and extraordinary combination of intellectual strength, and physical softness, which marks out the woman capable of exercising an irresistible influence over mankind. In the good old days, she might have occasioned a siege of Troy or a battle of Actium. She was one of those women who make nations mad, and for whom a man of genius would willingly peril the empire of the world!

So at least deemed Ferdinand Armine as he cantered through the park, talking to himself, apostrophizing the woods, and shouting his passion to the winds. It was scarcely noon when he reached Ducie Bower. This was a Palladian pavilion, situated in the midst of the most beautiful gardens, and surrounded by green hills. The sun shone brightly, the sky was without a cloud; it appeared to him that he had never beheld a more elegant and sparkling scene. It was a temple worthy of the divinity it enshrined. A façade of four Ionic columns fronted an octagonal hall, adorned with statues, which led into a saloon of considerable size and exquisite proportion. Ferdinand thought that he had never in his life entered so brilliant a chamber. The lofty walls were covered with an Indian paper of vivid fancy, and adorned with several pictures, which his practised eye assured him were of great merit. The room, without being inconveniently crowded, was amply stored with furniture, every article of which bespoke a refined and luxurious taste; easy chairs of all descriptions, most inviting couches, cabinets of choice inlay, and grotesque tables covered with articles of virtue; all these charming infinite nothings, which a person of taste might some time back have easily collected during a long residence on the Continent. A large lamp of Dresden china was suspended from the painted and gilded ceiling. The three tall windows opened on the gardens, and admitted a perfume so rich and various, that Ferdinand could easily believe the fair mistress, as she told him, was indeed a lover of flowers. A light bridge in the distant wood, that bounded the furthest lawn, indicated that a stream was at hand. What with the beauty of the chamber, the richness of the exterior scene, and the bright sun that painted every object with its magical colouring and made every thing appear even more fair and brilliant, Ferdinand stood for some moments quite entranced. A door opened, and Mr. Temple came forward and welcomed him with great cordiality.

After they had passed a half hour in looking at the pictures and in conversation to which they gave rise, Mr. Temple, proposing an adjournment to luncheon, opened a door exactly opposite to the one by which he had entered, and conducted Fer-

dinand into a dining-room, of which the suitable decoration wonderfully pleased his taste. A subdued tint pervaded every part of the chamber: the ceiling was painted in gray tinted frescos of a classical and festive character, and the side table, which stood in a recess supported by four magnificent columns, was adorned with very choice Etruscan vases. The air of repose and stillness which distinguished this apartment, was heightened by the vast conservatory into which it led, blazing with light and beauty, rows of orange trees in bloom, clusters of exotic plants of radiant tint, the sound of a fountain, and gorgeous forms of tropic birds.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Ferdinand.

"'Tis pretty," said Mr. Temple, carving a pasty, "but we are very humble people, and cannot vie with the lords of Gothic castles."

"It appears to me," said Ferdinand, "that Ducie Bower is the most exquisite place I ever beheld."

"If you had seen it two years ago, you would have thought differently," said Mr. Temple; "I assure you I dreaded becoming its tenant. Henrietta is entitled to all the praise, as she took upon herself the whole responsibility. There is not on the banks of the Brenta a more dingy and desolate villa than Ducie appeared when we first came; and as for the gardens, they were a perfect wilderness. She made every thing. It was one vast desolate and neglected lawn, used as a sheep-walk when we arrived. As for the ceilings, I was almost tempted to whitewash them, and yet you see they have cleaned wonderfully; and after all it only required a little taste and labour. I have not laid out much money here. I built the conservatory, to be sure. Henrietta could not live without a conservatory."

"Miss Temple is quite right," pronounced Ferdinand. "It is impossible to live without a conservatory."

At this moment the heroine of their conversation entered the room, and Ferdinand turned pale as death. She extended to him her hand with a most graceful smile; as he touched it, he trembled from head to foot.

"You were not fatigued, I hope, by your ride, Miss Temple," at length he contrived to say.

"O, no! not in the least! I am an experienced horsewoman. Papa and I take the longest rides together."

As for eating with Henrietta Temple in the room, Ferdinand found that quite impossible. The moment she appeared, his appetite vanished. Anxious to speak, yet deprived of his accustomed fluency, he began to praise Ducie.

"You must see it," said Miss Temple; "shall we walk round the grounds?"

"My dear Henrietta," said her father, "I dare say Captain Armine is at this moment sufficiently tired; besides, when he moves, he will like, perhaps, to take his gun; you forget he is a sportsman, and that he cannot waste his morning in talking to ladies and picking flowers."

"O! indeed, sir, I assure you," said Ferdinand, "there is nothing I like so much as talking to ladies, and picking flowers; that is to say, when the ladies have as fine taste as Miss Temple, and the flowers are as beautiful as those at Ducie."

"Well, you shall see my conservatory, Captain Armine," said Miss Temple; "and you shall go

end kill partridges afterwards." So saying, she entered the conservatory, and Ferdinand followed her, leaving Mr. Temple to his pasty.

"These orange groves remind me of Palermo," said Ferdinand.

"Ah!" said Miss Temple, "I have never been in the sweet south!"

"You seem to me a person born to live in a Sicilian palace," said Ferdinand; "to wander in perfumed groves, and to glance in a moonlight warmer than this sun."

"I see you pay compliments," said Miss Temple, looking at him archly, and meeting a glance serious and soft.

"Believe me, not to you."

"What do you think of this flower?" said Miss Temple, turning away rather quickly, and pointing to a strange plant. "It is the most singular thing in the world; but if it be tended by any other person than myself, it withers. Is it not droll?"

"I think not," said Ferdinand.

"I excuse you for your incredulity; no one does believe it; no one can; and yet it is quite true. Our gardener gave it up in despair. I wonder what it can be."

"I think it must be some enchanted prince," said Ferdinand.

"O! if I thought so, how I should long for a wand to emancipate him!" said Miss Temple.

"I would break your wand if you had one," said Ferdinand.

"Why?" said Miss Temple.

"O! I don't know," said Ferdinand, "I suppose because I believe you are sufficiently enchanting without one."

"I am bound to consider that most excellent logic," said Miss Temple.

"Do you admire my fountain and my birds?" she continued, after a short pause. "After Armine, Ducie appears a little tawdry toy."

"Ducie is Paradise," said Ferdinand. "I should like to pass my life in this conservatory."

"As an enchanted prince, I suppose," said Miss Temple.

"Exactly," said Captain Armine; "I would willingly this instant become a flower, if I were sure Miss Temple would cherish my existence."

"Cut off your tendrils, and drown you with a watering pot," said Miss Temple; "you really are very Sicilian in your conversation, Captain Armine."

"Come," said Mr. Temple, who now joined them, "if you really should like to take a stroll round the grounds, I will order the keeper to meet us at the cottage"

"A very excellent proposition," said Miss Temple.

"But you must get a bonnet, Henrietta—I must forbid your going out uncovered."

"No, papa, this will do," said Miss Temple, taking a handkerchief, twisting it round her head, and tying it under her chin.

"You look like an old woman, Henrietta," said her father, smiling.

"I shall not say what you look like, Miss Temple," said Captain Armine, with a glance of admiration, "lest you should think that I was this time even talking Sicilian."

"I reward you for your forbearance with a rose," said Miss Temple, plucking a flower. "It is a return for your beautiful present of yesterday."

Ferdinand pressed the gift to his lips.

They went forth; they stepped into a paradise, where the sweetest flowers seemed grouped in every combination of the choicest forms—baskets, and vases, and beds of infinite fancy. A thousand bees and butterflies filled the air with their glancing shapes and cheerful music, and the birds from the neighbouring groves joined in the chorus of melody. The wood walks through which they now rambled, admitted at intervals glimpses of the ornate landscape, and occasionally the view extended beyond the enclosed limits, and exhibited the clustering and embowered roofs of the neighbouring village, or some woody hill studded with a farmhouse, or a distant spire. As for Ferdinand, he strolled along, full of beautiful thoughts and thrilling fancies, in a dreamy state which had banished all recollection or consciousness but of the present. He was happy; positively, perfectly, supremely happy. He was happy for the first time in his life. He had no conception that life could afford such bliss as now filled his being. What a chain of miserable, tame, factitious sensations seemed the whole course of his past existence. Even the joys of yesterday were nothing to these; Armine was associated with too much of the commonplace and the gloomy to realize the ideal in which he now revelled. But now all circumstances contributed to enchant him. The novelty, the beauty of the scene, harmoniously blended with his passion. The sun seemed to him a more brilliant sun than the orb that illumined Armine; the sky more clear, more pure, more odorous. There seemed a magic sympathy in the trees, and every flower reminded him of its mistress. And then he looked around and beheld her. Was he positively awake! Was he in England! Was he in the same globe in which he had hitherto moved and acted? What was this entrancing form that moved before him? Was it indeed a woman?

O! dea certé!

That voice, too, now wilder than the wildest bird, now low, and hushed, yet always sweet—where was he, what did he listen to, what did he behold, what did he feel! The presence of her father alone restrained him from falling on his knees and expressing to her his adoration.

At length our friends arrived at a picturesque and ivy-grown cottage, where the keeper with their guns and dogs awaited Mr. Temple and his guest. Ferdinand, although a keen sportsman, beheld the spectacle with dismay. He execrated, at the same time, the existence of partridges, and the invention of gunpowder. To resist his fate, however, was impossible; he took his gun and turned to bid his hostess adieu.

"I do not like to quit Paradise at all," he said in a low voice; "must I go?"

"O! certainly," said Miss Temple. "It will do you a great deal of good. Take care you do not shoot papa, for, somehow or other, you really appear to be very absent to-day."

The caution of Miss Temple, although given in jest, was not altogether without some foundation. Captain Armine did contrive not to kill her father, but that was all. Never did any one, especially for the first hour, shoot more wildly. In time, however, Ferdinand sufficiently rallied to recover his reputation with the keeper, who from his first observation began to wink his eye to his son, an attendant bush-beater, and occasionally even thrust his tongue in

side his cheek—a significant gesture perfectly understood by the imp. “For the life of me, Sam,” he afterwards profoundly observed, “I couldn’t make out this here captain by no manner of means whatsoever. At first I thought as how he was going to put the muzzle to his shoulder. Hang me, if ever I see such a gentleman. He missed every thing; and at last if he didn’t hit the longest flying shots without taking aim. Hang me, if ever I see such a gentleman. He hit every thing. That ere captain puzzled me, surely.”

The party at dinner was increased by a neighbouring squire and his wife, and the rector of the parish. Ferdinand was placed at the right hand of Miss Temple. The more he beheld her, the more beautiful she seemed. He detected every moment some charm before unobserved. It seemed to him that he never was in such agreeable society, though, sooth to say, the conversation was not of a very brilliant character. Mr. Temple recounted the sport of the morning to the squire, whose ears kindled at a congenial subject, and every preserve in the county was then discussed, with some episodes on poaching. The rector, an old gentleman, who had dined in old days at Armine Place, reminded Ferdinand of the agreeable circumstance, sanguine, perhaps, that the invitation might lead to a renewal of his acquaintance with that hospitable board. He was painfully profuse in his description of the public days of the famous Sir Ferdinand. From the service of plate to the thirty servants in livery, nothing was omitted.

“Our friend deals in Arabian tales,” whispered Ferdinand to Miss Temple; “you can be a witness that we live quietly enough now.”

“I shall certainly never forget my visit to Armine,” replied Miss Temple; “it was one of the most agreeable days of my life.”

“And that is saying a great deal, for I think your life must have abounded in agreeable days.”

“I cannot, indeed, lay any claim to that misery which makes many people interesting,” said Miss Temple; “I am a very commonplace person, for I have been always happy.”

When the ladies withdrew, there appeared but little inclination on the part of the squire and the rector to follow their example; and Captain Armine, therefore, soon left Mr. Temple to his fate, and escaped to the drawing-room. He glided to a seat on an ottoman, by the side of his hostess, and listened in silence to the conversation. What a conversation! At any other time, under any other circumstances, Ferdinand would have been teased and wearied with its commonplace current; all the dull detail of country tattle, in which the squire’s lady was a proficient, and with which Miss Temple was too highly bred not to appear to sympathize—and yet the conversation, to Ferdinand, appeared quite charming. Every accent of Henrietta’s sounded like wit; and when she bent her head in assent to her companion’s obvious deductions, there was about each movement a grace so ineffable, that Ferdinand could have sat in silence and listened, entranced, forever; and, occasionally, too, she turned to Captain Armine, and appealed on some point to his knowledge or his taste. It seemed to him that he had never listened to sounds so sweetly thrilling as her voice. It was a birdlike burst of music, that well became the sparkling sunshine of her violet eyes.

His late companions entered. Ferdinand rose

from his seat; the windows of the saloon were open; he stepped forth into the garden. He felt the necessity of being a moment alone. He proceeded a few paces beyond the ken of man, and then leaning on a statue, and burying his face in his arm, he gave way to irresistible emotion. What wild thoughts dashed through his impetuous soul at that instant, it is difficult to conjecture. Perhaps it was passion that inspired that convulsive reverie; perchance it might have been remorse. Did he abandon himself to those novel sentiments which in a few brief hours had changed all his aspirations, and coloured his whole existence; or was he tortured by that dark and perplexing future, from which his imagination in vain struggled to extricate him?

He was roused from his reverie, brief but tumultuous, by the note of music, and then by the sound of a human voice. The stag detecting the huntsman’s horn could not have started with more wild emotion. But one fair organ could send forth that voice. He approached, he listened; the voice of Henrietta Temple floated to him on the air, breathing with a thousand odours. In a moment he was at her side. The squire’s lady was standing by her; the gentlemen, for a moment arrested from a political discussion, formed a group in a distant part of the room, the rector occasionally venturing in a practised whisper to enforce a disturbed argument. Ferdinand glided in unobserved by the fair performer. Miss Temple not only possessed a voice of rare tone and compass, but this delightful gift of nature had been cultivated with refined art. Ferdinand, himself a musician, and passionately devoted to vocal melody, listened with unexaggerated rapture.

“O! beautiful!” exclaimed he, as the songstress ceased.

“Captain Armine!” cried Miss Temple, looking round with a wild, bewitching smile. “I thought you were meditating in the twilight.”

“Your voice summoned me.”

“You care for music?”

“For little else.”

“You sing?”

“I hum.”

“Try this.”

“With you?”

Ferdinand Armine was not unworthy of singing with Henrietta Temple. His mother had been his able instructress in the art even in his childhood, and his frequent residence at Naples and other parts of the south, had afforded him ample opportunities of perfecting a talent thus early cultivated. But to-night the love of something beyond his art inspired the voice of Ferdinand. Singing with Henrietta Temple, he poured forth to her in safety all the passion which raged in his soul. The squire’s lady looked confused; Henrietta herself grew pale; the politicians ceased even to whisper, and advanced from their corner to the instrument, and when the duet was terminated, Mr. Temple offered his sincere congratulations to his guest. Henrietta also turned with some words of commendation to Ferdinand; but the words were faint and confused, and finally requesting Captain Armine to favour them by singing alone, she rose and vacated her seat.

Ferdinand took up the guitar; and accompanied himself to a Neapolitan air. It was gay and festive, a ritornella which might summon your mistress to dance in the moonlight. And then, and

many congratulations, he offered the guitar to Miss Temple.

"No one will listen to a simple melody after anything so brilliant," said Miss Temple, as she touched a string, and, after a slight prelude, sang these words:—

THE DESERTED.

I.

Yes! weeping is madness,
Away with this tear,
Let no sign of sadness
Betray the wild anguish I fear.
When we meet him to-night,
Be mute then my heart!
And my smile be as bright,
As if we were never to part.

II.

Girl! give me the mirror
That said I was fair;
Alas! fatal error,
This picture reveals my despair.
Smiles no longer can pass.
O'er this faded brow,
And I shiver this glass,
Like his love and his fragile vow!

"The music," said Ferdinand, full of enthusiasm, "is—"

"Henrietta's," replied her father.

"And the words?—"

"Were found in my canary's cage," said Henrietta Temple, rising and putting an end to the conversation.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE INDULGES IN A REVERY.

THE squire's carriage was announced, and then came his lady's shawl. How happy was Ferdinand, when he recollected that he was to remain at Ducie. Remain at Ducie! Remain under the same roof as Henrietta Temple. What bliss!—what ravishing bliss! All his life—and his had not been a monotonous one—it seemed that all his life could not afford a situation so adventurous and so sweet as this. Now they have gone. The squire and his lady, and the worthy rector who recollected Armine so well—they have all departed, all the adieux are uttered; after this little and unavoidable bustle, silence reigns in the saloon of Ducie. Ferdinand walked to the window. The moon was up; the air was sweet and hushed; the landscape clear though soft. O! what would he not have given to have strolled in that garden with Henrietta Temple, to have poured forth his whole soul to her, to have told her how wondrous fair she was, how wildly bewitching, and how he loved her, how he sighed to bind his fate with hers, and live forever in the brilliant atmosphere of her grace and beauty.

"Good night, Captain Armine," said Henrietta Temple.

He turned hastily round, he blushed, he grew pale. There she stood, in one hand a light, the other extended to her father's guest. He pressed her hand, he sighed, he looked confused; then suddenly letting go her hand, he walked quickly towards the door of the saloon, which he opened that she might retire.

"The happiest day of my life has ended," he muttered.

"You are so easily content, then, that I think you must always be happy."

"I fear I am not as easily content as you imagine."

She has gone. Hours, many and long hours, must elapse before he sees her again, before he again listens to that music, watches that airy grace, and meets the bright flashing of that fascinating eye. What misery was there in this idea! How little had he seemed hitherto to prize the joy of being her companion. He cursed the hours which had been wasted away from her in the morning's sport; he blamed himself that he had not even sooner quitted the dining-room, or that he had left the saloon for a moment, to commune with his own thoughts in the garden. With difficulty he restrained himself from reopening the door, to listen for the distant sound of her footsteps, or catch, perhaps, along some corridor, the fading echo of her voice. But Ferdinand was not alone—Mr. Temple still remained. That gentleman raised his face from the newspaper, as Captain Armine advanced to him; and, after some observations about the day's sport, and a hope that he would repeat his trial of the Ducie preserves to-morrow, proposed their retirement. Ferdinand of course assented, and, in a moment, he was ascending with his host the noble and Italian staircase; and he then was ushered from the vestibule into his room.

His previous visit to this chamber had been so hurried, that he had only made a general observation on its appearance. Little inclined to slumber, he now examined it more critically. In a recess was a French bed of simple furniture. On the walls, which were covered with a rustic paper, were suspended several drawings, representing views in Saxon Switzerland. They were so bold and spirited that they arrested attention; but the quick eye of Ferdinand instantly detected the initials of the artist in the corner. They were letters that made his heart tremble, as he gazed with admiring fondness on her performances. Before a sofa, covered with a chintz of a corresponding pattern with the paper of the walls, was placed a small French table, on which were writing materials; and his toilet table and his mantelpiece were profusely ornamented with rare flowers: on all sides were symptoms of female taste and feminine consideration.

Ferdinand carefully withdrew from his coat the flower that Henrietta had given him in the morning, and which he had worn the whole day. He kissed it; he kissed it more than once; he pressed its somewhat faded form to his lips with cautious delicacy; then tending it with the utmost care, he placed it in a vase of water, which holding in his hand, he threw himself into an easy chair, with his eyes fixed on the gift he most valued in the world.

An hour passed, and Ferdinand Armine remained fixed in the same position. But no one who beheld that beautiful and pensive countenance, and the dreamy softness of that large gray eye, could for a moment conceive that his thoughts were less sweet than the object on which they appeared to gaze. No distant recollections disturbed him now, no memory of the past, no fear of the future. The delicious present monopolized his existence. The ties of duty, the claims of domestic affection, the worldly considerations that by a cruel dispensation had seemed, as it were, to taint even his innocent and careless boyhood, even the urgent appeals of

his critical and perilous situation—all, all were forgotten in one intense delirium of absorbing love.

Anon he rose from his seat, and paced his room for some minutes, with his eyes fixed on the ground. Then throwing off his clothes, and taking the flower from the vase, which he previously placed on the table, he deposited it in his bosom. "Beautiful, beloved flower," exclaimed he; "thus, thus will I win and wear your mistress!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A STRANGE DREAM.

RESTLESS are the dreams of the lover that is young. Ferdinand Armine started awake from the agony of a terrible slumber. He had been walking in a garden with Henrietta Temple—her hand was clasped in his—her eyes fixed on the ground, as he whispered most delicious words. His face was flushed, his speech panting and low. Gently he wound his vacant arm around her graceful form; she looked up, her speaking eyes met his, and their trembling lips seemed about to cling into a—

When lo! the splendour of the garden faded, and all seemed changed and dim: instead of the beautiful arched walks, in which a moment before they appeared to wander, it was beneath the vaulted roof of some temple that they now moved; instead of the led of glowing flowers from which he was about to pluck an offering for her bosom, an altar rose, from the centre of which upsprang a quick and lurid tongue of fire. The dreamer gazed upon his companion, and her form was tinted with the dusky hue of the flame, and she held to her countenance a scarf, as if oppressed by the unnatural heat. Great fear suddenly came over him. With haste, yet with delicacy, he himself withdrew the scarf from the face of his companion, and this movement revealed the visage of—Miss Grandison.

Ferdinand Armine awoke and started up in his bed. Before him still appeared the unexpected figure. He jumped out of the bed—he gazed upon the form with staring eyes and open mouth. She was there—assuredly she was there: it was Katherine—Katherine his betrothed—sad and reproachful. The figure faded before him; he advanced with outstretched hand; in his desperation he determined to clutch the escaping form; and he found in his grasp his dressing-gown, which he had thrown over the back of a chair.

"A dream, and but a dream, after all," he muttered to himself; "and yet a strange one."

His brow was heated; he opened the casement. It was still night; the moon had vanished, but the stars were still shining. He recalled with an effort the scene with which he had become acquainted yesterday for the first time. Before him, serene and still, rose the bowers of Ducie. And their mistress? That angelic form whose hand he had clasped in his dream, was not then merely a shadow. She breathed, she lived, and under the same roof, Henrietta Temple was at this moment under the same roof as himself; and what were her slumbers? Were they wild as his own, or sweet and innocent as herself? Did his form flit over her closed vision at this charmed hour, as hers had visited his? Had it been scared away by an apparition as awful!

Bore any one to her the same relation as Katherine Grandison to him? A fearful surmise, that had occurred to him now for the first time, and which it seemed could never again quit his brain. The stars faded away—the breath of morn was abroad—the chant of birds arose. Exhausted in body and in mind, Ferdinand Armine flung himself upon his bed, and soon was lost in slumbers undisturbed as the tomb.

CHAPTER IX.

WHICH I HOPE MAY PROVE AS AGREEABLE TO THE READER AS TO OUR HERO.

Ferdinand's servant, whom he had despatched the previous evening to Armine, returned early in the morning with his master's letters; one from his mother, and one from Miss Grandison. They were all to arrive at the Place on the day after the morrow. Ferdinand opened these epistles with a trembling hand. The sight of Katherine's, his Katherine's handwriting was almost as terrible as his dream. It recalled to him, with a dreadful reality, his actual situation, which he had driven from his thoughts. He had quitted his family, his family who were so devoted to him, and whom he so loved, happy, nay, triumphant, a pledged and rejoicing bridegroom. What had occurred during the last eight-and-forty hours seemed completely to have changed all his feelings, all his wishes, all his views, all his hopes! He had in that interval met a single human being, a woman, a girl, a young and innocent girl; he had looked upon a girl and listened to her voice, and his soul was as changed as the earth by the sunrise. As lying in his bed he read these letters, and mused over their contents, and all the thoughts that they suggested, the strangeness of life, the mystery of human nature, were painfully impressed upon him. His melancholy father, his fond and confiding mother, the devoted Glastonbury, all the mortifying circumstances of his illustrious race, rose in painful succession before him. Nor could he forget his own wretched follies and that fatal visit to Bath, of which the consequences clanked upon his memory like a degrading and disgraceful fetter. The burthen of existence seemed intolerable. That domestic love, which had so solaced his existence, recalled now only the most painful associations. In the wilderness of his thoughts, he wished himself alone in the world, to struggle with his fate and mould his fortunes. He felt himself a slave and a sacrifice. He cursed Armine, his ancient house, and his broken fortunes. He felt that death was preferable to life without Henrietta Temple. But even supposing that he could extricate himself from his rash engagement; even admitting that all worldly considerations might be thrown aside, that the pride of his father, and his mother's love, and Glastonbury's pure hopes might all be outraged; what chance, what hope, was there of obtaining his great object? What was he—what was he, Ferdinand Armine, free as the air from the claims of Miss Grandison, with all sense of duty rooted out of his once sensitive bosom, and existing only for the gratification of his own wild fancies! A beggar, worse than a beggar, without a home, without the possibility of a home to offer the lady of his passion; nay, not even secure that the harsh pro-

cess of the law might not instantly claim its victim, and he himself be hurried from the altar to the jail!

Moody and melancholy, he repaired to the saloon, he beheld Henrietta Temple, and the cloud left his brow and lightness came to his heart. Never had she looked so beautiful, so fresh and bright, so like a fair flower with the dew upon its leaves. Her voice penetrated his soul, her sunny smile warmed his breast. Her father greeted him too with kindness, and inquired after his slumbers, which he assured Mr. Temple had been satisfactory.

"I find," continued Mr. Temple, "that the post has brought me some business to-day which, I fear, claims the morning to transact. But I hope you will not forget your promise to try again our preserves. I fear they are not very rich; but we poor tenants of the soil can scarcely vie with you lords of the land. The keeper will be ready whenever you summon him."

Ferdinand muttered something about trouble and intrusion, and the expected arrival of his family, but Miss Temple pressed him to accept the offer with so much expression that refusal was impossible.

After breakfast Mr. Temple retired to his library, and Ferdinand found himself alone for the first time with Henrietta Temple.

She was copying a miniature of Charles the First. Ferdinand looked over her shoulder.

"A melancholy countenance!" he observed.

"It is a favourite one of mine," she replied.

"Yet you are always gay!"

"Always."

"I envy you, Miss Temple."

"What, are you melancholy?"

"I have every cause."

"Indeed, I should have thought the reverse."

"I look upon myself as the most unfortunate of human beings," replied Ferdinand.

He spoke so seriously, in a tone of such deep and bitter feeling, that Miss Temple could not resist looking up at her companion. His countenance was indeed most gloomy.

"You surprise me," said Miss Temple; "I think that few people ought to be unhappy, and I rather suspect fewer are than we imagine."

"All I wish is," replied he, "that the battle of Newbury had witnessed the extinction of our family as well as our peerage."

"A peerage, and such a peerage as yours, is a fine thing," said Henrietta Temple, "a very fine thing; but I would not grieve, if I were you, for that; I would sooner be an Armine without a coronet, than many a brow I wot of, with."

"You misconceived a silly phrase," rejoined Ferdinand. "I was not thinking of the loss of our coronet, though that is only part of the system. Our family I am sure are fated. Birth without honour, estates without fortune, life without happiness, that is our lot."

"As for the first," said Miss Temple, "the honourable are always honoured; money, in spite of what they say, I feel is not the greatest thing in the world; and as for misery, I confess I do not very readily believe in the misery of youth."

"May you never prove it," replied Ferdinand; "may you never be, as I am, the victim of family profligacy and family pride." So saying, he turned away, and taking up a book, for a few minutes seemed wrapped in his reflections.

He suddenly resumed the conversation in a more

cheerful tone. Holding a volume of Petrarch in his hand, he touched lightly, but with grace, on Italian poetry; then diverged into his travels, recounted an adventure with sprightliness, and replied to Miss Temple's lively remarks with gayety and readiness. The morning advanced; Miss Temple closed her portfolio, and visited her flowers, inviting him to follow her. Her invitation was scarcely necessary: his movements were regulated by hers; he was as faithful to her as her shadow. From the conservatory they entered the garden. Ferdinand was as fond of gardens as his mistress. She praised the flower-garden of Armine. He gave her some account of its principal creator. The character of Glastonbury highly interested Miss Temple. Love is confidential; it has no fear of ridicule; Ferdinand entered with freedom, and yet with grace, into family details, from which, at another time and to another person, he would have been the first to shrink. The imagination of Miss Temple was greatly interested by his simple, and, to her, affecting account of this ancient line living in their hereditary solitude, with all their noble pride and haughty poverty. The scene, the circumstances, were all such as please a maiden's fancy; and he, the natural hero of this singular history, seemed deficient in none of those heroic qualities which the wildest spirit of romance might require for the completion of its spell. Beautiful as his ancestors, and, she was sure, as brave, young, spirited, graceful, and accomplished; a gay and daring spirit blended with the mournful melody of his voice, and occasionally contrasted with the somewhat subdued and chastened character of his demeanour.

"Well, do not despair," said Henrietta Temple "riches did not make Sir Ferdinand happy. I feel confident the house will yet flourish."

"I have no confidence," replied Ferdinand; "I feel the struggle with our fate to be fruitless. Once, indeed, I felt like you; there was a time when I took even a fancied pride in all the follies of my grandfather. But that is past; I have lived to execrate his memory."

"Hush! hush!"

"Yes, to execrate his memory; I repeat, to execrate his memory; his follies stand between me and my happiness."

"Indeed I see not that."

"May you never! I cannot disguise from myself that I am a slave, and a wretched one, and that his career has entailed this curse of servitude upon me. But away with this! You must think me, Miss Temple, the most egotistical of human beings, and yet, to do myself justice, I scarcely ever remember having spoken of myself so much before."

"Will you walk with me," said Miss Temple, after a moment's silence; "you seem little inclined to avail yourself of my father's invitation to solitary sport. But I cannot stay at home, for I have visits to pay, although I fear you will consider them rather dull ones."

"Why so?"

"My visits are to cottages."

"I love nothing better. I used ever to be my mother's companion on such occasions."

So, crossing the lawn, they entered a beautiful wood of considerable extent, which formed the boundary of the grounds, and after some time passed in most agreeable conversation, emerged upon a common of no ordinary extent or beauty, for it was thickly studded in some parts with lofty

timber, while in others the furze and fern gave richness and variety to the vast wilderness of verdant turf, scarcely marked except by the light hoof of Miss Temple's palfrey.

"It is not so grand as Armine Park," said Miss Temple; "but we are proud of our common."

The thin gray smoke that rose in different directions, was a beacon to the charitable visits of Miss Temple. It was evident that she was a visitor both habitual and beloved. Each cottage door was familiar to her entrance. The children smiled at her approach; their mothers rose and courtesied with affectionate respect. How many names and how many wants had she to remember; yet nothing was forgotten! Some were rewarded for industry, some were admonished not to be idle; but all were treated with an engaging suavity more efficacious than gifts or punishments. The aged were solaced by her visits; the sick forgot their pains; and as she listened with sympathizing patience to long narratives of rheumatic griefs, it seemed her presence in each old chair, her tender inquiries and sanguine hopes, brought even more comfort than her plenteous promises of succour from the Bower in the shape of arrowroot and gruel, port wine and flannel petticoats.

This scene of sweet simplicity brought back old days and old places to the memory of Ferdinand Armine. He thought of the time when he was a happy boy at his innocent home; his mother's boy, the child she so loved and looked after, when a cloud upon her brow brought a tear into his eye, and when a kiss from her lips was his most dear and desired reward. The last night he had passed at Armine, before his first departure, rose up to his recollection; all his mother's passionate fondness, all her wild fear that the day might come when her child would not love her as dearly as he did then. That time had come. But a few hours back—ay! but a few hours back—and he had sighed to be alone in the world, and had felt those domestic ties which had been the joy of his existence, a burden, and a curse. A tear stole down his cheek; he stepped forth from the cottage to conceal his emotion. He seated himself on the trunk of a tree, a few paces withdrawn; he looked upon the setting sun that gilded the distant landscape with its rich yet pensive light. The scenes of the last five years flitted across his mind's eye in fleet succession; his dissipation, his vanity, his desperate folly, his hollow worldliness. Why, O! why had he ever left his unpolluted home? Why could he not have lived and died in that silvan paradise? Why, O! why was it impossible to admit his beautiful companion into that sweet and serene society? Why should his love for her make his heart a rebel to his hearth? Money, horrible money! It seemed to him that the contiguous cottage and the labour of his hands with her, were preferable to palaces and crowds of retainers without her inspiring presence. And why not screw his courage to the sticking-point, and commune in confidence with his parents? They loved him; yes, they idolized him! For him, for him alone, they sought the restoration of their house and fortunes. Why, Henrietta Temple was a treasure richer than any his ancestors had counted. Let them look on her, let them listen to her, let them breathe as he had done in her enchantment; and could they wonder, could they murmur at his conduct? Would they not, O! would they not rather admire, extol it!

But then, his debts, his infernal, his overwhelming debts. All the rest might be faced. His desperate engagement might be broken, his family might be reconciled to obscurity and poverty: but, ruin! what was to grapple with his impending ruin? Now his folly stung him, now the scorpion entered his soul. It was not the profligacy of his ancestor, it was not the pride of his family then, that stood between him and his love; it was his own culpable and heartless career! He covered his face with his hands; something touched him lightly, it was the parasol of Miss Temple.

"I am afraid," she said, "that my visits have wearied you; but you have been very kind and good."

He rose rapidly with a slight blush. "Indeed," he replied, "I have passed a most delightful morning, and I was only regretting that life consisted of any thing else but cottages and yourself."

They were late; they heard the first dinner-bell at Ducie as they re-entered the wood. "We must hurry on," said Miss Temple; "dinner is the only subject on which papa is a tyrant. What a sunset! I wonder if Lady Armine will return on Saturday. When she returns, I hope you will make her call upon us, for I want to copy all the pictures in your gallery."

"If they were not heirlooms, I would give them you," said Ferdinand; "but as it is, there is only one way by which I can manage it."

"What way?" inquired Miss Temple, very innocently.

"I forget," replied Ferdinand with a peculiar smile. Miss Temple seemed to comprehend a little more clearly, and looked a little confused.

CHAPTER X.

AN EVENING STROLL.

IN spite of his perilous situation, an indefinite sensation of happiness pervaded the soul of Ferdinand Armine, as he made his hurried toilet, and hastened to the domestic board of Ducie, where he was now the solitary guest. His eye caught Miss Temple's as he entered the room. It seemed to beam upon him with interest and kindness. His courteous and agreeable host welcomed him with polished warmth. It seemed that a feeling of intimacy was already established among them, and he fancied himself already looked upon as an habitual member of their circle. All dark thoughts are driven away. He was gay and pleasant, and duly maintained with Mr. Temple that conversation in which his host excelled. Miss Temple spoke little, but listened with evident interest to her father and Ferdinand. She seemed to delight in their society, and to be gratified by Captain Armine's evident sense of her father's agreeable qualities.

When dinner was over, they all rose together, and repaired to the saloon.

"I wish Mr. Glastonbury were here," said Miss Temple, as Ferdinand opened the instrument. "You must bring him, some day, and then our concert will be perfect."

Ferdinand smiled, but the name of Glastonbury made him shudder. His countenance changed at the future plans of Miss Temple. "Some day," indeed, when he might also take the opportunity

of introducing his betrothed! But the voice of Henrietta Temple drove all care from his bosom; he abandoned himself to the intoxicating present. She sang alone; and then they sang together; and, as he arranged her books, or selected her theme, a thousand instances of the interest with which she inspired him developed themselves. Once he touched her hand, and he pressed his own, unseen, to his lips.

Though the room was lit up, the windows were open and admitted the moonlight. The beautiful saloon was full of fragrance and of melody; the fairest of women dazzled Ferdinand with her presence; his heart was full; his senses ravished; his hopes were high. Could there be such a demon as care in such a paradise? Could sorrow ever enter here? Was it possible that these bright halls and odorous bowers could be polluted by the miserable considerations that reigned too often supreme in his unhappy breast? An enchanted scene had suddenly risen from the earth for his delight and fascination. Could he be unhappy? Why, if all went darker even than he sometimes feared, that man had not lived in vain who had beheld Henrietta Temple! All the troubles of the world were folly here; this was fairyland, and he, some knight who had fallen from a gloomy globe upon some starry regions flashing with perennial lustre.

The hours flew on; the servants brought in that light banquet whose entrance in the country seems the only method of reminding our guests that there is a morrow.

"Tis the last night," said Ferdinand, smiling, with a sigh. "One more song; only one more. Mr. Temple, be indulgent; it is the last night. I feel," he added, in a lower tone, to Henrietta, "I feel exactly as I did when I left Armine for the first time."

"Because you are going to return to it? That is wilful!"

"Wilful or not, I would that I might never see it again."

"For my part, Armine is to me the very land of romance."

"It is strange."

"No spot on earth ever impressed me more. It is the finest combination of art, and nature, and poetical associations I know; it is indeed unique."

"I do not like to differ with you on any subject."

"We should be dull companions, I fear, if we agreed upon every thing."

"I cannot think it."

"Papa," said Miss Temple, "one little stroll upon the lawn; one little, little stroll. The moon is so bright; and autumn, this year, has brought us as yet no dew." And as she spoke, she took up her scarf and wound it round her head. "There," she said, "I look like the portrait of the Turkish page in Armine gallery; don't I?"

There was a playful grace about Henrietta Temple, a wild and brilliant simplicity, which was the more charming, because it was blended with peculiarly high breeding. No person in ordinary society was more calm, or enjoyed a more complete self-possession; yet no one, in the more intimate relations of life, indulged more in those little unstudied bursts of nature, which seemed almost to remind one of the playful child rather than the polished woman; and which, under such circumstances, are infinite, captivating. As for Ferdinand Ar-

mine, he looked upon the Turkish page with a countenance beaming with admiration; he wished it was Turkey wherein he then beheld her, or any other strange land, where he could have placed her on his courser, and galloped away in pursuit of a fortune wild as his soul.

They walked in the garden, the arms of Henrietta Temple linked between her father's and Captain Armine's. Though the year was in decay, summer had lent this night to autumn, it was so soft and sweet. The moonbeam fell brightly upon Ducie Bower, and the illumined saloon contrasted effectively with the natural splendour of the exterior scene. Mr. Temple reminded Henrietta of a brilliant fête which had been given at a Saxon palace, and which some circumstances of similarity recalled to his recollection. Ferdinand could not speak, but found himself unconsciously pressing Henrietta Temple's arm to his heart. The Saxon palace brought back to Miss Temple a wild melody which had been sung in the gardens on that night. She asked her father if he recollected it, and hummed the air as she made the inquiry. Her gentle murmur soon expanded into song. It was one of those wild and natural lyrics that spring up in mountainous countries, and which seem to mimic the prolonged echoes that in such regions greet the ear of the pastor and the huntsman.

O! why did this night ever have an end!

CHAPTER XI.

A MORNING WALK.

It was solitude that brought despair to Ferdinand Armine. The moment he was alone his real situation thrust itself upon him; the moment that he had quitted the presence of Henrietta Temple, he was as a man under the influence of music when the orchestra suddenly stops. The source of all his inspiration failed him; this last night at Ducie was dreadful. Sleep was out of question; he did not affect even the mimicry of retiring, but paced up and down his room the whole night, or flung himself, when exhausted, upon a restless sofa. Occasionally he varied these monotonous occupations, by pressing his lips to the drawings which bore her name; then, relapsing into a profound reverie, he sought some solace in recalling the scenes of the morning, all her movements, every word she had uttered, every look which had illumined his soul. In vain he endeavoured to find consolation in the fond belief that he was not altogether without interest in her eyes. Even the conviction that his passion was returned, in the situation in which he was plunged, would, however flattering, be rather a source of fresh anxiety and perplexity. He took a volume from the single shelf of books that was slung against the wall; it was a volume of Corinne. The fervid eloquence of the poetess sublimated his passion: and, without disturbing the tone of his excited mind, relieved in some degree its tension, by busying his imagination with other, though similar, emotions. As he read, his mind became more calm and his feelings deeper, and, by the time his lamp grew ghastly in the purple light of morning that now entered his chamber, his soul seemed so stilled, that he closed the volume, and though sleep was impossible, he remained nevertheless calm and absorbed.

When the first sounds assured him that some were stirring in the house, he quitted his room, after some difficulty found a maid-servant by whose aid he succeeded in getting into the garden. He took his way to the common where he had observed, the preceding day, a fine sheet of water. The sun had not risen more than an hour; it was a fresh and ruddy morn. The cottagers were just abroad. The air of the plain invigorated him, and the singing of the birds, and all those rural sounds, that rise with the husbandman, brought to his mind a wonderful degree of freshness and serenity. Occasionally he heard the gun of an early sportsman, to him at all times an animating sound; but when he had plunged into the water, and found himself struggling with that inspiring element, all sorrow seemed to leave him. His heated brow became cool and clear—his aching limbs vigorous and elastic—his jaded soul full of hope and joy. He lingered in the liquid and vivifying world, playing with the stream, for he was an expert and practised swimmer; and often, after nights of southern dissipation, had recurred to this natural bath for health and renovation.

The sun had now risen far above the horizon; the village clock had long struck seven; Ferdinand was three miles from Ducie Bower. It was time to return, yet he loitered on his way, the air was so sweet and fresh, the scene so pretty, and his mind, in comparison with his recent feelings, so calm, and even happy. Just as he emerged from the woods, and entered the grounds of Ducie, he met Miss Temple. She stared, and she had cause. Ferdinand, indeed, presented rather an unusual figure; his head uncovered, his hair matted, and his countenance glowing with his exercise, but his figure clothed in the identical evening dress in which he had bid her a tender good night.

"Captain Armine!" exclaimed Miss Temple, "you are an early riser, I see."

Ferdinand looked a little confused. "The truth is," he replied, "I have not risen at all. I could not sleep; why, I know not; the evening, I suppose, was too happy for so commonplace a termination; so I escaped from my room as soon as I could do so without disturbing your household; and I have been bathing, which refreshes me always more than slumber."

"Well, I could not resign my sleep, were it only for the sake of my dreams."

"Pleasant I trust they were. 'Rosy dreams and slumbers light' are for ladies as fair as you."

"I am grateful that I always fulfil the poet's wish; and what is more, I wake only to gather roses—see here!"

She extended to him a flower.

"I deserve it," said Ferdinand, "for I have not neglected your first gift," and he offered her the rose she had given him the first day of his visit. "Tis shrivelled," he added, "but still very sweet—at least to me."

"It is mine now," said Henrietta Temple.

"Ah! you will throw it away."

"Do you think me, then, so insensible to galantry so delicate?"

"It cannot be to you what it is to me," replied Ferdinand.

"It is a memorial," said Miss Temple.

"Of what, and of whom?" inquired Ferdinand.

"Of friendship and a friend."

"Tis something to be Miss Temple's friend."

"I am glad you think so. I believe I am very vain, but certainly I like to be—liked."

"Then you can always gain your wish without an effort."

"Now I think we are very good friends," said Miss Temple, "considering we have known each other so short a time. But then papa likes you so much."

"I am honoured as well as gratified by the kindly disposition of so agreeable a person as Mr. Temple. I can assure his daughter that the feeling is mutual. Your father's opinion influences you?"

"In every thing. He has been so kind a father, that it would be worse than ingratitude to be less than devoted to him."

"Mr. Temple is a very enviable person."

"But Captain Armine knows the delight of a parent who loves him. I love my father as you love your mother."

"I have, however, lived to feel that no person's opinion could influence me in every thing; I have lived to find that even filial love—and God knows mine was powerful enough—is, after all, but a pallid moonlight beam, compared with——"

"See! my father kisses his hand to us from the window. Let us run and meet him."

CHAPTER XII.

CONTAINING AN OMINOUS INCIDENT.

The last adieus are bidden; Ferdinand is on his road to Armine, flying from the woman whom he adores, to meet the woman to whom he is betrothed. He reined in his horse as he entered the park. As he slowly approached his home, he could not avoid feeling that, after so long an absence, he had not treated Glastonbury with the kindness and consideration he merited. While he was torturing his invention for an excuse for his conduct, he observed his old tutor in the distance; and riding up and dismounting, he joined that faithful friend. Whether it be that love and falsehood are, under any circumstances, inseparable, Ferdinand Armine, whose frankness was proverbial, found himself involved in a long and confused narrative of a visit to a friend, whom he had unexpectedly met, whom he had known abroad, and to whom he was under the greatest obligations. He even affected to regret this temporary estrangement from Armine after so long a separation, and to rejoice at his escape. No names were mentioned, and the unsuspecting Glastonbury, delighted again to be his companion, inconvenienced him with no cross-examination. But this was only the commencement of the system of degrading deception which awaited him.

Willingly would Ferdinand have devoted all his time and feelings to his companion; but in vain he struggled with the absorbing passion of his soul. He dwelt in silence upon the memory of the last three days, the most eventful period of his existence. He was moody and absent, silent when he should have spoken, wandering when he should have listened, hazarding random observations instead of conversing, or breaking into hurried and inappropriate comments; so that to any worldly critic of his conduct he would have appeared at the same time both dull and excited. At length he made a desperate effort to accompany Glastonbury to the picture gallery, and listen to his plans. The

scene, indeed, was not ungrateful to him, for it was associated with the existence and the conversation of the lady of his heart: he stood entranced before the picture of the Turkish page, and lamented to Glastonbury, a thousand times, that there was no portrait of Henrietta Armine.

"I would sooner have a portrait of Henrietta Armine, than the whole gallery together," said Ferdinand.

Glastonbury stared.

"I wonder if there ever will be a portrait of Henrietta Armine. Come, now, my dear Glastonbury," he continued, with an air of remarkable excitement, "let us have a wager upon it. What are the odds? Will there ever be a portrait of Henrietta Armine? I am quite fantastic to-day. You are smiling at me. Now do you know, if I had a wish certain to be gratified, it should be to add a portrait of Henrietta Armine to our gallery?"

"She died very young," remarked Glastonbury.

"But my Henrietta Armine should not die young," said Ferdinand. "She should live, breathe, smile—she—"

Glastonbury looked very confused.

So strange is love, that this kind of veiled allusion to his secret passion relieved and gratified the overcharged bosom of Ferdinand. He pursued the subject with enjoyment. Anybody but Glastonbury might have thought that he had lost his senses, he laughed so loud, and talked so fast about a subject which seemed almost nonsensical; but the good Glastonbury ascribed these ebullitions to the wanton spirit of youth, and smiled out of sympathy, though he knew not why, except that his pupil appeared happy.

At length they quitted the gallery; Glastonbury resumed his labours in the hall, where he was copying an escutcheon; and, after hovering a short time restlessly around his tutor, now escaping into the garden that he might muse over Henrietta Temple undisturbed, and now returning for a few minutes to his companion, lest the good Glastonbury should feel mortified by his neglect, Ferdinand broke away altogether, and wandered far into the plaisance.

He came to the green and shady spot where he had first beheld her. There rose the cedar, spreading its dark form in solitary grandeur, and holding, as it were, its state among its subject woods. It was the same scene, almost the same hour: but where was she? He waited for her form to rise, and yet it came not. He shouted Henrietta Temple, yet no fair vision blessed his expectant sight. Was it all a dream? Had he been but lying beneath these branches in a rapturous trance, and had he only woken to the shivering dulness of reality? What evidence was there of the existence of such a being as Henrietta Temple? If such a being did not exist, of what value was life? After a glimpse of paradise, could he breathe again in this tame and frigid world? Where was Ducie? Where were its immortal bowers, those roses of supernatural fragrance, and the celestial melody of its halls? That garden, wherein he wandered and hung upon her accents; that wood, among whose shadowy boughs she glided like an antelope; that pensive twilight, on which he had gazed with such subdued emotion; that moonlight walk, when her voice floated, like Ariel's, in the purple sky: were these all phantoms? Could it be that this morn. this very morn he had beheld Henrietta Temple, had con-

versed with her alone, had bidden her a soft adieu? What—was it this day that she had given him the rose?

He threw himself upon the turf, and gazed upon the flower. The flower was young and beautiful as herself, and just expanding into perfect life. To the fantastic brain of love there seemed a resemblance between this rose and her who had culled it. Its stem was tall, its countenance was brilliant, an aromatic essence pervaded its being. As he held it in his hand, a bee came hovering round its charms, eager to revel in its fragrant loveliness. More than once had Ferdinand driven the bee away, when suddenly it succeeded in alighting on the rose. Jealous of his rose, Ferdinand, in his haste, shook the flower, and the fragile head fell from the stem!

A feeling of deep melancholy came over him, with which he found it in vain to struggle, and which he could not analyze. He rose, and pressing the flower to his heart, he walked away and rejoined Glastonbury, whose task was nearly accomplished. Ferdinand seated himself upon one of the high cases which had been stowed away in the hall, folding his arms, swinging his legs, and whistling the German air which Miss Temple had sung the preceding night.

"That is a wild and pretty air," said Glastonbury, who was devoted to music. "I never heard it before. You travellers pick up choice things. Where did you find it?"

"I am sure I cannot tell, my dear Glastonbury; I have been asking myself the same question the whole morning. Sometimes I think I dreamt it."

"A few more such dreams would make you a rare composer," observed Glastonbury, smiling.

"Ah! my dear Glastonbury, talking of music, I know a musician, such a musician, a musician whom I should like to introduce you to above all persons in the world."

"You always loved music, dear Ferdinand; 'tis in the blood. You come from a musical stock on your mother's side. Is Miss Grandison musical?"

"Yes—no—that is to say, I forget—some commonplace accomplishment in the art, she has, I believe; but I was not thinking of that sort of thing; I was thinking of the lady who taught me this air."

"A lady!" said Glastonbury; "the German ladies are highly cultivated."

"Yes! the Germans, and the women especially, have a remarkably fine musical taste," rejoined Ferdinand, recovering from his blunder.

"I like the Germans very much," said Glastonbury, "and I admire that air."

"O! my dear Glastonbury, you shall hear it sung by moonlight."

"Indeed!" said Glastonbury.

"Yes; if you could only hear her sing it by moonlight, I venture to say, my dear Glastonbury, that you would confess that all you had ever heard, or seen, or imagined, of enchanted spirits floating in the air, and filling the air with supernatural symphonies, was realized."

"Indeed!" said Glastonbury, "a most accomplished performer, no doubt! Was she professional?"

"Who?" inquired Ferdinand.

"Your songstress."

"Professional! O! ah! yes! No! she was not a professional singer, but she was fit to be one; and that is an excellent idea, too; for I would sooner,

after all, be a professional singer, and live by my art, than marry against my inclination, or not marry according to it."

"Marry!" said Glastonbury, rather astonished; "what, is she going to be married against her will? Poor devoted thing!"

"Devoted, indeed!" said Ferdinand; "there is no greater curse on earth."

Glastonbury shook his head.

"The affections should not be forced," the old man added; "our feelings are our own property, often our best."

Ferdinand fell into a fit of abstraction; then, suddenly turning round, he said, "Is it possible that I have been away from Armine only two days. Do you know it really seems to me a year!"

"You are very kind to say so, my Ferdinand," said Glastonbury.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE FINDS REASON TO BELIEVE IN THE EXISTENCE OF FAIRIES.

It is difficult to describe the restlessness of Ferdinand Armine. His solitary dinner was an excuse for quitting Glastonbury: but to eat is as impossible as to sleep, to a man who is really in love. He took a spoonful of soup, and then jumping up from his chair, he walked up and down the room, thinking of Henrietta Temple. Then to-morrow occurred to him, and that other lady that to-morrow was to bring. He drowned the thought in a bumper of claret. Wine, mighty wine! thou best and surest consolation! What care can withstand thy inspiring influence? from what scrape canst thou not, for a moment, extricate the victim? Who can deny that our spiritual nature in some degree depends upon our corporeal condition? A man without a breakfast is not a hero; a hero well fed is full of audacious invention. Every thing depends upon the circulation. Let but the blood flow freely, and a man of imagination is never without resources. A fine pulse is a talisman; a charmed life; a balance at our banker's. It is good luck; it is eternity; it is wealth. Nothing can withstand us; nothing injure us; it is inexhaustible riches. So felt Ferdinand Armine, though on the verge of a moral precipice. To-morrow! what of to-morrow? Did to-morrow daunt him? Not a jot. He would wrestle with to-morrow, laden as it might be with curses, and dash it to the earth. It should not be a day; he would blot it out of the calendar of time; he would effect a moral eclipse of its influence. He loved Henrietta Temple. She should be his. Who could prevent him? Was he not an Armine? Was he not the near descendant of that bold man who passed his whole life in the voluptuous indulgence of his unrestrained volition? Bravo! he willed it and it should be done. Every thing yields to determination. What a fool! what a miserable craven fool had he been to have frightened himself with the flimsy shadows of petty worldly cares! He was born to follow his own pleasure; it was supreme; it was absolute; he was a despot; he set every thing and everybody at defiance; and, filling a huge tumbler to the health of the great Sir Ferdinand, he reeled to bed, glorious as an emperor.

On the whole, Ferdinand had not committed so great an indiscretion as the reader, of course shocked, might at first imagine. For the first time for some days he slept, and slept soundly. Next to wine, a renovating slumber perhaps puts us in the best humour with our destiny. Ferdinand awoke refreshed and sanguine, full of inventive life, which soon developed itself in a flow of most improbable conclusions. His most rational scheme, however, appeared to consist in winning Henrietta Temple, and turning pirate, or engaging in the service of some distant and disturbed state. Why might he not free Greece, or revolutionize Spain, or conquer the Brazils? Others had embarked in these bold enterprises; men not more desperate than himself, and not better qualified for the career. Young, courageous, a warrior by profession, with a name of traditional glory throughout the courts of Christendom, perhaps even remembered in Asia, he seemed just the individual to carve out a glorious heritage with his sword. And as for his parents, they were not in the vale of years; let them dream on in easy obscurity, and maintain themselves at Armine until he returned to redeem his hereditary domain. All that was requisite was the concurrence of his adored mistress. Perhaps, after all his foolish fears, and all his petty anxiety, he might live to replace upon her brow the ancient coronet of Tewkesbury! Why not? The world is strange; nothing happens that we anticipate: when apparently stifled by the commonplace, we are on the brink of stepping into the adventurous. If he married Miss Grandison, his career was closed: a most unnatural conclusion for one so young and bold. It was evident that he must marry Henrietta Temple; and then? Why, then something would happen totally unexpected and unforeseen. Who could doubt it? Not he!

He rose, he mounted his horse, and galloped over to Ducie Common. Its very aspect melted his heart. He called at the cottages he had visited two days before. Without inquiring after Miss Temple, he contrived to hear a thousand circumstances relating to her which interested and charmed him. In the distance rose the woods of Ducie; he gazed upon them as if he could never withdraw his sight from their deep and silent forms. O, that sweet Bower! Why was there any other world but Ducie? All his brave projects of war, and conquest, and imperial plunder seemed dull and vain now. He sickened at the thought of action. He sighed to gather roses, to listen to songs sweeter than the nightingale, and wander forever in moonlit groves.

He turned his horse's head; slowly and sorrowfully he directed his course to Armine. Had they arrived! The stern presence of reality was too much for all his slight and glittering visions. What was he after all! This future conqueror was a young officer on leave, obscure except in his immediate circle, with no inheritance, and very much in debt; awaited with anxiety by his affectionate parents, and a young lady whom he was about to marry—for her fortune? Most impotent epilogue to a magnificent reverie!

The post arrived at Armine in the afternoon. As Ferdinand, nervous as a child returning to school, tardily regained home, he recognised the approaching postman. Ha! a letter? What was its import? The blessing of delay? or was it the herald of their instant arrival? Pale, and sick at

heart, he tore open the hurried lines of Katherine. The maiden aunt had stumbled while getting out of a pony phaeton, and experienced a serious accident; their visit to Armine was necessarily postponed. He read no more. The colour returned to his cheek, reinforced by his heart's liveliest blood. A thousand thoughts, a thousand wild hopes, and wilder plans came over him. Here was, at least, one interposition in his favour; others would occur. He felt fortunate. He rushed to the tower, to tell the news to Glastonbury. His tutor ascribed his agitation to the shock, and attempted to console him. In communicating the intelligence, he was obliged to finish a letter; it expressed a hope, that, if their visit were postponed for more than a day or two, Katherine's dearest Ferdinand would return to Bath.

Ferdinand wandered forth into the park to enjoy his freedom. A burden had suddenly fallen from his frame; a cloud that had vanished. To-day, that was so accursed, was to be marked now in his calendar with red chalk. Even Armine pleased him; its sky was brighter, its woods more vast and green. They had not arrived; they would not arrive to-morrow, that was certain; the third day, too, was a day of hope. Why! three days, three whole days of unexpected, unhopèd for freedom, it was eternity! What might not happen in three days! In three days he might fairly remain in expectation of fresh letters. It could not be anticipated, it was not even desired, that he should instantly repair to them. Come, he would forget this curse, he would be happy. The past, the future should be nothing; he would revel in the auspicious present.

Thus communing with himself, he sauntered along, musing over Henrietta Temple, and building bright castles in the air. A man engaged with his ideas is insensible of fatigue. Ferdinand found himself at the park gate that led to Ducie; intending only a slight stroll, he had already rambled half-way to his beloved. It was a delicious afternoon: the heat of the sun had long abated; the air was sweet and just beginning to stir; not a sound was heard, except the last blow of the woodman's axe, or the occasional note of some joyous bird waking from its siesta. Ferdinand passed the gate; he entered the winding road, the road that Henrietta Temple had so admired; a beautiful green lane, indeed with banks of flowers, and hedges of tall trees. He strolled along, our happy Ferdinand, indefinite of purpose, almost insensible whether he were advancing or returning home. He plucked the wild flowers, and pressed them to his lips, because she had admired them—rested on a bank—lounged on a gate—cut a stick from the hedge—traced Henrietta Temple in the road, and then turned the words into Henrietta Armine—and so, and so, and so—he, at length, stared at finding himself on Ducie Common.

Beautiful common! How he loved it! How familiar every tree and rustic roof had become to him! Could he ever forget the morning he had bathed in those fresh waters! What lake of Italy, what heroic wave of the midland ocean, could rival in his imagination that simple basin! He drew near to the woods of Ducie, glowing with the setting sun. Surely there was no twilight like the twilight of this land! The woods of Ducie are entered. He recognised the path over which she had glided; he knelt down and kissed that sacred

earth. As he approached the pleasure-grounds, he turned off into a side path, that he might not be perceived, he caught, through a vista, the distant glimpse of the mansion. The sight of that roof, wherein he had been so happy; of that roof that contained all that he cared or thought for in this world, overcame him. He leaned against a tree, and hid his face.

The twilight died away, the stars stole forth, and Ferdinand ventured in the spreading gloom of night to approach the mansion. He threw himself upon the turf, and watched the chamber where she lived. The windows were open, there were lights within the room, but the thin curtains were drawn, and concealed the inmates. Happy, happy chamber! All that was bright, and fair, and sweet, were concentrated in those charming walls!

The curtain is withdrawn; an arm—an arm which cannot be mistaken—pulls back the drapery. Is she coming forth? No, she does not; but he sees, distinctly he sees her. She sits in an old chair that he had often praised; her head rests upon her arm—her brow seems pensive: and in her other hand she holds a volume that she scarcely appears to read. O! may he gaze upon her forever! May this celestial scene, this seraphic hour, never pass away. Bright stars—O! do not fade; thou summer wind that playest upon his brow, perfumed by her flowers, refresh him forever; beautiful night, be forever the canopy of a scene so sweet and still; let existence glide away in gazing on yon delicate and tender vision!

Dreams of fantastic love—the curtain closes; a ruder hand than hers has shut her from his sight! It has all vanished; the stars seem dim, the autumnal air is dank and harsh; and where he had gazed on heaven, a bat flits wild and fleet. Poor Ferdinand, unhappy Ferdinand, how dull and depressed our brave gallant has become! Was it her father who had closed the curtain? Could he, himself, thought Ferdinand, have been observed?

Hark! a voice softer and sweeter than the night breaks upon the air. It is the voice of his beloved—and, indeed, with all her singular and admirable qualities, I do not know that there was any thing more remarkable about Henrietta Temple than her voice. It was a rare voice; so that in speaking, and in the most ordinary conversation, there was no one whose utterance was more natural and less unstudied; it forcibly affected you. She could not give you a greeting, bid you an adieu, or make the most routine remark, without impressing you with her power and sweetness. It sounded like a bell, sweet, and clear, and thrilling; it was quite astonishing—ay! it was ridiculous—what influence a little word uttered by this woman, without thought, would have upon your life. Of such fine clay is man made.

That beautiful voice recalled to Ferdinand all his fading visions: it renewed the spell which had recently enchanted him; it conjured up again all those sweet spirits that had a moment since hovered over him with their auspicious pinions. He could not, indeed, see her; her form, indeed, was shrouded, but her voice reached him; a voice attuned to tenderness, even to love; a voice that ravished his ear, melted his soul, and blended with his whole existence. His heart fluttered, his pulse beat high, he sprang up, he advanced to the window! Yes! a few paces alone divide them: a single step and he will be at her side. His hand is outstretched to

clutch the curtain, his —, when suddenly the music ceased. His courage vanished with its inspiration. For a moment he lingered, but his heart misgave him, and he stole back to his solitude.

What a mystery is love! All the necessities and habits of our life sink before it. Food and sleep, that seem to divide our being, as day and night divide time, lose all their influence over the lover. He is, indeed, a spiritualized being, fit only to live upon ambrosia, and slumber in an imaginary paradise. The cares of the world do not touch him; its most stirring events are to him but the dusty incidents of by-gone annals. All the fortune of the world without his mistress is misery; and with her all its mischances a transient dream. Revolutions, earthquakes, the change of governments, the fall of empires, are to him but childish games distasteful to a manly spirit. Men love in the plague, and forget the pest, though it rages about them. They bear a charmed life, and think not of destruction until it touches their idol, and then they die without a pang, like zealots for their persecuted creed. A man in love wanders in the world as a somnambulist, with eyes that seem to open to those that watch him, yet in fact view nothing but their own inward fancies.

O! that night at Ducie, through whose long hours Ferdinand Armine, in a tumult of enraptured passions, wandered in the lawns, and groves, feeding on the image of its enchanting mistress, watching the solitary light in her chamber that was to him as the Pharos to a mariner in a tumultuous voyage! The morning, the gray cold morning, came at last; he had outwatched the stars, and listened to the matins of the waking birds. It was no longer possible to remain in the gardens unobserved; he regained the common.

What should he do? whether should he wend his course? To Armine; O! not to Armine; never could he return to Armine without the heart of Henrietta Temple. Yes! on that great venture he had now resolved; on that mighty hazard all should now be staked. Reckless of consequences, one vast object now alone sustained him. Existence without her was impossible! Ay! a day, a day, a single, a solitary day, should not elapse without breathing to her his passion, and seeking his fate from her dark eyes!

He strolled along to the extremity of the common. It was a great table land, from whose boundary you looked down in small rich valleys; and into one of these, winding his way through fields of golden grain and pastures, of which the fertile soil was testified by their vigorous hedges, he now descended. A long, low farmhouse, with gable ends and ample porch, an antique building that in old days might have been some manorial residence, attracted his attention. Its picturesque form, its angles and twisted chimneys, its porch covered with jessamine and egantine, its verdant homestead and its orchard rich with ruddy fruit, its vast barns and long lines of ample stacks, produced altogether a rural picture complete and cheerful. Near it ran a stream, which Ferdinand followed, and which, after a devious and rapid course, emptied itself into a deep and capacious pool, touched by the early sunbeam, and grateful to the swimmer's eye. Here Ferdinand made his natural toilet; and afterwards slowly returning to the farmhouse, sought an agreeable refuge from the sun in its fragrant porch.

The farmer's wife, accompanied by a pretty daughter with downcast eyes, came forth and invited him to enter. While he courteously refused her offer, he sought her hospitality. The good wife brought a table, and placed it in the porch, and covered it with a napkin purer than snow. Her viands were fresh eggs, milk warm from the cow, and bread she had herself baked. Even a lover might feed on such sweet food. This happy valley and this cheerful settlement wonderfully touched the fancy of Ferdinand. The season was mild and sunny, the air scented by the flowers that rustled in the breeze, the bees soon came to rife their sweetness, and flights of white and blue pigeons ever and anon skimmed along the sky from the neighbouring gables that were their dovecotes. Ferdinand made a salutary, if not a plenteous meal; and when the table was removed, exhausted by the fatigue and excitement of the last four-and-twenty hours, he stretched himself at full length in the porch, and fell into a gentle and dreamless slumber.

Hours elapsed before he awoke, vigorous indeed, and wonderfully refreshed; but the sun had already greatly declined. To his astonishment, as he moved, there fell from his breast a most beautiful nosegay. He was charmed with this delicate attention from his hostess, or perhaps from her pretty daughter with those downcast eyes. There seemed a refinement about the gift, and the mode of its offering, which scarcely could be expected from these kind yet simple rustics. The flowers, too, were most rare and choice; geraniums, such as are found only in lady's bower, a cape jessamine, some musky carnations, and a rose that seemed the sister of the one that he had borne from Ducie. They were most delicately bound together, too, by a bright blue riband, fastened by a golden and turquoise pin. This was most strange; this was an adventure more suitable to a Sicilian palace than an English farmhouse; to the gardens of a princess than the clustered porch of his kind hostess. Ferdinand gazed at the bouquet with a glance of blended perplexity and pleasure; then he entered the farmhouse, and made inquiries of his hostess, but they were fruitless. The pretty daughter with the downcast eyes was there too; but her very admiration of the gift, so genuine and unrestrained, proved, if testimony indeed were necessary, that she was not his unknown benefactor: admirer, he would have said; but Ferdinand was in love, and modest. All agreed no one, to their knowledge, had been there, and so Ferdinand, cherishing his beautiful gift, was fain to quit his new friends in as much perplexity as ever.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHICH CONTAINS AN INCIDENT THAT IS THE TERMINATION OF MOST TALES, THOUGH ALMOST THE BEGINNING OF THE PRESENT.

It was about two hours before sunset that Captain Armine summoned up courage to call at Ducie Bower. He inquired for Mr. Temple, and learned, to his surprise, that Mr. Temple had quitted Ducie yesterday morning for Scotland.

"And Miss Temple?" said Ferdinand.

"Is at home, sir," replied the servant.

Ferdinand was ushered into the saloon. She was not there. Our hero was very nervous he

had been bold enough in the course of his walk from the farmhouse, and indulged in a thousand imaginary conversations with his mistress; but, now that he was really about to meet her, all his fire and fancy deserted him. Every thing occurred to him inauspicious to his suit; his own situation, the short time she had known him, his uncertainty of the state of her affections. How did he know she was not engaged to another! why should she not be betrothed as well as himself? This contingency had occurred to him before, and yet he had driven it from his thoughts. He began to be jealous; he began to think himself a very great fool; at any rate, he resolved not to expose himself any further. He was clearly premature; he would call to-morrow or next day; to speak to her now was certainly impossible.

The door opened; she entered, radiant as the day! What a smile! what dazzling teeth! what ravishing dimples! her eyes flashed like summer lightning; she extended him a hand white and soft as one of those doves that had played about him in the morning. Surely never was any one endowed with such an imperial presence. So stately, so majestic, and yet withal so simply gracious; full of such airy artlessness, at one moment she seemed an empress, and then only a beautiful child; and the hand and arm that seemed fashioned to wave a sceptre, in an instant appeared only fit to fondle a gazelle or pluck a flower.

"How do you do!" she said; and he really fancied she was going to sing. He was not yet accustomed to that marvellous voice. It broke upon the silence, like a silver bell just touched by the summer air. "It is very kind of you to come and see a lone maiden," she continued; "papa has deserted me, and without any preparation. I cannot endure to be separated from him, and this is almost the only time that he has refused my solicitation to accompany him. But he must travel far and quickly. My uncle has sent for him; he is very unwell, and papa is his trustee. There is business; I do not know what it is, but I dare say not very agreeable. By-the-by, I hope Lady Armine is well?"

"My papa has deserted me," said Ferdinand with a smile. "They have not yet arrived, and some days may yet elapse before they reach Armine."

"Indeed! I hope they are well."

"Yes; they are well."

"Did you ride here?"

"No."

"You did not walk?"

"I hardly know how I came; I believe I walked."

"You must be very tired; and you are standing! pray sit down; sit in that chair; you know that is your favourite chair."

And Ferdinand seated himself in the very chair in which he had watched her the preceding night.

"This is certainly my favourite chair," he said; "I know no seat in the world I prefer to this."

"Will you take some refreshment! I am sure you will; you must be very tired. Take some hock; let me order some hock—papa always takes hock and soda water. I shall order some hock and soda water for you." She rose and rang the bell in spite of his remonstrance.

"And have you been walking, Miss Temple?" inquired Ferdinand.

"I was thinking of strolling now," she replied; "but I am glad you have called, for I want an excuse to be idle."

An hour passed away, nor was the conversation on either side very brilliantly supported. Ferdinand seemed dull, but, indeed, was only moody, revolving in his mind many strange incidents and feelings, and then turning for consolation in his perplexities to the enchanting vision on which he still could gaze. Nor was Miss Temple, indeed, in her usually sparkling vein; her liveliness seemed an effort; she was more constrained, she was less fluent than before. Ferdinand, indeed, rose more than once to depart; yet still he remained. He lost his cap; he looked for his cap; he found his cap; and then again seated himself. Again he rose, restless and disquieted, wandered about the room, looked at a picture, plucked a flower, pulled the flower to pieces.

"Miss Temple," he at length observed, "I am afraid I am very stupid!"

"Because you are silent?"

"Is not that a sufficient reason?"

"Nay! I think not—I think I am rather fond of silent people myself; I cannot bear to live with a person who feels bound to talk because he is my companion. The whole day passes sometimes without papa and myself exchanging fifty words; yet I am very happy; I do not feel that we are dull;" and Miss Temple pursued her work, which she had previously taken up.

"Ah! but I am not your papa; when we are very intimate with people, when they interest us, we are engaged with their feelings, we do not perpetually require their ideas. But an acquaintance, as I am, only an acquaintance, a miserable acquaintance, unless I speak or listen, I have no business to be here; unless I in some degree contribute to the amusement or the convenience of my companion, I degenerate into a bore."

"I think you are very amusing, and you may be useful if you like, very;" and she offered him a skein of silk, which she requested him to hold.

It was a beautiful hand that was extended to him, a beautiful hand is an excellent thing in woman; it is a charm that never falls, and, better than all, it is a means of fascination that never disappears. Women carry a beautiful hand with them to the grave, when a beautiful face has long ago vanished or ceased to enchant. The expression of the hand, too, is inexhaustible; and when the eyes we may have worshipped no longer flash or sparkle, the ringlets with which we may have played are covered with a cap, or worse, a turban, and the symmetrical presence which in our sonnets has reminded us so oft of antelopes and wild gazelles, have all, all vanished; the hand, the immortal hand, defying alike time and care, still vanquishes, and still triumphs; and, small, soft, and fair, by an airy attitude, a gentle pressure, or a new ring, renews with untiring grace the spell that bound our enamoured and adoring youth!

But in the present instance there were eyes as bright as the hand, locks more glossy and luxuriant than Helen of Troy's, a cheek pink as a shell, and breaking into dimples like a May morning into sunshine, and lips from which stole forth a perfume sweeter than the whole conservatory. Ferdinand sat down on a chair opposite Miss Temple, with the extended skein.

"Now this is better than doing nothing!" she said, catching his eye with a glance half kind, half arch. "I suspect, Captain Armine, that your melancholy originates in idleness."

"Ah! if I could only be employed every day in this manner!" ejaculated Ferdinand.

"Nay! not with a distaff; but you must do something. You must get into parliament."

"You forget that I am a Catholic," said Ferdinand.

Miss Temple slightly blushed, and talked rather quickly about her work; but her companion would not relinquish the subject.

"I hope you are not prejudiced against my faith," said Ferdinand.

"Prejudiced! Dear Captain Armine, do not make me repent too seriously a giddy word. I feel it is wrong that matters of taste should mingle with matters of belief; but, to speak the truth, I am not quite sure that a Howard or an Armine, who was a Protestant, like myself, would quite please my fancy as much as in their present position, which, if a little inconvenient, is very picturesque."

Ferdinand smiled. "My great-grandmother was a Protestant," said Ferdinand. "Margaret Armine. Do you think Margaret a pretty name?"

"Queen Margaret! yes! a fine name, I think; barring its abbreviation."

"I wish my great-grandmother's name had not been Margaret," said Ferdinand very seriously.

"Now, why should that respectable dame's baptism disturb your fancy?" inquired Miss Temple.

"I wish her name had been Henrietta," replied Ferdinand. "Henrietta Armine. You know there was a Henrietta Armine once?"

"Was there?" said Miss Temple, rising. "Our skein is finished. You have been very good. I must go and see my flowers. Come." And as she said this little word, she turned her fair and finely finished neck, and looked over her shoulder at Ferdinand with an arch expression of countenance peculiar to her. That winning look, indeed, that clear, sweet voice, and that quick graceful attitude, blended into a spell, which was irresistible. His heart yearned for Henrietta Temple, and rose at the bidding of her voice.

From the conservatory they stepped into the garden. It was a most delicious afternoon; the sun had sunk behind the grove, and the air, which had been throughout the day somewhat oppressive, was now warm, but mild. At Ducie there was a fine old terrace facing the western hills, that bound the valley in which the Bower was situated. These hills, a ridge of moderate elevation, but of very picturesque form, parted just opposite the terrace, as if on purpose to admit the setting sun, like inferior existences that had, as it were, made way before the splendour of some mighty lord or conqueror. The lofty and sloping bank which this terrace crowned was covered with rare shrubs, and occasionally a group of tall trees sprang up among them, and broke the view with an interference which was far from ungraceful—while ivy and other creepers,

preading forth from large marble vases, had extended over their trunks, and sometimes even in their play, had touched their topmost branches. Between the terrace and the distant hills extended a vast tract of pasture land, green and well wooded by its rich hedge-rows; not a roof was visible, though many farms and hamlets were at hand; and, in the heart of a rich and populous land, here was a region where the shepherd or the herdsman were the only evidences of human existence. It was thither, a grateful spot at such an hour, that Miss

Temple and her companion directed their steps. The last beam of the sun flashed across the flaming horizon as they gained the terrace; the hills, well wooded, or presenting a bare and acute outline to the sky, rose sharply defined in form; while in another direction some more distant elevations were preaded with a rich purple tint, touched sometimes with a rosy blaze of soft and flickering light. The whole scene, indeed, from the humble pasture land that was soon to creep into darkness, to the proud hills whose sparkling crests were yet touched by the living beam, was bathed with lucid beauty and luminous softness, and blended with the glowing canopy of the lustrous sky. But on the terrace, and the groves that rose beyond it, and the glades and vistas into which they opened, fell the full glory of the sunset. Each moment a new shadow, now rosy, now golden, now blending in its shifting tints all the glory of the iris, fell over the rich pleasure-grounds, its groups of rare and noble trees, and its dim or glittering avenues.

The vespers of the birds were faintly dying away, the last low of the returning kine sounded over the lea, the tinkle of the sheep-bell was heard no more, the thin white moon began to gleam, and Hesperus glittered in the fading sky. It was the twilight hour!

That delicious hour that softens the heart of man—what is its magic? Not merely its beauty; it is not more beautiful than the sunrise. It is its repose. Our tumultuous passions sink with the sun; there is a fine sympathy between us and our world, and the stillness of nature is responded to by the serenity of the soul.

At this sacred hour our hearts are pure. All worldly cares, all those vulgar anxieties and aspirations that at other seasons hover like vultures over our existence, vanish from the serene atmosphere of our susceptibility. A sense of beauty, a sentiment of love pervade our being. But if at such a moment solitude is full of joy—if, even when alone, our native sensibility suffices to entrance us with a tranquil, yet thrilling, bliss—how doubly sweet, how multiplied must be our fine emotions, when the most delicate influence of human sympathy combines with the power and purity of material and moral nature, and completes the exquisite and enchanting spell!

Ferdinand Armine turned from the beautiful world around him, to gaze upon a countenance sweeter than the summer air, softer than the gleaming moon, brighter than the evening star. The shadowy light of purple eve fell upon the still and solemn presence of Henrietta Temple. Irresistible emotion impelled him; softly he took her gentle hand, and scarcely winding round her waist his trembling arm, he bent his head, and murmured to her, "Most beautiful, I love thee!"

As in the oppressive stillness of some tropic night, a single drop is the refreshing harbinger of a shower that clears the heavens, so even this slight expression relieved in an instant the intensity of his o'erburdened feelings, and warm, quick, and gushing, flowed the words that breathed his fervid adoration. "Yes!" he continued, "in this fair scene, O! let me turn to something fairer still. Beautiful, beloved Henrietta, I can repress no longer the emotions that, since I first beheld you, have vanquished my existence. I love you, I adore you, life in your society is heaven; without you I cannot live. Deem me, O! deem me not too bold,

sweet lady; I am not worthy of you, yet let me love! I am not worthy of you, but who can be! Ah! if I dared but venture to offer you my heart, if indeed that humblest of all possessions might indeed be yours, if my adoration, if my devotion, if the consecration of my life to you, might in some degree compensate for its little worth, if I might live even but to hope—

"You do not speak, my treasure; my beloved is silent. Miss Temple, Henrietta, admirable Henrietta, have I offended you! am I indeed the victim of hopes too high and fancies too supreme? O! pardon me, most beautiful, I pray your pardon. Is it a crime to feel, perchance too keenly, the sense of beauty like to thine, dear lady? Ah! tell me I am forgiven; tell me indeed you do not hate me. I will be silent, I will never speak again. Yet, let me walk with you. Cease not to be my companion because I have been too bold. Pity me, pity me, dearest, dearest Henrietta. If you but knew how I have suffered, if you but knew the nights that brought no sleep, the days of fever, that had been mine since first we met; if you but knew how I have fed but upon one sweet idea, one sacred image of absorbing life, since first I gazed on your transcendent form, indeed I think that you would pity, that you would pardon, that you might even—

"Tell me, is it my fault that you are beautiful? O! how beautiful, my wretched and exhausted soul too surely feels! Is it my fault those eyes are like the dawn, that thy sweet voice thrills through my frame, and but the lightest touch of that light hand falls like a spell on my entranced form? Ah! Henrietta, be merciful, be kind!"

He paused for a second, and yet she did not answer; but her cheek fell upon his shoulder, and the gentle pressure of her hand was more eloquent than language. That slight sweet signal was to him as the sunrise on the misty earth. Full of hope, and joy, and confidence, he took her in his arms, sealed her cold lips with a burning kiss, and vowed to her his eternal and almighty love!

He bore her to an old stone bench placed on the terrace. Still she was silent: but her hand clasped his, and her head rested on his bosom. The gleaming moon now glittered, the hills and woods were silvered by its beams, and the far meads were bathed with its clear, fair light. Not a single cloud curtailed the splendour of the stars. What a rapturous soul was Ferdinand Armine's as he sat that night on the old bench, on Ducie terrace, shrouding from the rising breeze the trembling form of Henrietta Temple! And yet it was not cold that made her shiver.

The clock of Ducie church struck ten. She moved, saying, in a faint voice, "We must go home, my Ferdinand!"

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE PROVES HIMSELF A COMPLETE TACTICIAN.

THE midnight moon flung its broad beams over the glades and avenues of Armine, as Ferdinand, riding Miss Temple's horse, re-entered the park. His countenance was paler than the spectral light

that guided him on his way. He looked little like a pledged and triumphant lover; but in his contracted brow and compressed lip might be read the determination of his soul. There was no longer a contest between poverty and pride, between the maintenance or destruction of his ancient house, between his old engagement and his present passion; that was past. Henrietta Temple was the light in the Pharos, amid all his stormy fortunes; thither he directed all the energies of his being; and to gain that port, or sink, was his unflinching resolution.

It was deep in the night before he again beheld the towers and turrets of his castle, and the ivy-covered fragment of the old Place seemed to sleep in peace under its protecting influence. A wild and beautiful event had happened since last he quitted those ancient walls. And what would be its influence upon them? But it is not for the passionate lover to moralize. For him, the regrets of the past and the chances of the future are alike lost in the ravishing and absorbing present. For a lover that has just secured the object of his long and tumultuous hopes, is as a diver who has plucked a jewel from the bed of some rare sea. Panting and wild he lies upon the beach, and the gem that he clutches is the sole idea that engrosses his existence.

Ferdinand is within his little chamber; that little chamber where his mother had bid him so passionate a farewell. Ah! he loves another woman better than his mother now! Nay, even a feeling of embarrassment and pain is associated with the recollection of that fond and elegant being, that he had recognised once as the model of all feminine perfection, and who had been to him so gentle and so devoted. He drives his mother from his thoughts. It is of another voice that he now muses; it is the memory of another's glance that touches his eager heart. He falls into a reverie; the passionate past is acted again before him; in his glittering eye and the rapid play of his features may be traced the tumult of his soul. A doubt crosses his brow. Is he indeed so happy—is it not all a dream? He takes from his bosom the handkerchief of Henrietta Temple. He recognises upon it her magical initials, worked in her own fine dark hair. A smile of triumphant certainty irradiates his countenance, as he rapidly presses the memorial to his lips, and imprints upon it a thousand kisses; and, holding this cherished testimony of his felicity to his heart, sleep at length descended upon the exhausted frame of Ferdinand Armine.

But the night that brought dreams to Ferdinand Armine, brought him not visions more marvellous and magical than his waking life. He who loves, lives in an ecstatic trance. The world that surrounds him is not the world of working man: it is fairyland. He is not of the same order as the labouring myriads on which he seems to tread. They are to him but a swarm of humble-minded and humble-mannered insects. For him, the human species is represented by a single individual, and of her he makes an idol. All that is bright and rare is but invented and devised to adorn and please her. Flowers for her were made so sweet and birds so musical. All nature seems to bear an intimate relation to the being we adore; and, as to us life would now appear intolerable, a burden or insupportable and wearing toil, without this transcendent sympathy, so we cannot help fancying

that were its sweet and subtle origin herself to quit this inspired scene, the universe itself would not be unconscious of its deprivation, and somewhat of the world's lustre might be missed, even by the most callous.

The morning burst, as beautiful as such love. A rosy tint suffused the soft and tremulous sky, and tinted with a delicate hue the tall trees and the wide lawns, freshened with the light and vanishing dew. The air was vocal with a thousand songs; all was bright and clear, cheerful and golden. Ferdinand awoke from delicious dreams, and gazed upon the scene that responded to his own bright and glad emotions, and inhaled the balmy air, ethereal as his own soul. Love, that can illumine the dark hovel and the dismal garret, that sheds a ray of enchanting light over the close and busy city, seems to mount with a lighter and more glittering pinion in an atmosphere as brilliant as its own plumes. Fortunate the youth, the romance of whose existence is placed in a scene befitting its fair and marvellous career; fortunate the passion that is breathed in palaces, amid the ennobling creations of surrounding art, and greets the object of its fond solicitude amid perfumed gardens, and in the shade of green and silent woods! Whatever may be the harsher course of his career, however the cold world may cast its dark shadows upon his future path, he may yet consider himself thrice blessed to whom this graceful destiny has fallen, and amid the storms and troubles of after-life may look back to these hours, fair as the dawn, beautiful as the twilight, with solace and satisfaction. Disappointment may wither up his energies, oppression may bruise his spirit; but balked, daunted, deserted, crushed, lone where once all was sympathy, gloomy where all was light, still he has not lived in vain.

Business, however, rises with the sun. The morning brings cares, and, although with braced energies and renovated strength then is the season that we are best qualified to struggle with the harassing brood, still Ferdinand Armine, the involved son of a ruined race, seldom rose from his couch, seldom recalled consciousness after repose, without a pang. Nor was there indeed magic withal in the sweet spell that now bound him to preserve him from this black invasion. Anxiety was one of the ingredients of the charm. He might have forgotten his own broken fortunes, his audacious and sanguine spirit might have built up many a castle for the future, as brave as that of Armine; but the very inspiring recollection of Henrietta Temple, the very remembrance of the past and triumphant eve, only the more forced upon his memory the conviction that he was, at this moment, engaged also to another, and bound to be married to two women.

Something must be done; Miss Grandison might arrive this very day. It was an improbable incident, but still it might occur. While he was thus musing, his servant brought him his letters, which had arrived the preceding day—letters from his mother and Katherine, *his* Katherine. They brought present relief. The invalid had not amended; their movements were still uncertain. Katherine, "his own Kate," expressed even a fond faint wish that he would return. His resolution was taken in an instant. He decided with the prescient promptitude of one who has his dearest interests at stake. He wrote to Katherine that he would

instantly fly to her, only that he daily expected his attendance would be required in town, on military business of urgent importance to their happiness. This might, this must, necessarily delay their meeting. The moment he received his summons to attend the Horse Guards, he should hurry off. In the mean time, she was to write to him here; and at all events not to quit Bath for Armine, without giving him a notice of several days. Having despatched this letter, and another to his mother, Ferdinand repaired to the tower, to communicate to Glastonbury the necessity of his immediate departure for London, but he also assured that good old man of his brief visit to that city. The pang of this unexpected departure was softened by the positive promise of returning in a very few days, and returning with his family.

Having made these arrangements, Ferdinand now felt that come what might, he had at least secured for himself a certain period of unbroken bliss. He had a faithful servant, an Italian, in whose discretion he had justly unlimited confidence. To him Ferdinand intrusted the duty of bringing, each day, his letters to his retreat, which he had fixed upon should be that same picturesque farmhouse, in whose friendly porch he had found the preceding day such a hospitable shelter, and where he experienced that charming adventure which now rather delighted than perplexed him.

CHAPTER II.

A DAY OF LOVE.

MEANWHILE the beautiful Henrietta sat in her bower, her music neglected, her drawing thrown aside. Even her birds were forgotten and her flowers untended. A soft tumult filled her frame; now rapt in revery she leaned her head upon her fair hand in charmed abstraction; now rising from her restless seat she paced the chamber, and thought of his quick coming. What was this mighty revolution that a few short days—a few brief hours had occasioned? How mysterious, yet how irresistible—how overwhelming! Her father was absent, that father on whose fond idea she had alone lived; from whom the slightest separation had once been pain; and now that father claims not even her thoughts. Another and a stranger's image, is throned in her soul! She who had moved in the world so variously—who had received so much homage, and been accustomed from her childhood to all that is considered accomplished and fascinating in man, and had passed through the ordeal with a calm clear spirit; behold, she is no longer the mistress of her thoughts or feelings; she had fallen before a glance, and yielded in an instant to a burning word!

But could she blame herself? Did she repent the rapid and ravishing past? Did regret mingle with her wonder? Was there a pang of remorse, however slight, blending its sharp tooth with all her bliss? O! no! Her love was perfect, and her joy was full. She offered her vows to that Heaven that had accorded her happiness so supreme; she felt only unworthy of a destiny so complete. She marvelled in the meekness and purity of her spirit, why one so gifted had been reserved for her, and

what he could recognise in imperfect and inferior qualities to devote to them the fondness of his rare existence.

Ferdinand Armine! Did there indeed ever breathe, had the wit of poet ever yet devised, a being so choice? So young, so beautiful, so lively and accomplished, so deeply and variously interesting! Was that sweet voice, indeed, only to sound in her enchanted ear—that graceful form to move only for the pleasure of her watchful eye? That quick and airy fancy but to create for her delight, and that soft, gentle heart, to own no solicitude but for her will and infinite gratification? And could it be possible that he loved her, that she was indeed his pledged and panting bride, that the accents of his adoration still echoed in her ear, and his fond embraces still clung to her mute and trembling lips! Would he always love her? Would he always be so fond? Would he be as faithful as he was now devoted? Ah! she would not lose him. That heart should never escape her. Her life should be one long vigilant device to enchain his being.

What was she five days past? Is it possible that she lived before she met him? Of what did she think, what do! Could there be pursuits without this companion, plans or feelings without this sweet friend? Life must have been a blank, rapid, and dull, and weary. She could not recall herself before that morning ride to Armine. How rolled away the day! How heavy must have been the hours! All that had been uttered before she listened to Ferdinand seemed without point; all that was done before he lingered at her side aimless and without an object.

O, Love! in vain they moralize; in vain they teach us thou art a delusion; in vain they dissect thine inspiring sentiment, and would mortify us into misery by its degrading analysis. The sage may announce that gratified vanity is thine aim and end; the lover glances with contempt at his cold-blooded philosophy. Nature assures him thou art a beautiful and sublime emotion; and, he answers, canst thou deprive the sun of its heat because its ray may be decomposed; or does the diamond blaze with less splendour because thou canst analyze its effulgence!

A gentle rustling sounded at the window; Henrietta looked up, but the sight deserted her fading vision, as Ferdinand seized with softness her softer hand, and pressed it to his lips.

A moment since, and she had longed for his presence as the infant for its mother; a moment since, and she had murmured that so much of the morn had passed without his society; a moment since, and it had seemed that no time could exhaust the expression of her feelings. How she had sighed for his coming! How she had hoped that this day she might convey to him what last night she had so weakly, so imperfectly attempted! And now she sat trembling and silent, with downcast eyes and changing countenance!

"My Henrietta!" exclaimed Ferdinand; "My beautiful Henrietta, it seemed we never should meet again, and yet I rose almost with the sun."

"My Ferdinand," replied Miss Temple, scarcely daring to meet his glance, "I cannot speak; I am so happy that I cannot speak."

"Ah! tell me, sweetest, have you thought of me very much! Did you observe I stole your hand-

kerchief last night? See! here it is; when I slept, I kissed it and wore it next my heart."

"Dear handkerchief! Ah! give it me, my Ferdinand," she faintly murmured, extending her hand; and then she added, in a firmer and livelier tone, "And did he really kiss it! did he really kiss it before he slept, and wear it near his heart!"

"Near thine; for thine it is, love! Sweet, you look so beautiful to-day! It seems to me you never looked half so fair. Those eyes are so brilliant—so very blue—so like the violet! There is nothing like your eyes."

"Except your own."

"You have taken away your hand. Give me back my hand, my Henrietta. I will not quit it. The whole day it shall be clasped in mine. Ah! what a hand! so soft—so very soft! There is nothing like your hand."

"Yours is as soft, Ferdinand."

"O! Henrietta! I do love you so! I wish that I could tell you how I loved you! As I rode home last night, it seemed that I had not conveyed to you a tithe, nay, a thousandth part of what I feel."

"You cannot love me, Ferdinand, more than I love you."

"Say so again! Tell me very often—tell me a thousand times, how much you love me. Unless you tell me a thousand times, Henrietta, I never can believe that I am so blessed."

They went forth into the garden. Nature, with the splendid sky and the sweet breeze, seemed to smile upon their passion. Henrietta plucked the most beautiful flowers, and placed them in his breast.

"Do you remember the rose at Armine?" said Ferdinand, with a fond smile.

"Ah! who would have believed that it would have led to this!" said Henrietta, with downcast eyes.

"I am not more in love now than I was then," said Ferdinand.

"I dare not speak of my feelings," said Miss Temple. "Is it possible that it can be but five days back since we first met! It seems another era."

"I have no recollection of any thing that occurred, before I saw you beneath the cedar," replied Ferdinand; "that is the date of my existence. I saw you, and I loved. My love was at once complete; I have no confidence in any other; I have no confidence in the love that is the creature of observation, and reflection, and comparison, and calculation. Love, in my opinion, should spring from innate sympathy; it should be superior to all situations, all ties, all circumstances."

"Such, then, we must believe, is ours," replied Henrietta, in a somewhat grave and musing tone; "I would willingly embrace your creed. I know not why I should be ashamed of my feelings. They are natural, and they are pure. And yet I tremble. But as long as you do not think lightly of me, Ferdinand, for whom should I care!"

"My Henrietta! my angel! my adored and beautiful! I worship you—I reverence you. Ah! my Henrietta, if you only knew how I doat upon you, you would not speak thus. Come, let us ramble in our woods."

So saying, he withdrew her from the more public situation in which they were then placed, and entered, by a winding walk, those beautiful bowers

that had given so fair and fitting a name to Ducie. Ah! that was a ramble of rich delight, as, winding his arm round her light waist, he poured into her palpitating ear all the eloquence of his passion. Each hour that they had known each other was analyzed, and the feelings of each moment were compared. What sweet and thrilling confessions! Eventually it was settled, to the complete satisfaction of both, that both had fallen in love at the same time, and that they had been mutually and unceasingly thinking of each other from the first instant of their meeting.

The conversation of lovers is inexhaustible. Hour glided away after hour, as Ferdinand alternately expressed his passion and detailed the history of his past life. For the curiosity of woman, lively at all times, is never so keen, so exacting, and so interested, as in her anxiety to become acquainted with the previous career of her lover. She is jealous of all that he has done before she knew him; of every person to whom he has spoken. She will be assured a thousand times that he never loved before, yet she credits the first affirmation. She envies the mother who knew him as a child, even the nurse that may have rocked his cradle. She insists upon a minute and finished portraiture of his character and life.

Why did he not give it? More than once it was upon his lips to reveal all; more than once he was about to pour forth all his sorrows, all the entanglements of his painful situation; more than once he was about to make the full and mortifying confession, that, though his heart was hers, there existed another, who even at that moment might claim the hand that Henrietta clasped with so much tenderness. But he checked himself. He would not break the charm that surrounded him; he would not disturb the clear and brilliant stream in which his life was at this moment flowing; he had not courage to change by a worldly word the scene of celestial enchantment in which he now moved and breathed. Let me add, in some degree for his justification, that he was not altogether unmindful of the feelings of Miss Grandison. Sufficient misery remained, at all events, for her, without adding the misery of making her rival a confidant in her mortification. The deed must be done, and done promptly; but, at least, there should be no unnecessary witnesses to its harrowing achievement.

So he looked upon the radiant brow of his Henrietta, wreathed with smiles of innocent triumph, sparkling with unalloyed felicity, and beaming with unbroken devotion. Should the shade of a dark passion for a moment cloud that heaven, so bright and so serene? Should even a momentary pang of jealousy or distrust pain that pure and unsullied breast? In the midst of contending emotions, he pressed her to his heart with renewed energy, and, bending down his head, imprinted an embrace upon her blushing forehead.

They seated themselves on a bank, which, it would seem, nature had created for the convenience of lovers. The softest moss and the brightest flowers decked its elastic and fragrant side. A spreading beech tree shaded their heads from the sun, which now indeed was on the decline; and occasionally its wide branches rustled with the soft breeze, that passed over them in renovating and gentle gusts. The woods widened before them, and, at the termination of a well-contrived avenue,

they caught the roofs of the village and the tall tower of Ducie Church. They had wandered for hours without weariness, yet the repose was grateful, while they listened to the birds, and plucked beautiful wild flowers.

"Ah! I remember," said Ferdinand, "that it was not far from here, while slumbering indeed in the porch of my pretty farmhouse, that the fairy of the spot dropped on my breast these beautiful flowers that I now wear. Did you not observe them, my sweet Henrietta? Do you know that I am rather mortified, that they have not made you at least a little jealous?"

"I am not jealous of fairies, dear Ferdinand."

"And yet I half believe that you are a fairy, my Henrietta."

"A very substantial one, I fear, my Ferdinand. Is this a compliment to my form?"

"Well, then, a sylvan nymph, much more, I assure you, to my fancy; perhaps the rosy dryad of this fair tree; rambling in woods, and bounding over commons, scattering beautiful flowers, and dreams as bright."

"And were your dreams bright yesterday morning?"

"I dreamt of you."

"And when you awoke?"

"I hastened to the source of my inspiration."

"And if you had not dreamt of me?"

"I should have come to have inquired the reason why."

Miss Temple looked upon the ground; a blended expression of mirth and sentiment played over her features, and then looking up with a smile contending with her tearful eye, she hid her face in his breast and murmured, "I watched him sleeping. Did he indeed dream of me?"

"Darling of my existence," exclaimed the enraptured Ferdinand; "exquisite, enchanting being! Why am I so happy? What have I done to deserve bliss so ineffable? But tell me, beauty, tell me how you contrived to appear and vanish without witnesses. For my inquiries were severe, and these good people must have been less artless than I imagined to have withstood them successfully."

"I came," said Miss Temple, "to pay them a visit, with me not uncommon. When I entered the porch I beheld my Ferdinand asleep. I looked upon him for a moment, but I was frightened and stole away unperceived. But I left the flowers more fortunate than your Henrietta!"

"Sweet love!"

"Never did I return home," continued Miss Temple, "more sad and more dispirited. A thousand times I wish that I was a flower, that I might be gathered and worn upon your heart. You smile, my Ferdinand. Indeed I feel I am very foolish, yet I know not why, I am now neither ashamed nor afraid to tell you any thing. I was so miserable when I arrived home, my Ferdinand, that I went to my room and wept. And he then came! O! what heaven was mine! I wiped the tears from my face and came down to see him. He looked so beautiful and happy!"

"And you, sweet child, O! who could have believed, at that moment, that a tear had escaped from those bright eyes!"

"Love makes us hypocrites, I fear, my Ferdinand; for a moment before I was so wearied that I was lying on my sofa quite wretched. And then, when I saw him, I pretended that I had not been

out, and was just thinking of a stroll. O! my Ferdinand! will you pardon me?"

"It seems to me that I never loved you until this moment. Is it possible that human beings ever loved each other as we do?"

Now came the hour of twilight. While in this fond strain the lovers interchanged their hearts, the sun had sunk, the birds grown silent, and the star of evening twinkled over the tower of Ducie. The bat and the beetle warned them to return. They rose reluctantly and retraced their steps to Ducie, with hearts even softer than the melting hour.

"Must we then part?" exclaimed Ferdinand. "O! must we part! How can I exist even an instant without your presence, without at least the consciousness of existing under the same roof? O! would I were one of your serving-men, to listen to your footstep, to obey your bell, and ever and anon to catch your voice! O! now I wish indeed Mr. Temple were here, and then I might be your guest."

"My father!" exclaimed Miss Temple, in a somewhat serious tone. "My poor father! I ought to have written to him to-day! Why have I not? O! talk not of my father, speak only of yourself."

They stood in silence as they were about to emerge upon the lawn, and then Miss Temple said, "Dear Ferdinand, you must go; indeed you must. Press me not to enter, darling. If you love me, now let us part. I shall retire immediately, that the morning may sooner come. God bless you, my Ferdinand. May he guard over you, and keep you forever and ever. Sweet, sweet love, you weep! Indeed you must not; you will drive me mad if you do this. Ferdinand, darling, darling Ferdinand, be good, be kind; for my sake do not this. I love you, sweetest; what can I do more? The time will come we will not part, but now we must. Good night, my Ferdinand; good night, idol of my soul! Nay, if you will, these lips indeed are yours. Promise me you will not remain here. Well, then, when the light is out in my chamber, leave Ducie. Promise me this, sweet, and early to-morrow, earlier than you think, I will pay a visit to your cottage. Now, sweet, be good, and to-morrow we will breakfast together. There, now!" she added in a gay tone, "you see woman's wit has the advantage." And so without another word she ran away.

CHAPTER III.

WHICH ON THE WHOLE IS FOUND VERY CONSOLING.

THE separation of lovers, even with an immediate prospect of union, involves a sentiment of deep melancholy. The reaction of our solitary emotions, after a social impulse of such peculiar excitement, very much disheartens and depresses us. Mutual passion is complete sympathy. Under such an influence there is no feeling so strong, no fancy so delicate, that it is not instantly responded to. Our heart has no secrets, though our life may. Under such an influence, each unconsciously labours to enchant the other; each struggles to maintain the reality of that ideal, which has been reached in a moment of happy inspiration. Then is the season when the voice is ever soft, the eye ever bright, and every movement of the frame airy and picturesque; each accent is full of tenderness, each glance

of affection, each gesture of grace. We live in a heaven of our own creation. All happens that can contribute to our perfect satisfaction, and can insure our complete self-complacency. We give and we receive felicity. We adore and we are adored. Love is the May-day of the heart.

But a cloud nevertheless will dim the genial lustre of that soft and brilliant sky, when we are alone; when the soft voice no longer sighs, and the bright eye no longer beams, and the form we worship no longer moves before our enraptured vision. Our happiness becomes too much the result of reflection. Our faith is not less devout, but it is not so fervent. We believe in the miracle, but we no longer witness it.

And as the light was extinguished in the chamber of Henrietta Temple, Ferdinand Armine felt for a moment as if his sun had set forever. There seemed to be now no evidence of her existence. Would to-morrow ever come? And if it came, would the rosy hours indeed bring her in their radiant car? What if this night she died? He shuddered at this wild imagination. Yet it might be; such direful calamities had been. And now he felt his life was involved in hers, and that under such circumstances his instant death must complete the catastrophe. There was then much at stake. Had it been yet his glorious privilege that her fair cheek should have found a pillow on his heart; could he have been permitted to have rested without her door but as her guard; even if the same roof at any distance had screened both their heads; such dark conceptions would not perhaps have risen up to torture him; but as it was, they haunted him like evil spirits as he took his lonely way over the common to gain his new abode.

Ah! the morning came, and such a morn! Bright as his love! Ferdinand had passed a dreary night, and when he woke he could not at first recognise the locality. It was not Armine. Could it be Ducie? As he stretched his limbs and rubbed his eyes, he might be excused for a moment fancying that all the happiness of yesterday was indeed a vision. He was, in truth, sorely perplexed, as he looked around the neat but humble chamber, and caught the first beam of the sun struggling through a casement shadowed by the jessamine. But on his heart there rested a curl of dark and flowing hair, and held together by that very turquoise of which he fancied he had been dreaming. Happy, happy Ferdinand! Why shouldst thou have cares! and may not the course even of thy true love run smooth!

He recks not of the future! What is the future to one so blessed? The sun is up, the lark is singing, the sky is bluer than the loved jewel at his heart. She will be here soon. No gloomy images disturb him now. Cheerfulness is the dowry of the dawn.

Will she indeed be here? Will Henrietta Temple indeed come to visit him? Will that consummate being before whom, but a few days back, he stood entranced—to whose mind the very idea of his existence had not then even occurred—will she be here anon to visit him? to visit her beloved! What has he done to be so happy? What fairy has touched him and his dark fortunes with her wand? What talisman does he grasp to call up such bright adventures of existence. He does not err. He is an enchanted being; a spell indeed pervades his frame; he moves in truth in a world of marvels and miracles. For what fairy has a wand

like love, what talisman can achieve the deeds of passion.

He quitted the rustic porch, and strolled up the lane that led to Ducie. He started at a sound; it was but the spring of a wandering bird. Then the murmur of a distant wheel turned him pale; and he stopped and leaned on a neighbouring gate with a panting heart. Was she at hand? There is not a moment when the heart palpitates with such delicate suspense as when we await our mistress in the spring days of our passion. Man watching the sunrise from the mountain, awaits not an incident to him more beautiful; more genial, and more impressive. With her presence it would seem that both light and heat fall at the same time upon our heart; our emotions are warm and sunny, that a moment ago seemed dim and frigid; a thrilling sense of joy pervades our frame; the air is sweeter, and our ears seem to echo with the music of a thousand birds.

The sound of the approaching wheel became more audible; it drew near, nearer; but lost the delicacy that distance lent it. Alas! it did not propel the car of a fairy, or the chariot of a heroine, but a cart, whose taxed springs bowed beneath the portly form of an honest yeoman, who gave Captain Armine a cheerful good-morrow as he jogged by, and flanked his jolly whip with unmerciful dexterity. The loudness of the unexpected salute, the crack of the echoing thong, shook the fine nerves of a fanciful lover, and Ferdinand looked so confused, that if the honest yeoman had only stopped to observe him, the passenger might have really been excused for mistaking him for a poacher, at the least, by his guilty countenance.

This little worldly interruption broke the wings of Ferdinand's soaring fancy. He fell to earth. Doubt came over him whether Henrietta would indeed come. He was disappointed, and so he became distrustful. He strolled on, however, in the direction of Ducie, yet slowly, as there was more than one road, and to miss each other would have been mortifying. His quick eye was in every quarter; his watchful ear listened in every direction; still she was not seen, and not a sound was heard except the hum of day. He became nervous, agitated, and began to conjure up a crowd of unfortunate incidents.—Perhaps she was ill; that was very bad.—Perhaps her father had suddenly returned. Was that worse? Perhaps something strange had happened.—Perhaps—

Why! why does his face turn so pale, and why is his step so suddenly arrested? Ah! Ferdinand Armine, is not thy conscience clear! That pang was sharp. No, no, it is impossible; clearly, absolutely impossible; this is weak, indeed. See! he smiles! He smiles at his weakness. He waves his arm as if in contempt. He casts away, with defiance, his idle apprehensions. His step is more assured, and the colour returns to his cheek. And yet her father must return. Was he prepared for that occurrence? This was a searching question. It induced a long, dark train of harassing recollections. He stopped to ponder. In what a web of circumstances was he now involved! Howsoever he might act, self-extrication appeared impossible. Perfect candour to Miss Temple might be the destruction of her love; even modified to her father, would certainly produce his banishment from Ducie. As the betrothed of Miss Grandison, Miss Temple

would abjure him; as the lover of Miss Temple, under any circumstances, Mr. Temple would reject him. In what light would he appear to Henrietta were he to dare to reveal the truth? Would she not look upon him as the unresisting libertine of the hour, engaging in levity her heart, as he had already trifled with another's? For that absorbing and overwhelming passion, pure, primitive, and profound, to which she now responded with an enthusiasm as fresh, as ardent, and as immaculate; she would only recognise the fleeting fancy of a vain and worldly spirit, eager to add another triumph to a long list of conquests, and proud of another evidence of his irresistible influence. What security was there for her that she too should not in turn be forgotten for another? that another eye should not shine brighter than hers, and another voice sound to his ear with a sweeter tone? O, no! he dared not disturb and sully the bright flower of his present existence; he shrank from the fatal word that would dissolve the spell that enchanted them, and introduce all the calculating cares of a harsh world into the thoughtless Eden in which they now wandered. And, for her father, even if the sad engagement with Miss Grandison did not exist, with what front could Ferdinand solicit the hand of his daughter? What prospect could he hold out of worldly prosperity to the anxious consideration of a parent? Was he himself independent? Was he not worse than a beggar? Could he refer Mr. Temple to Sir Ratcliffe? Alas! it would be an insult to both! In the mean time, every hour, Mr. Temple might return, or something reach the ear of Henrietta fatal to all his aspirations. Armine, with all its cares, Bath, with all its hopes; his melancholy father, his fond and sanguine mother, the tender-hearted Katherine, the devoted Glastonbury, all rose up before him, and crowded on his tortured imagination. In the agony of his mind he wished himself alone in the world; he sighed for some earthquake to swallow up Armine and all its fatal fortunes; and as for those parents, so affectionate and virtuous, and to whom he had hitherto been so dutiful and devoted, he turned from their idea with a sensation of weariness, almost of hatred.

He sat down on the trunk of a tree and buried his face with his hands. His reverie had lasted some time, when a gentle sound disturbed him. He looked up; it was Henrietta. She had driven over the common in her pony-chaise, and unattended. She was but a few steps from him; and, as he looked up, he caught her fond smile. He sprang from his seat; he was at her side in an instant; his heart beat so tumultuously, that he could not speak; all dark thoughts were forgotten; he seized with a trembling touch her extended hand, and gazed upon her with a glance of ecstasy. For, indeed, she looked so beautiful, that it seemed to him he had never before done justice to her surpassing loveliness. There was a bloom upon her cheek, as upon some choice and delicate fruit; her violet eyes sparkled like gems; while the dimples played and quivered on her cheeks; as you may sometimes watch the sunbeam on the pure surface of fair water. Her countenance, indeed, was wreathed with smiles. She seemed the happiest thing on earth; the very personification of a poetic spring; lively, and fresh, and innocent; sparkling, and sweet, and soft. When he beheld her, Ferdi-

nand was reminded of some gay bird, or airy antelope; she looked so bright and joyous!

"He is to get in," said Henrietta, with a smile, "and drive her to their cottage. Have I not managed well to come alone! We shall have such a charming drive to-day."

"You are so beautiful," murmured Ferdinand.

"I am content if you but think so. You did not hear me approach? What were you doing? Plunged in meditation? Now tell me truly, were you thinking of her?"

"Indeed, I have no other thought. O, my Henrietta! you are so beautiful to-day. I cannot talk of any thing but your beauty."

"And how did you sleep? Are you comfortable? I must see your room. I have brought you some flowers to make it pretty."

They soon reached the farmhouse. The good-wife seemed a little surprised when she observed her guest driving Miss Temple, but far more pleased. Henrietta ran into the house to see the children, spoke some kind words to the little maiden, and asked if their guest had breakfasted. Then, turning to Ferdinand, she said, "Have you forgot that you are to give me a breakfast? It shall be in the porch. Is it not sweet and pretty? See, here are your flowers, and I have brought you some fruit."

The breakfast was arranged. Miss Temple made tea for Ferdinand, and prepared every thing for him. "But you do not play your part, sweet Henrietta," he said; "I cannot breakfast alone."

She affected to share his repast, that he might partake of it; but, in truth, she only busied herself in arranging the flowers. Yet she conducted herself with so much dexterity, that Ferdinand had the opportunity of gratifying his appetite, without being placed in a position, awkward at all times, insufferable for a lover, that of eating in the presence of others who do not join you in the occupation.

"Now," she suddenly said, sitting by his side, and placing a rose in his dress, "I have a little plan to-day, which I think will be quite delightful. You shall drive her to Armine."

Ferdinand started. He thought of Glastonbury. His miserable situation recurred to him. This was the bitter drop in the cup; yes! in the very plenitude of his rare felicity he experienced a pang. His confusion was not unobserved by Miss Temple; for she was very quick in her perception; but she could not comprehend it. It did not rest on her mind, particularly when Ferdinand assented to her proposition, but added, "I forgot that Armine is more interesting to you than to me. All my associations with Armine are painful. Ducie is my delight."

"Ah! my romance is at Armine; yours at Ducie. What we live among, we do not always value. And yet I love my home," she added, in a somewhat subdued, even serious tone; "all my associations with Ducie are sweet and pleasant. Will they always be so?"

She hit upon a key to which the passing thoughts of Ferdinand too completely responded; but he restrained the mood of his mind. As he grew grave, he affected cheerfulness. "My Henrietta must always be happy," he said, "at least, if her Ferdinand's love can make her so."

She did not reply, but she pressed his hand. Then, after a moment's silence, she said, "My Ferdinand must not be low-spirited about dear Armine. I have confidence in our destiny, sweet; I see a happy, a very happy future."

Who could resist so fair a prophet? Not the sanguine mind of the enamoured Ferdinand Armine. He drank inspiration from her smiles, and dwelt with delight on the tender accents of her animating sympathy. "I never shall be low-spirited with you, my beloved," he replied; "you are my good genius. O! Henrietta! what heaven it is to be together!"

"Darling! I bless you for these words. We will not go to Armine to-day. Let us walk. And to speak the truth—for I am not ashamed of saying any thing to you—it would be hardly discreet, perhaps, to be driving about the country in this guise. And yet," she added, after a moment's hesitation, "what care I for what people say? O! Ferdinand, I think only of you!"

That was a delicious ramble which these young and enamoured creatures took that sunny morn! The air was sweet, the earth was beautiful, and yet they were insensible to every thing but their mutual love. Inexhaustible is the converse of fond hearts! A simple story, too, and yet there are so many ways of telling it! "How strange that we should have ever met!" said Henrietta Temple.

"Indeed, I think it most natural," said Ferdinand, "I will believe it the fulfilment of a happy destiny. For all that I have sighed for now I meet, and more, much more than my imagination could ever hope for!"

"Only think of that morning drive," resumed Henrietta, "such a little time ago, and yet it seems an age! Let us believe in destiny, sweet Ferdinand, or you must think of me, I fear, that which I would not wish."

"My darling, darling Henrietta, I can think of you only as the noblest and the sweetest of beings. My love is ever equalled by my gratitude!"

"Sweet Ferdinand, I had read of such feelings, but did not believe in them. I did not believe, at least, that they were reserved for me. And yet I have met many persons, and seen something more, much more than falls to the lot of women of my age. Believe me, indeed, my Ferdinand, my eye has hitherto been undazzled, and my heart untouched."

He pressed her hand.

"And then," she resumed, "in a moment—but it seemed not like a common life. That beautiful wilderness, that ruinous castle! As I gazed around me, I felt not as is my custom. I felt as if some fate were impending, as if my life and lot were bound up, as it were, with that strange and silent scene. And then he came forward, and I beheld him so unlike all other men—so beautiful, so pensive! O! my Ferdinand, pardon me for loving you!" and she gently turned her head, and hid her face on his breast.

"Darling, darling Henrietta," lowly breathed the enraptured lover, "best, and sweetest, and loveliest of women, your Ferdinand, at that moment, was not less moved than you were. Speechless and pale I had watched my Henrietta, and I felt that I beheld the being to whom I must dedicate my existence."

"O! I shall never forget the moment when I stood before the portrait of Sir Ferdinand and recognised my child. Do you know my heart was prophetic; I wanted not that confirmation of a strange conjecture. I felt that you must be an Armine. I had heard so much of your grandfather, so much of your family. I loved them for their glory, and for their lordly sorrows."

"Ah! my Henrietta, 'tis that alone that galls me. It is bitter to introduce my bride to our house of cares."

"You shall never think it so," she replied with animation. "I will prove a true Armine. Happier in the honour of that name, than in the most rich possessions! O! my Ferdinand, you do not know me yet. Your wife shall not disgrace you or your lineage. I have a spirit worthy of you, Ferdinand; at least, I dare to hope so. I can break, but I will not bend. We will wrestle together with all our cares; and my Ferdinand, animated by his Henrietta, shall restore the house."

"Alas! my noble-minded girl, I fear a severe trial awaits us. I can offer you only love."

"Is there any thing else in this world?"

"But, to bear you from a roof of luxury, where you have been cherished from your cradle, with all that ministers to the delicate delights of woman, to—O! my Henrietta, you know not the disheartening and depressing burden of domestic cares." His voice faltered as he recalled his melancholy father; and the disappointment, perhaps the destruction, that his passion was preparing for his roof.

"There shall be no cares, my Ferdinand; I will endure every thing; I will animate all. I have energy; indeed I have, my Ferdinand. I have, young as I may be, I have often inspired, often urged on my father. Sometimes, he says, that had it not been for me, he would not have been what he is. He is my father, the best and kindest parent that ever loved his child; yet, what are fathers to you, my Ferdinand; and, if I could assist him, what may I not do for—"

"Alas! my Henrietta, we have no theatre for action. You forget our creed."

"It was the great Sir Ferdinand's. He made a theatre."

"My Henrietta is ambitious," said Ferdinand, smiling.

"Dearest, I would be content—nay! that is a weak phrase—I would, if the choice were in my power now to select a life most grateful to my views and feelings, choose some delightful solitude, even as Armine, and pass existence with no other aim but to delight my Ferdinand. But we were speaking of other circumstances. Such happiness, it is said, is not for us. And I wished to show you that I have a spirit that can struggle with adversity, and a soul prescient of overwhelming it."

"You have a spirit I reverence, and a soul I worship, nor is there a happier being in the world than Ferdinand Armine. With such a woman as you every fate must be a triumph. You have touched, my darling, upon a chord of my heart that has sounded before, though in solitude. It was but the wind that played on it before; but now that tone rings with a purpose. This is glorious sympathy. Let us leave Armine to its fate. I have a sword, and it shall go hard if I do not carve out a destiny worthy even of Henrietta Temple."

CHAPTER IV.

HENRIETTA VISITS ARMINE, WHICH LEADS TO A RATHER PERPLEXING ENCOUNTER.

THE communion of this day, of the spirit of which the conversation just noticed may convey an intimation, produced a very inspiring effect on the mind of Ferdinand. Love is inspiration; it encourages to great deeds, and develops the creative faculty of our nature. Few great men have flourished, who, were they to be candid, would not acknowledge the vast advantages they have experienced in the earlier years of their career from the spirit and sympathy of woman. It is woman whose prescient admiration strings the lyre of the desponding poet, whose genius is afterwards to be recognised by his race, and which often embalms the memory of the gentle mistress whose kindness solaced him in less glorious hours. How many an official portfolio would never have been carried, had it not been for her sanguine spirit and assiduous love! How many a depressed and despairing advocate has clutched the Great Seal, and taken his precedence before princes, borne onward by the breeze of her inspiring hope, and illumined by the sunshine of her prophetic smile! A female friend, amiable, clever, and devoted, is a possession more valuable than parks and palaces; and, without such a muse, few men can succeed in life—none be content.

The plans and aspirations of Henrietta Temple had relieved Ferdinand from a depressing burden. Inspired by her creative sympathy, a new scene opened to him, adorned by a magnificent perspective. His sanguine imagination sought refuge in a triumphant future. That love for which he had hitherto schooled his mind to sacrifice every worldly advantage, appeared suddenly to be transformed into the very source of earthly success. Henrietta Temple was to be the fountain, not only of his bliss, but of his prosperity. In the revel of his audacious fancy he seemed, as it were, by a beautiful retribution, to be already rewarded for having devoted, with such unhesitating readiness, his heart upon the altar of disinterested affection. Lying on his cottage couch, he indulged in dazzling visions; he wandered in strange lands with his beautiful companion, and offered at her feet the quick rewards of his unparalleled achievements.

Recurring to his immediate situation, he resolved to lose no time in bringing his affairs to a crisis. He was even working himself up to his instant departure, solaced by the certainty of his immediate return, when the arrival of his servant announced to him that Glastonbury had quitted Armine on one of those antiquarian rambles to which he was accustomed. Gratified that it was now in his power to comply with the wish of Henrietta to visit his home, and perhaps, in truth, not very much mortified that so reasonable an excuse had arisen for the postponement of his intended departure, Ferdinand instantly rose, and as speedily as possible took his way to Ducie.

He found Henrietta in the garden. He had arrived, perhaps, earlier than he was expected; yet what joy to see him. And, when he himself proposed an excursion to Armine, her grateful smile melted his very heart. Indeed, Ferdinand this morning was so gay and light-hearted, that his

excessive merriment might almost have been as suspicious as his passing gloom the previous day. Not less tender and fond than before, his sportive fancy indulged in infinite expressions of playful humour, and delicate pranks of love. When he first recognised her, gathering a nosegay, too, for him, himself unobserved, he stole behind her on tiptoe, and suddenly clasping her delicate waist, and raising her gently in the air, "Well, lady-bird," he exclaimed, "I too will pluck a flower!"

Ah! when she turned round her beautiful face, full of charming confusion, and uttered a faint cry of fond astonishment, as she caught his bright glance, what happiness was Ferdinand Armine's, as he felt this enchanting creature was his, and pressed to his bosom her noble and throbbing form!

"Perhaps this time next year, we may be travelling on mules, love," said Ferdinand, as he flourished his whip, and the little pony trotted along. Henrietta smiled. "And then," continued he, "we shall remember our pony-chaise, that we turn up our noses at now. Donna Henrietta, joggled to death over dull vegas, and picking her way across rocky sierras, will be a very different person to Miss Temple, of Ducie Bower. I hope you will not be very irritable, my child; and pray vent your spleen upon your muleteer, and not upon your husband."

"Now, Ferdinand, how can you be so ridiculous!"

"O! I have no doubt I shall have to bear all the blame. 'You brought me here,' it will be, 'ungrateful man, is this your love! not even post-horses!'"

"As for that," said Henrietta, "perhaps we shall have to walk. I can fancy ourselves—you with an Andalusian jacket, a long gun, and I fear, a cigar; and I with all the baggage."

"Children and all," added Ferdinand.

Miss Temple looked somewhat demure, turned away her face a little, but said nothing.

"But what think you of Vienna, sweetest?" inquired Ferdinand, in a more serious tone; "upon my honour I think we might do great things there. A regiment and a chamberlainship at the least!"

"In mountains or in cities I shall be alike content, provided Ferdinand be my companion," replied Miss Temple.

Ferdinand let go the reins, and dropped his whip. "My darling, darling Henrietta," he exclaimed, looking in her face, "what an angel you are!"

This visit to Armine was so delightful to Miss Temple,—she experienced so much gratification in wandering about the park, and over the old castle, and gazing on Glastonbury's tower, and wondering when she should see him, and talking to her Ferdinand about every member of his family,—that Captain Armine, unable to withstand the irresistible current, postponed from day to day his decisive visit to Bath, and, confident in the future, would not permit his soul to be the least daunted by any possible conjuncture of ill-fortune. A week, a whole happy week glided away, and spent almost entirely at Armine. Their presence there was scarcely noticed by the single female servant who remained; and, if her curiosity had been excited, she possessed no power of communicating it into Somersetshire. Besides, she was unaware that her young master was nominally in London. Sometimes an hour was snatched by Henrietta from roaming in the

plaisance, and interchanging vows of mutual love and admiration, to the picture gallery, where she had already commenced a miniature copy of the portrait of the great Sir Ferdinand. As the sun set they departed in their little equipage. Ferdinand wrapped his Henrietta in his fur cloak, for the autumn dews began to rise, and, thus protected, the journey of ten miles was ever found too short. It is the habit of lovers, however innocent their passion, to grow every day less discreet; for every day their almost constant companionship becomes more a necessity. Miss Temple had almost unconsciously contrived at first that Captain Armine, in the absence of her father, should not be observed too often at Ducie; but now Ferdinand drove her home every evening, and drank tea at the Bower, and the evening closed with music and song. Each night he crossed over the common to his farmhouse more fondly and devotedly in love.

One morning at Armine, Henrietta being alone in the gallery busied with her drawing, Ferdinand having left her for a moment to execute some light commission for her, she heard some one enter, and, looking up to catch his glance of love, she beheld a venerable man, of a very mild and benignant appearance, and dressed in black, standing, as if a little surprised, at some distance. Herself not less confused, she nevertheless bowed, and the gentleman advanced with hesitation, and with a faint blush returned her salute, and apologized for his intrusion. "He thought Captain Armine might be there."

"He was here but this moment," replied Miss Temple; "and doubtless will instantly return." Then she turned to her drawing with a trembling hand.

"I perceive, madam," said the gentleman, advancing and speaking in a very soft and engaging tone, while looking at her labour with a mingled air of diffidence and admiration, "that you are a very fine artist."

"My wish to excel may have assisted my performance," replied Miss Temple.

"You are copying the portrait of a very extraordinary personage," said the stranger.

"Do you think that it is like Captain Armine?" inquired Miss Temple, with some hesitation.

"It is always so considered," replied the stranger.

Henrietta's hand faltered; she looked at the door of the gallery, then at the portrait: never was she yet so anxious for the reappearance of Ferdinand. There was a silence which she was compelled to break, for the stranger was both mute and motionless, and scarcely more assured than herself.

"Captain Armine will be here immediately, I have no doubt."

The stranger bowed. "If I might presume to criticise so finished a performance," he remarked, "I should say that you had conveyed, madam, a more youthful character than the original presents."

Henrietta did not venture to confess that such was her intention. She looked again at the door, mixed some colour, then cleared it immediately off her palette. "What a beautiful gallery is this!" she exclaimed, as she changed her brush, which was, however, without a fault.

"It is worthy of Armine," said the stranger.

"Indeed there is no place so interesting," said Miss Temple.

"It pleases me to hear it praised," said the stranger.

"You are well acquainted with it?" inquired Miss Temple.

"I have the happiness to live here," said the stranger.

"I am not then mistaken in believing that I speak to Mr. Glastonbury."

"Indeed, madam, that is my name," replied the gentleman; "I fancy we have often heard of each other. This is a most unexpected meeting, madam, but for that reason not less delightful. I have myself just returned from a ramble of some days, and entered the gallery little aware that the family had arrived. You met, I suppose, my Ferdinand on the road. Ah! you wonder, perhaps, at my familiar expression, madam. He has been my Ferdinand so many years, that I cannot easily school myself no longer to style him so. But I am aware that there are now other claims—"

"My dearest Glastonbury," exclaimed Ferdinand Armine, starting as he re-entered the gallery, and truly in as great a fright as a man could well be, who, perhaps, but a few hours ago, was to conquer in Spain or Germany. At the same time, pale and eager, and talking with excited rapidity, he embraced his tutor, and scrutinized the countenance of Henrietta to ascertain whether his fatal secret had been discovered. That countenance was fond, and, if not calm, not more confused than the unexpected appearance under the circumstances might account for. "You have often heard me mention Mr. Glastonbury," he said, addressing himself to Henrietta. "Let me now have the pleasure of making you acquainted. My oldest, my best friend, my second father—an admirable artist, too, I can assure you. He is qualified to decide even upon your skill. And when did you arrive, my dearest friend! and where have you been? Our old haunts, our old haunts! Many sketches, many sketches? What abbey have you explored, what antique treasure have you discovered? I have such a fine addition for your herbar! The Barbary cactus, just what you wanted; I found it in my volume of Shelley; and beautifully dried—beautifully; it will quite charm you. What do you think of this drawing? Is it not beautiful? quite the character, is it not?" Ferdinand paused for lack of breath.

"I was just observing as you entered," said Glastonbury, very quietly, "to Miss—"

"I have several letters for you," said Ferdinand, interrupting him, and trembling from head to foot lest he might say Miss *Grandison*. "Do you know that you are just the person I wanted to see! How fortunate that you should just arrive! I was so annoyed to find you were away. I cannot tell you how much I was annoyed."

"Your dear parents?" inquired Glastonbury.

"Are quite well," said Ferdinand, "perfectly well. They will be so glad to see you—so very glad. They do so long to see you, my dearest Glastonbury. You cannot imagine how they long to see you."

"I shall find them within, think you?" inquired Glastonbury.

"O! they are not here," said Ferdinand; "they have not yet arrived. I expect them every day. Every day I expect them. I have prepared every thing for them—every thing. What a wonderful autumn it has been!"

And Glastonbury fell into the lure, and talked about the weather, for he was learned in the seasons, and prophesied by many circumstances a hard winter. While he was thus conversing, Ferdinand extracted from Henrietta that Glastonbury had not been in the gallery more than a very few minutes; and he felt assured that nothing very fatal had transpired. All this time Ferdinand was reviewing his painful situation with desperate rapidity and prescience. All that he aspired to now was that Henrietta should quit Armine in as happy ignorance as she had arrived; as for Glastonbury, Ferdinand cared not what he might suspect, or ultimately discover. These were future evils, that subsided into insignificance compared with any discovery on the part of Miss Temple.

Comparatively composed, Ferdinand now suggested to Henrietta to quit her drawing, which, indeed, was so advanced, that it might be finished at Ducie; and, never leaving her side, and watching every look, and hanging on every accent of his old tutor, he even ventured to suggest that they should visit the tower. The proposal, he thought, might lull any suspicion that might have been excited on the part of Miss Temple. Glastonbury expressed his gratification at the suggestion, and they quitted the gallery, and entered the avenue of beech trees.

"I have heard so much of your tower, Mr. Glastonbury," said Miss Temple, "I am sensible, I assure you, of the honour of being admitted."

The extreme delicacy that was a characteristic of Glastonbury preserved Ferdinand Armine from the dreaded danger. It never for an instant entered Glastonbury's mind that Henrietta was not Miss Grandison; he thought it a little extraordinary, indeed, that she should arrive at Armine only in the company of Ferdinand; but much might be allowed to plighted lovers; besides, there might be some female companion, some aunt or cousin, for aught he knew, at the Place. It was only his parents that Ferdinand had said had not yet arrived. At all events, he felt at this moment that Ferdinand, perhaps, even because he was alone with his intended bride, had no desire that any formal introduction or congratulations should take place, and only pleased that the intended wife of his pupil should be one so beautiful, so gifted, and so gracious, one apparently so worthy in every way of his choice and her lot, Glastonbury relapsed into his accustomed ease and simplicity, and exerted himself to amuse the young lady with whom he had become so unexpectedly acquainted, and with whom, in all probability, it was his destiny in future to be so intimate. As for Henrietta, nothing had occurred in any way to give rise to the slightest suspicion in her mind. The agitation of Ferdinand at this unexpected meeting between his tutor and his betrothed was in every respect natural. Their engagement, as she knew, was at present a secret to all; and although, under such circumstances, she herself at first was disposed not to feel very much at her ease, still she was so well acquainted with Mr. Glastonbury from report, and he was so unlike the common characters of the censorious world, that she was, from the first, far less annoyed than she otherwise would have been, and soon regained her usual composure, and was even gratified and amused with the adventure.

A load, however, fell from the heart of Ferdinand, when he and his beloved bade Glastonbury a good

afternoon. This accidental, and almost fatal interview, terribly reminded him of his difficult and dangerous position; it seemed the commencement of a series of misconceptions, mortifications, and misfortunes, which it was absolutely necessary to prevent by instantly arresting them with the utmost energy and decision. It was bitter to quit Armine and all his joys, but in truth the arrival of his family was very doubtful; and, until the confession of his real situation was made, every day might bring some disastrous discovery. Some ominous clouds in the horizon formed a capital excuse for hurrying Henrietta off to Ducie. They quitted Armine at an unusually early hour. As they drove along, Ferdinand revolved in his mind the adventure of the morning, and endeavoured to stimulate himself to the exertion of instantly repairing to Bath. But he had not courage to confide his purpose to Henrietta. When, however, they arrived at Ducie, they were welcomed with intelligence which rendered the decision, on his part, absolutely necessary. But we will reserve this for the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

WHICH CONTAINS SOMETHING VERY UNEXPECTED.

MISS TEMPLE had run up stairs to take off her bonnet; Ferdinand stood before the wood-fire in the saloon. Its clear and fragrant flame was agreeable after the cloudy sky of their somewhat chill drive. He was musing over the charms of Henrietta, and longing for her reappearance, when she entered: but her entrance filled him with alarm. She was very pale, her lips nearly as white as her forehead. An expression of dread was impressed on her agitated countenance. Ere he could speak she held forth her hand to his extended grasp. It was cold, it trembled.

"Good God! my sweetest; you are ill!" he exclaimed.

"No!" she faintly murmured, "not ill." And then she paused, as if stifled, leaning down her head with eyes fixed upon the ground.

The conscience of Ferdinand pricked him. Had she heard——

But he was reassured by her accents of kindness. "Pardon me, dearest," she said; "I am agitated—I shall soon be better."

He held her hand with firmness while she leaned upon his shoulder. After a few minutes of harrowing silence, she said, in a smothered voice, "Papa returns to-morrow."

Ferdinand turned as pale as she; the blood fled to his heart, his frame trembled, his knees tottered, his passive hand scarcely retained hers; he could not speak. All the possible results of his return flashed across his mind, and presented themselves, in terrible array, to his alarmed imagination. He could not meet Mr. Temple,—that was out of the question. Some explanation must immediately and inevitably ensue, and that must precipitate the fatal discovery. The great object was to prevent any communication between Mr. Temple and Sir Ratchiff before Ferdinand had broken his situation to his father. How he now wished he had not postponed his departure for Bath! Had he only quitted Armine when first convinced of the hard necessity, the harrowing future would now have been the past; the impending scenes, however dreadful,

would have ensued; perhaps he might have been at Ducie at this moment, with a clear conscience and a frank purpose, and with no difficulties to overcome but those which must necessarily arise from Mr. Temple's natural consideration for the welfare of his child. These, however difficult to combat, seemed light in comparison with the perplexities of his involved situation. Ferdinand bore Henrietta to a seat, and hung over her in agitated silence, which she ascribed only to his sympathy in her distress, but which, in truth, was rather to be attributed to his own uncertain purpose, and to the confusion of an invention which he now ransacked for desperate expedients.

While he was thus revolving in his mind the course which he must now pursue, he sat down on the ottoman on which her feet rested, and pressed her hand to his lips while he summoned to his aid all the resources of his imagination. It at length appeared to him that the only mode by which he could now gain time, and secure himself from dangerous explanations, was to involve Henrietta in a secret engagement. There was great difficulty, he was aware, in accomplishing this purpose. Miss Temple was devoted to her father; and though for a moment led away, by the omnipotent influence of an irresistible passion, to enter into a compact without the sanction of her parent, her present agitation too clearly indicated her keen sense that she had not conducted herself towards him in her accustomed spirit of unswerving and immaculate duty; that, if not absolutely indelicate, her behaviour must appear to him very inconsiderate, very rash, perhaps even unfeeling. Unfeeling! What—to that father, that fond and widowed father, of whom she was the only and cherished child! All his goodness, all his unceasing care, all his anxiety, his ready sympathy, his watchfulness for her amusement, her comfort, her happiness, his vigilance in her hours of sickness, his pride in her beauty, her accomplishments, her affection, the smiles and tears of long, long years—all passed before—till at last she released herself with a quick movement from the hold of Ferdinand, and, clasping her hands together, burst into a sigh so bitter, so profound, so full of anguish, that Ferdinand started from his seat.

"Henrietta!" he exclaimed, "my beloved Henrietta!"

"Leave me," she replied, in a tone almost of sternness. He rose and walked up and down the room, overpowered by contending emotions. The severity of her voice, that voice that hitherto had fallen upon his ear like the warble of a summer bird, filled him with consternation. The idea of having offended her, of having seriously offended her—of being to her, to Henrietta, his Henrietta, that divinity to whom his idolatrous fancy clung with such rapturous devotion, in whose very smiles and accents it is no exaggeration to say he lived and had his being—the idea of being to her, even for a transient moment, an object of repugnance, seemed something too terrible for thought, too intolerable for existence. All his troubles, all his cares, all his impending sorrows, vanished into thin air compared with this unforeseen and sudden visitation. O! what was future evil, what was to-morrow, pregnant as it might be with misery, compared with the quick agony of 'ho instant! As long as she smiled, every difficulty appeared surmountable; as long as he could listen to her accents of tenderness, there was no discon-

sation with which he could not struggle. Come what come may, throned in the palace of her heart he was a sovereign who might defy the world in arms; but, thrust from that great seat, he was a fugitive without a hope, an aim, a desire; dull, timid, exhausted, broken-hearted!

And she had bid him leave her. Leave her! Henrietta Temple had bid him leave her! Did he leave? Was this the same world in which a few hours back he breathed, and blessed his God for breathing! What had happened? What strange event, what miracle had occurred, to work this awful, this portentous change? Why, if she had known all, if she had suddenly shared that sharp and perpetual woe, every gnawing at his own secret heart, even amid his joys; if he had revealed to her, if any one had betrayed to her his distressing secret, could she have said more? Why! it was to shun this, it was to spare himself this horrible catastrophe, that he had involved himself in his agonizing, his inextricable difficulties. Inextricable they must be now; for where, now, was the inspiration that before was to animate him to such great exploits? How could he struggle any longer with his fate? How could he now carve out a destiny? All that remained for him now was to die; and, in the madness of his sensations, death seemed to him the most desirable consummation.

The temper of a lover is exquisitely sensitive. Mortified and miserable, at any other time Ferdinand, in a fit of harrassed love and irritable devotion, might have instantly quitted the presence of a mistress who had treated him with such unexpected and such undeserved harshness. But the thought of the morrow—the mournful conviction that this was the last opportunity for their undisturbed communion—the recollection that, at all events, their temporary separation was impending; all these considerations had checked his first impulse. Besides, it must not be concealed that more than once it occurred him that it was utterly impossible to permit Henrietta to meet her father in her present mood. With her determined spirit and strong emotions, and her difficulty of concealing her feelings; smarting, too, under the consciousness of having parted with Ferdinand in anger, and of having treated him with injustice; and, therefore, doubly anxious to bring affairs to a crisis, a scene in all probability would instantly ensue: and Ferdinand recoiled at present from the consequences of any explanations.

Unhappy Ferdinand! It seemed to him that he had never known misery before. He wrung his hands in despair—his mind seemed to desert him. Suddenly he stopped—he looked at Henrietta,—her face was still pale, her eyes fixed upon the decaying embers of the fire, her attitude unchanged. Either she was unconscious of his presence, or she did not choose to recognise it. What were her thoughts?

Still of her father? Perhaps she contrasted that fond and faithful friend of her existence, to whom she owed such an incalculable debt of gratitude, with the acquaintance of the hour, to whom, in a moment of insanity, she had pledged the love that could alone repay it. Perhaps, in the spirit of self-torment, she conjured up against this too successful stranger all the menacing spectres of suspicion, distrust, and deceit; recalled to her recollection the too just and too frequent tales of man's impurity and ingratitude; and tortured herself by her own

apparition, the merited victim of his harshness, his neglect, or his desertion. And when she had at the same time both shocked and alarmed her fancy by these distressful and degrading images, exhausted by these imaginary vexations, and eager for consolation in her dark despondency, she may have recurred to the yet innocent cause of her sorrow and apprehension, and perhaps accused herself of cruelty and injustice for visiting on his head the mere consequences of her own fitful and morbid temper. She may have recalled his unvarying tenderness, his unceasing admiration; she may have recollected those impassioned accents that thrilled her heart, those glances of rapturous affection that fixed her eye with fascination. She may have conjured up that form over which of late she had mused in a trance of love—that form bright with so much beauty, beaming with so many graces, adorned with so much intelligence, and hallowed by every romantic association that could melt the heart or mould the spirit of woman; she may have conjured up this form, that was the god of her idolatry, and rushed again to the altar in an ecstasy of devotion.

The shades of evening were fast descending—the curtains of the chamber were not closed—the blaze of the fire had died away. The flickering light fell upon the solemn countenance of Henrietta Temple, now buried in the shade, now transiently illuminated by the fitful flame.

On a sudden he advanced, with a step too light even to be heard, knelt at her side, and, not venturing to touch her hand, pressed his lips to her arm, and with streaming eyes, and in a tone of plaintive tenderness, murmured, "What have I done?"

She turned—her eyes met his—a wild expression of fear, surprise, delight, played over her countenance; then, bursting into tears, she threw her arms round his neck, and hid her face upon his breast.

He did not disturb this effusion of her suppressed emotions. His throbbing heart responded to her tumultuous soul. At length, when the strength of her passionate affections had somewhat decreased—when the convulsive sobs had subsided into gentle sighs, and ever and anon he felt the pressure of her sweet lips sealing her remorseful love and charming repentance upon his bosom—he dared to say, "O! my Henrietta, you did not doubt your Ferdinand?"

"Darling, beloved, dearest, sweetest Ferdinand, you are too good, too kind, too faultless—and I am very wicked."

He raised himself gently from her side, bearing up her form at the same time, and contrived, with one arm round her waist, to place himself in her chair, and seat her on his knee. Then taking her hand and covering it with kisses, while her head rested on his shoulder, he said, in a distinct but very low voice, "Now tell me, darling, why were you unhappy?"

"Papa," sighed Henrietta, "dearest papa, that the day should come when I should grieve to meet him!"

"And why should my darling grieve?" said Ferdinand.

"I know not; I ask myself what have I done? what have I to fear? It is no crime to love; it may be a misfortune—God knows I have almost felt to-night that such it was. But no, I never will believe that it can be either wrong or unhappy to love you."

"Bless you, my sweetest, for such sweet words," replied Ferdinand. "If my heart can make you happy, felicity should be your lot."

"It is my lot. I am happy, quite happy, and grateful for my happiness."

"And your father, our father let me call him, (she pressed his hand when he said this,) he will be happy too?"

"So I would hope."

"If the fulfilment of my duty can content him," continued Ferdinand, "Mr. Temple shall not repent his son-in-law."

"O! do not call him Mr. Temple; call him father. I love to hear you call him father."

"Then what alarms my child?"

"I hardly know," said Henrietta in a hesitating tone. "I think, I think it is the suddenness of all this. He has gone—he comes again; he went—he returns; and all has happened. So short a time, too, Ferdinand. It is a life to us; to him, I fear," and she smiled and hid her face, "it is only—a fortnight."

"We have seen more of each other, and known more of each other, in this fortnight, than we might have in an acquaintance which had continued a life."

"'Tis true—'tis very true. We feel this, Ferdinand, because we know it. But papa will not feel like us: we cannot expect him to feel like us. He does not know my Ferdinand as I know him. Papa, too, though the dearest, kindest, fondest father that ever lived, though he had no thought but for my happiness, and lives only for his daughter, papa naturally is not as young as we are. He is, too, what is called a man of the world. He has seen a great deal—he has formed his opinions on men and life. We cannot expect that he will change them in your, I mean our, favour. Men of the world are of the world, worldly. I do not think they are always right—I do not myself believe in their infallibility. There is no person more clever and more judicious than papa. No person is more considered. But there are characters so rare, that men of the world do not admit them into their general calculations—and such is my Ferdinand's."

Here Ferdinand seemed plunged in thought, but he pressed her hand, though he said nothing.

"He will think we have known each other too short a time," continued Miss Temple. "He will be mortified, perhaps alarmed, when I inform him I am no longer his."

"Then do not inform him," said Ferdinand.

She started.

"Let me inform him," continued Ferdinand, giving another turn to his meaning, and watching her countenance with an unflinching eye.

"Dearest Ferdinand—always prepared to bear every burden!" exclaimed Miss Temple. "How generous and good you are! No, it would be better for me to speak first to my father. My soul, I will never have a secret from you, and you, I am sure, will never have one from your Henrietta. This is the truth; I do not repent the past, I glory in it; I am yours, and I am proud to be yours. Were the past to be again acted, I would not falter. But I cannot conceal from myself that, as far as my father is concerned, I have not conducted myself towards him with frankness, with respect, or with kindness. There is no fault in loving you. Even were he to regret, he could not blame such an occurrence: but he will regret, he will blame, he has

a right both to regret and blame, my doing more than love you: my engagement, without his advice, his sanction, his knowledge, or even his suspicion!"

"You take too refined a view of our situation, sweet Henrietta," replied Ferdinand. "Why should you not spare your father the pain of such a communication, if painful it would be? What has passed is between ourselves, and ought to be between ourselves. If I request his permission to offer you my hand, and he yields his consent, is not that ceremony enough?"

"I have never concealed any thing from papa," said Henrietta, "but I will be guided by you."

"Leave, then, all to me," said Ferdinand; "be guided but by the judgment of your own Ferdinand, my sweet Henrietta, and believe me all will go right. I will break this intelligence to your father. So we will settle it?" he continued inquiringly.

"It shall be so."

"Then arises the question," said Ferdinand, "when it would be most advisable for me to make the communication. Now, your father, Henrietta, who is a man of the world, will of course expect that, when I do make it, I shall be prepared to speak definitely to him upon all matters of business. He will think, otherwise, that I am trifling with him. To go and request of a man like your father, a shrewd, experienced man of the world, like Mr. Temple, permission to marry his daughter, without showing to him that I am prepared with the means of maintaining a family; is little short of madness. He would be offended with me, he would be prejudiced against me. I must, therefore, settle something first with Sir Ratcliffe. Much you know, unfortunately, I cannot offer your father; but still, sweet love, there must at least be an appearance of providence and management. We must not disgust your father with our match."

"O! how can he be disgusted with my Ferdinand?"

"Darling! This, then, is what I propose—that, as to-morrow we must comparatively be separated, I should take advantage of the next few days, I should rush to Bath, and bring affairs to some arrangement. Until my return I would advise you to say nothing to your father."

"O! how can I live under the same roof with him, under such circumstances?" exclaimed Miss Temple; "how can I meet his eye—how can I speak to him, with the consciousness of a secret engagement, with the recollection that, all the time he is lavishing his affection upon me, my heart is yearning for another, and that, while he is laying plans of future companionship, I am meditating, perhaps, an eternal separation!"

"Sweet Henrietta, listen to me one moment. Suppose I had quitted you last night for Bath, merely for this purpose, as indeed we had once thought of; and that your father had arrived at Ducie before I had returned to make my communication; would you style your silence, under such circumstances, a secret engagement? No, no, dear love; this is an abuse of terms. It would be a delicate consideration for a parent's feelings."

"O! Ferdinand, would we were united, and had no cares!"

"You would not consider our projected union a secret engagement, if, after passing to-morrow with your father, you expected me on the next day to

communicate to him our position. Is it any more a secret engagement because six or seven days are to elapse, before this communication takes place, instead of one? My Henrietta is indeed fighting with shadows!"

"O! Ferdinand, I cannot reason like you; but I feel unhappy when I think of this."

"Dearest Henrietta! feel only that you are loved. Think, darling, the day will come when we shall smile at all these cares. All will flow smoothly yet; and we shall all yet live at Armine—Mr. Temple and all."

"Papa likes you so much, too, Ferdinand, I should be miserable if you offended him."

"Which I certainly should do if I were not to communicate with Sir Ratcliffe first."

"Do you, indeed, think so?"

"Indeed I am certain."

"But cannot you write to Sir Ratcliffe, Ferdinand? Must you, indeed, go? Must we, indeed, be separated? I cannot believe it; it is inconceivable; it is impossible; I cannot endure it."

"It is, indeed, terrible," said Ferdinand, most sincerely. "This consideration alone reconciles me to the necessity: I know my father well; his only answer to a communication of this kind would be an immediate summons to his side. Now, is it not better that this meeting should take place when we must necessarily be much less together than before, than at a later period, when we may, perhaps, be constant companions with the sanction of our parents?"

"O! Ferdinand, you reason—I only feel."

Let us pause here one instant, to reflect upon the character and situation of Ferdinand Armine. Henrietta Temple told him that he reasoned, and did not feel. Such an observation from one's mistress is rather a reproach than a compliment. It was made, in the present instance, to a man whose principal characteristic was, perhaps, his too dangerous susceptibility; a man of profound and violent passions, yet of a most sweet and tender temper; capable of deep reflection, yet ever acting from the impulse of sentiment, and ready at all times to sacrifice every consideration to his heart. The prospect of separation from Henrietta, for however short a period, was absolute agony to him; he found difficulty in conceiving existence without the influence of her perpetual presence: their parting even for the night was felt by him as an onerous deprivation. The only process, indeed, that could at present prepare and console him for the impending sorrow, would have been the frank indulgence of the feelings which it called forth. Yet behold him, behold this unhappy victim of circumstances, forced to deceive, even for her happiness, the being whom he idolized; compelled, at this hour of anguish, to bridle his heart, lest he should lose for a fatal instant his command over his head; and—while he was himself conscious that not in the wide world, perhaps, existed a man who was sacrificing more for his mistress—obliged to endure, even from her lips, a remark which seemed to impute to him a deficiency of feeling. And yet it was too much; he covered his eyes with his hand, and said, in a low and broken voice, "Alas! my Henrietta, if you knew all, you would not say this!"

"My Ferdinand, my darling Ferdinand," she exclaimed, touched by that tender and melancholy one, "why—what is this? you weep! Let me

kiss away these tears! What have I said—what done? Dearest, dearest Ferdinand, do not do this." And she threw herself on her knees before him, and looked up into his face with scrutinizing affection.

He bent down his head, and pressed his lips to her forehead. "O, Henrietta!" he exclaimed, "we have been so happy!"

"And shall be so, my love, my own Ferdinand. Doubt not my word, all will go right, sweet soul. I am so sorry, I am so miserable, that I made you unhappy to-night. I shall think of it when you are gone. I shall remember how naughty I was. It was so wicked—so very, very wicked; and he was so good!"

"Gone! what a dreadful word! And shall we not be together to-morrow, Henrietta? O! what a morrow! Think of me, dearest! Do not let me for a moment escape from your memory!"

"Tell me exactly your road; let me know exactly where you will be at every hour; write to me on the road; if it be only a line, only a little word, only his dear name; only Ferdinand. Let me have a letter with only 'Ferdinand' in it, that I may kiss the dear name with a thousand kisses!"

"And how shall I write to you, my beloved? Shall I direct to you here?"

Henrietta looked perplexed. "Papa opens the bag every morning, and every morning you must write, or I shall die. Ferdinand, what is to be done?"

"I will direct to you at the post-office. You must send for your letters."

"I tremble. Believe me, it will be noticed. It will look so—so—so—so clandestine."

"I will direct them to your maid. She must be our confidant."

"Ferdinand!"

"'Tis only for a week."

"O, Ferdinand! love teaches us strange things."

"My darling, believe me, it is wise and well. Think how desolate we should be without constant correspondence. As for myself, I shall write to you every hour, and unless I hear from you as often, I shall believe only in evil!"

"Let it be as you wish. God knows my heart is pure. I pretend no longer to regulate my destiny. I am yours, Ferdinand. Be you responsible for all that affects my honour or my heart."

"A precious trust, my Henrietta, and dearer to me than all the glory of my ancestors."

The clock sounded eleven. Miss Temple rose. "It is so late, and we in darkness here! What will they think? Ferdinand, sweetest, rouse the fire. I ring the bell. Lights will come, and then—" Her voice faltered.

"And then—" echoed Ferdinand. He took up his guitar, but he could not command his voice.

"'Tis your guitar," said Henrietta; "I am happy that it is left behind."

The servant entered with lights, drew the curtains, renewed the fire, arranged the room, and withdrew.

"Little knows he our misery," said Henrietta. "It seemed strange, when I felt my own mind, that there could be any thing so calm and mechanical in the world."

Ferdinand was silent. He felt that the hour of departure had indeed arrived, yet he had not courage to move. Henrietta, too, did not speak. She laid down on the sofa, as it were, exhausted, and placed

her handkerchief over her face. Ferdinand leaned over the fire. He was nearly tempted to give up his project, confess all to his father by letter, and await his decision. Then he conjured up the dreadful scenes at Bath, and then he remembered that, at all events, to-morrow he must not appear at Ducie. "Henrietta!" he at length said.

"A minute, Ferdinand, yet a minute," she exclaimed, in an excited tone; "do not speak—I am preparing myself."

He remained in his leaning posture; and, in a few moments, Miss Temple rose and said, "Now, Ferdinand, I am ready." He looked round. Her countenance was quite pale, but fixed and calm.

"Let us embrace," she said, "but let us say nothing."

He pressed her to his arms. She trembled. He imprinted a thousand kisses on her cold lips; she received them with no return. Then she said in a low voice, "Let me leave the room first;" and, giving him one kiss upon the forehead, Henrietta Temple disappeared.

When Ferdinand, with a sinking heart and a staggering step, quitted Ducie, he found the night so dark that it was with extreme difficulty that he traced, or rather groped, his way through the grove. The absolute necessity of watching every step he took, in some degree diverted his mind from his painful meditations. The atmosphere of the wood was so close, that he congratulated himself when he had gained its skirts; but just as he was about to emerge upon the common, and was looking forward to the light of some cottage, as his guide in this gloomy wilderness, a flash of lightning that seemed to cut the sky in twain, and to descend like a flight of fiery steps from the highest heavens to the lowest earth, revealed to him for a moment the whole broad bosom of the common, and showed to him that nature to-night was as disordered and perturbed as his own heart. A clap of thunder, that might have been the herald of doomsday, woke the cattle from their slumbers, which began to moan and low to the rising wind, and cluster under the trees, that sent forth, indeed, with their waiting branches, sounds scarcely less dolorous and wild. Avoiding the woods, and striking into the most open part of the country, Ferdinand watched the progress of the tempest.

For the wind, indeed, had now risen to such a height, that the leaves and branches of the trees were carried about in vast whirls and eddies, while the waters of the lake, where, in serener hours, Ferdinand was accustomed to bathe, were lifted out of their bed, and inundated the neighbouring settlements. Lights were now seen moving in all the cottages, and then the forked lightning, pouring down at the same time from opposite quarters of the sky, exposed with an awful distinctness, and a fearful splendour, the wide-spreading scene of danger and devastation.

Now descended the rain in such overwhelming torrents, that it was as if a waterspout had burst, and Ferdinand gasped for breath beneath its oppressive power, while the blaze of the variegated lightning, the crash of the thunder, and the roar of the wind, all simultaneously in movement, indicated the fulness of the storm. Succeeded then that strange lull that occurs in the heart of a tempest, when the unruly and disordered elements pause as it were for breath, and seem to concentrate their energies for an increased and final explosion. It

came at last; and the very earth seemed to rock in the passage of the hurricane.

Exposed to all the awful chances of the storm, one solitary being alone beheld them without terror. The mind of Ferdinand Armine grew calm, as nature became more disturbed. He moralized amid the whirlwind. He contrasted the present tumult and distraction with the sweet and beautiful serenity which the same scene had presented, when, a short time back, he first beheld it. His love, too, had commenced in stillness and in sunshine; was it, also, to end in storm and destruction?

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH CONTAINS A LOVE-LETTER.

LET us pause. We have endeavoured to trace, in the preceding portion of this history, the development of that passion that is at once the principle and end of our existence; that passion, compared to whose delights all the other gratifications of our nature—wealth, and power, and fame—sink into insignificance; and which, nevertheless, by the ineffable beneficence of our Creator, are open to his creatures of all conditions, qualities, and climes. Whatever be the lot of man, however unfortunate, however oppressed, if he only love and be loved, he must strike a balance in favour of existence, for love can illumine the dark roof of poverty, and can lighten the fetter of the slave.

But, if the most miserable position of humanity be tolerable with its support, so also the most splendid situations of our life are wearisome without its inspiration. The golden palace requires a mistress as magnificent; and the fairest garden, besides the song of birds, and the breath of flowers, calls for the sigh of sympathy. It is at the foot of woman that we lay the laurels that, without her smile, would never have been gained: it is her image that strings the lyre of the poet, that animates our voice in the blaze of eloquent faction, and guides our brain in the august toils of stately councils.

But this passion, so charming in its nature, so equal in its dispensation, so universal in its influence, never assumes a power so vast, or exerts an authority so captivating, as when it is experienced for the first time. Then it is truly irresistible and enchanting, fascinating, and despotic; and, whatever may be the harsher feelings that life may develop, there is no one, however callous or constrained he may have become, whose brow will not grow pensive at the memory of FIRST LOVE.

The magic of first love is our ignorance that it can ever end. It is the dark conviction that feelings the most ardent may yet grow cold, and that emotions the most constant and confirmed, are, nevertheless, liable to change, that taints the feebler spell of our later passions, though they may spring from a heart that has lost little of its original freshness, and be offered to one infinitely more worthy of the devotion than our first idolatry. To gaze upon a face, and to believe that forever we must behold it with the same adoration; that those eyes, in whose light we live, will forever meet ours with mutual glances of rapture and devotedness; to be

conscious that all conversation with others sounds rapid and spiritless, compared with the endless expression of our affection; to feel our heart rise at the favoured voice; and to believe that life must hereafter consist of a ramble through the world, pressing but one fond hand, and leaning but upon one faithful breast;—O! must this sweet credulity indeed be dissipated! Is there no hope for them so full of hope?—no pity for them so abounding with love?

And can it be possible that the hour can ever arrive when the former votaries of a mutual passion so exquisite and engrossing can meet each other with indifference, almost with unconsciousness, and recall with an effort their vanished scenes of felicity—that quick yet profound sympathy, that ready yet boundless confidence, all that charming abandonment of self, and that vigilant and prescient fondness that anticipates all our wants and all our wishes! It makes the heart ache but to picture such vicissitudes to the imagination. They are mages full of distress, and misery, and gloom. The knowledge that such changes can occur flits over the mind like the thought of death, obscuring all our gay fancies with its batlike wing, and tainting the healthy atmosphere of our happiness with its venomous exhalations. It is not so much ruined cities, that were once the capital glories of the world, or mouldering temples, breathing with oracles no more believed, or arches of triumph, that have forgotten the heroic name they were piled up to celebrate, that fill my mind with half so mournful an impression of the instability of human fortunes as these sad spectacles of exhausted afflictions, and, as it were, traditional fragments of expired passion.

The morning, that broke sweet, and soft, and clear, brought Ferdinand, with its first glimmer, a letter from Henrietta.

HENRIETTA TO FERDINAND.

MINE own, own love! I have not lain down the whole night, I have been so anxious about my Ferdinand. What a terrible, what an awful night! To think that he was in the heart of that fearful storm! What did, what could you do? How I long to be with you! And I could only watch the tempest from my window, and strain my eyes at every flash of lightning, in the vain hope that it might reveal him! Is he well—is he unhurt? Until my messenger return I can imagine only evil. How often I was on the point of sending out the household, and yet I thought it must be useless, and might displease him! I knew not what to do. I beat about my chamber like a silly bird in a cage. Tell me the truth, my Ferdinand—conceal nothing. Do not think of moving to-day. If you feel the least unwell, send immediately for advice. Write to me one line, only one line to tell me you are well. I shall be in despair until I hear from you. Do not keep the messenger an instant. He is on my pony. He promises to return in a very, very short time. I pray for you, as I prayed for you the whole long night, that seemed as if it would never end. God bless you, my dear and darling Ferdinand! Write only one word to your own

HENRIETTA.

FERDINAND TO HENRIETTA.

SWEETEST, DEAREST HENRIETTA!—I am quite well, and love you, if that could be, more than ever.

Darling, to send to see after her Ferdinand! A wet jacket, and I experienced no greater evil, does not frighten me. The storm was magnificent; I would not have missed it for the world. But I regret it now, because my Henrietta did not sleep. Sweetest love, let me come on to you! your page is inexorable. He will not let me write another line. God bless you, my Henrietta, my beloved, my matchless Henrietta! Words cannot tell you how I love you, how I dote upon you, my darling.

THY FERDINAND.

HENRIETTA TO FERDINAND.

No! you must not come here. It would be unwise, it would be silly. We could only be together a moment, and though a moment with you is heaven, my Ferdinand, I cannot endure again the agony of parting. O, Ferdinand! what has that separation not cost me! Pangs that I could not conceive any human misery could occasion. My Ferdinand may we some day be happy! It seems to me now that happiness can never come again. And yet I ought to be grateful that he was uninjured last night. I dared not confess to you before what evils I anticipated. Do you know she was so foolish that she thought every flash of lightning must descend on the head of her Ferdinand? She dares not now own how foolish she was. God be praised that he is well. But is he sure that he is *quite* well? If you have the slightest cold, dearest, do not move. Postpone that journey on which all our hopes are fixed. Colds bring fever. But you laugh at me: you are a man and a soldier; you laugh at a woman's caution. O! my Ferdinand, I am so selfish that I should not care if you were ill, if I might only be your nurse. What happiness, what exquisite happiness would that be!

Darling, do not be angry with your Henrietta, but I am nervous about concealing our engagement from papa. What I have promised I will perform, fear not that; I will never deceive you, no, not even for your fancied benefit; but sweet, sweet love, I feel the burden of this secrecy more than I can express, more than I wish to express. I do not like to say any thing that can annoy you, especially at this moment; when I feel, from my own heart, how you must require all the support and solace of unbroken fondness. I have such confidence in your judgment, my Ferdinand, that I feel convinced that you have acted wisely; but come back, my sweetest, come back as soon as you can. I know it must be more than a week; I know that that prospect was only held out by your affection for your Henrietta. Days must elapse before you can reach Bath; and I know, Ferdinand, I know your office is more difficult than you will confess. But come back, my sweetest, as soon as you can, and write to me at the postoffice, as you settled.

If you are well, as you say, leave the farm directly. The consciousness that you are so near, my darling, makes me restless. Remember, in a few hours papa will be here. I wish to meet him with as much calmness as I can command.

Ferdinand, I must bid you adieu! My tears are too evident. See, they fall upon the page. It is stained. Kiss it, Ferdinand, just here. I will press my lips just here; do you also press yours. Think of me always. Never let your Henrietta be absent from your thoughts. If you knew how

desolate this house is! Your guitar is on the sofa; a ghost of departed joy!

Farewell, Ferdinand! farewell, *my* Ferdinand! Ah! there is pride, there is bliss, in that remembrance! If you knew, sweetest, how proud I am of you, how keenly I feel my own unworthiness; but my heart is yours. I cannot write, darling. I cannot restrain my tears. I know not what to do. I almost wish papa would return, though I dread to see him. I feel the desolation of this house, I am so accustomed to see you here!

Heaven be with you, dearest, and guard over you, and cherish you, and bless you. Think always of me. Would that this pen could express the depth and devotion of my feelings!

Thine own fond and faithful

HENRIETTA.

CHAPTER II.

WHICH, SUPPOSING THE READER IS INTERESTED
IN THE CORRESPONDENCE, PURSUES IT.

LETTER I.

HENRIETTA TO FERDINAND.

DEAREST, dearest love. A thousand, thousand thanks, a thousand blessings, for your letter from Armine, dear, dear Armine, where some day we shall be so happy! It was such a darling letter, so long, so kind, and so *clear*. How could my sweet life for a moment fancy that his Henrietta would not be able to decipher his dear, dear handwriting? Always cross, dearest; your handwriting is so beautiful that I shall never find the slightest difficulty in making it out, if your letters were crossed a thousand times. Besides, dear love, to tell the truth, I should rather like to experience a little difficulty in reading your letters, for I read them so often, over and over again, till I get them by heart, and it is such a delight every now and then to find out some new expression that escaped me in the first fever of perusal, and then it is sure to be some darling word fonder than all the rest!

O, my Ferdinand! how shall I express to you my love! It seems to me now that I never loved you until this separation—that I have never been grateful enough to you for your goodness. It makes me weep to remember all the soft things you have said, all the kind things you have done for me, and to think that I have not conveyed to you at the time a title of my sense of all your gentle kindness. You are so gentle, Ferdinand! I think that, sweet, is the greatest charm of your character. My gentle, gentle love! so unlike all other persons that I have met with! Your voice is so sweet, your manner so tender, I am sure you have the kindest heart that ever existed; and then it is a daring spirit too, and that I love! Ec of good cheer, my Ferdinand; all will go well. I am full of hope, and would be of joy if you were here—and yet I am joyful, too, when I think of all your love. I can sit for hours and recall the past—it is so sweet. When I received your dear letter from Armine yesterday and knew indeed that you had gone, I went and walked in our woods, and sat down on the very bank we loved so, and read your letter over and over again; and then I thought of all you had said and done. It is so strange; I think I could repeat every word you have uttered since we first knew each other.

The morning that began so miserable, wore away before I dreamed it could be noon.

Papa arrived about an hour before dinner. So kind and good! And why should he not be? I was ashamed of myself afterwards for seeming surprised that he was the same as ever. He asked me if your family had returned to Armine. I said that you expected them daily. Then he asked if I had seen you. I said very often, but that you had now gone to Bath, as their return had been prevented by the illness of a relative. Did I right in this? I looked as unconcerned as I could when I spoke of you, but my heart throbbled—O! how it throbbled! I hope, however, I did not change colour; I think not; for I had schooled myself for this conversation. I knew it must ensue. Believe me, Ferdinand, papa really likes you, and is prepared to love you. He spoke of you in a tone of genuine kindness. I gave him your message about the shooting at Armine; that you regretted his unexpected departure had prevented you from speaking before, but that it was at his entire command, only that, after our preserves, all you could hope was, that the extent of the land might make up for the thinness of the game. He was greatly pleased.

Ferdinand, my darling Ferdinand, adieu! All good angels guard over my Ferdinand. I will write every day to the postoffice, Bath. Think of me very much. Your own faithful HENRIETTA.

LETTER II.

HENRIETTA TO FERDINAND.

O, FERDINAND, what heaven it is to think of you, and to read your letters! This morning brought me two—the one from London, and the few lines you wrote me as the mail stopped on the road. Do you know, you will think me very ungrateful, for those dear few lines, I believe I must confess I prefer them even to your beautiful long letter. It was so kind, so tender, so sweetly considerate, so like my Ferdinand, to snatch the few minutes that should have been given to rest and food, to write to his Henrietta. Darling! I love you for it a thousand times more than ever! I hope you are really well; I hope you tell me truth. This is a great fatigue, even for you. It is worse than our mules that we once talked of. Does he recollect? O! what joyous spirits my Ferdinand was in that happy day! I love him when he laughs, and yet I think he won my heart with those pensive eyes of his!

Papa is most kind, and suspects nothing. Yesterday I mentioned you first. I took up your guitar, and said to whom it belonged. I thought it more natural not to be silent about you. Besides, dearest, papa really likes you, and I am sure will love you very much when he knows all, and it is such a pleasure to me to hear you praised and spoken of with kindness by those I love. I have, of course, little to say about myself. I visit my birds, tend my flowers, and pay particular attention to all those I remember that you admired or touched. Sometimes I whisper to them, and tell them that you will soon return, for, indeed, they seem to miss you and to droop their heads like their poor mistress. O! my Ferdinand, shall we ever again meet! Shall I, indeed, ever again listen to that sweet voice, and will it tell me again that it loves me with the very selfsame accents that ring even now in my fascinated ear!

O Ferdinand! this love is a fever, a fever of

health. I cannot sleep; I can scarcely countenance my father at his meals. I am wild and restless; but I am happy, happy in the consciousness of your fond devotion. To-morrow I purpose visiting our farmhouse. I think papa will shoot to-morrow. My heart will throb, I fancy, when I see our porch, and when I remember all that has happened there. God bless my own love; the darling, the idol of his fond and happy

HENRIETTA.

LETTER III.

HENRIETTA TO FERDINAND.

DEAREST, dearest love! No letter since the few lines on the road, but I suppose it was impossible. To-morrow will bring me one, I suppose from Bath. I know not why I tremble when I write that word. All is well here, papa most kind, the same as ever. He went a little on your land to-day, a very little, but it pleased me. He has killed an Armine hare. O! what a morning have I spent; so happy, so sorrowful, so full of tears and smiles! I hardly know whether I laughed or wept most. That dear, dear farmhouse! And then they all talked of you. How they do love my Ferdinand! But so must every one. The poor woman has lost her heart to you, I suspect, and I am half inclined to be a little jealous. She did so praise you! So kind, so gentle, giving so little trouble, and, as I fear, so much too generous! Exactly like my Ferdinand; but, really, this was unnecessary. Pardon me, love, but I am learning prudence.

Do you know I went into your room! I contrived to ascend alone; the good woman followed me, but I was there alone a moment, and—and—and—what do you think I did? I could not help it, dear Ferdinand. Don't think it very wrong; don't scold me. I kissed your pillow. I could not help it, dearest; when I thought that his darling head has rested there so often and so lately, I could not refrain from pressing my lips to that favoured resting-place, and I am afraid I shed a tear besides.

When mine own love receives this he will be at Bath. How I pray that you may find all your family well and happy! I hope they will love me. I already love them, and dear, dear Armine. I shall never have courage to go there again until your return. It is night, and I am writing this in my own room. Perhaps the hour may have its influence, but I feel depressed. O! that I were at your side! This house is so desolate without you. Every thing reminds me of the past. Darling, darling Ferdinand, how can I express to you what I feel—the affection, the love, the rapture, the passionate joy, with which your image inspires me? I will not be miserable. I will be grateful to Heaven that I am loved by one so rare and gifted. Your portrait is before me, I call it yours; it is so like! 'Tis a great consolation. My heart is with you, dearest. Think of me as I think of you. Awake or asleep my thoughts are alike yours, and now I am going to pray for you.

Thine own HENRIETTA.

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LETTER IX.

My best beloved—The week is long past, but you say nothing of returning. O! my Ferdinand, your Henrietta is not happy. I read your letters over and over again. They ought to make me happy. I feel in the consciousness of your affec-

tion that I ought to be the happiest person in the world, and yet, I know not why, I am very depressed. You say that all is going well; but why do you not enter into detail? There are difficulties, I am prepared for them. Believe me, my Ferdinand, that your Henrietta can endure as well as enjoy. Your father, he frowns upon our affection? Tell me, tell me all, only do not leave me in suspense. I am entitled to your confidence, Ferdinand. It makes me hate myself to think that I do not share your cares as well as your delights. I am jealous of your sorrows, Ferdinand, if I may not share them.

Darling Ferdinand, do not let your brow be clouded when you read this. O! I could kill myself if I thought I could increase your difficulties. I love you—God knows how I love you. I will be patient; and yet, my Ferdinand, I feel wretched when I think that all is concealed from papa, and my lips are sealed until you give me permission to open them.

Pray write to me, sweet, sweet love, and tell me really how affairs are. Be not afraid to tell your Henrietta any thing. There is no misery as long as we love; as long as your heart is mine, there is nothing which I cannot face, nothing which I am persuaded, we cannot overcome. God bless you, Ferdinand, my soul's very idol. Words cannot express how I dote upon your image.

HENRIETTA.

LETTER X.

MINE OWN, OWN. I wrote to you yesterday a letter of complaints. I am so sorry, for your dear letter has come to-day, and it is so kind, so fond, so affectionate, that it makes me miserable that I should occasion you even a shade of annoyance. Dearest, how I love you! How I long to prove my love! There is nothing that I would not do, nothing that I would not endure, to convince you of my devotion! Sweet, sweet Ferdinand, I will do all that you wish. I will be calm, I will be patient. I will try to be content. You say you are sure all will go right; but you tell me nothing. What said your dear father? your mother? Be not afraid to speak.

You bid me tell you all that I am doing. O! my Ferdinand, life is a blank without you. I have seen no one, I have spoken to no one, save papa. He is very kind, and yet somehow or other I dread to be with him. This house seems so desolate, so very desolate. It seems a deserted place since your departure, a spot that some good genius has quitted, and all the glory has gone. I never care for my birds or flowers now. They have lost their music and their sweetness since my Ferdinand left them. And the woods, I cannot walk in them, and the garden reminds me only of the happy past. I have never been to the farmhouse again. I could not go now, dearest Ferdinand; it would only make me weep. I think only of the morning, for it brings me your letters. I feed upon them, I live upon them. They are my only joy and solace, and yet—but no complaints to-day, no complaints, dearest Ferdinand; let me only express my devoted love. Farewell, my joy, my pride, my soul's idol. O! that my weak pen could express a title of my fond devotion. Ferdinand, I love you with all my heart, and all my soul, and all my spirit's strength. I have no thought but for you, I exist only on your idea. Write, write—tell me that you love me, tell me that you are

unchanged. It is so long since I heard that voice, so long since I beheld that fond, soft eye! Pity me, my Ferdinand. This is captivity. A thousand, thousand loves. Your devoted HENRIETTA.

LETTER XI.

FERDINAND, dearest Ferdinand, the post to-day has brought me no letter. I cannot credit my senses. I think the postmaster must have thought me mad. No letter! I could not believe his denial. I was annoyed, too, at the expression of his countenance. This mode of correspondence, Ferdinand, I wish not to murmur, but when I consented to this clandestine method of communication, it was for a few days, a few, few days, and then—But I cannot write. I am quite overwhelmed. O! will to-morrow ever come! HENRIETTA.

LETTER XII.

DEAREST FERDINAND, I wish to be calm. Your letter occasions me very serious uneasiness. I quarrel not with its tone of affection. It is fond, very fond, and there were moments when I could have melted over such expressions; but, Ferdinand, it is not candid. Why are we separated! For a purpose. Is that purpose effected? Were I to judge only from your letters, I should even suppose that you had not spoken to your father; but that is of course, impossible. Your father disapproves of our union. I feel it, I know it; I was even prepared for it. Come, then, and speak to my father. It is due to me not to leave him any more in the dark; it will be better, believe me, for yourself, that he should share our confidence. Papa is not a rich man, but he loves his daughter. Let us make him our friend. Ah! why did I ever conceal any thing from one so kind and good? In this moment of desolation, I feel, I keenly feel, my folly, my wickedness. I have no one to speak to, no one to console me. This constant struggle to conceal my feelings will kill me. It was painful when all was joy, but now—O, Ferdinand! I can endure this life no longer. My brain is weak, my spirit perplexed and broken. I will not say if you love; but Ferdinand, if you pity me, write, and write definitely to your unhappy HENRIETTA.

LETTER XVIII.

You tell me that, in compliance with my wishes, you will write definitely. You tell me that circumstances have occurred, since your arrival at Bath, of a very perplexing and annoying nature, and that they retard that settlement with your father that you had projected and partly arranged, that it is impossible to enter into detail in letters, and assuring me of your love, you add that you have been anxious to preserve me from sharing your anxiety. O, Ferdinand! what anxiety can you withhold like that you have occasioned me! Dearest, dearest Ferdinand, I will, I must still believe that you are faultless; but, believe me, a want of candour in our situation, and, I believe, in every situation, is a want of common sense. Never conceal any thing from your Henrietta.

I now take it for granted that your father has forbid our union; indeed, this is the only conclusion that I can draw from your letter. Ferdinand, I can bear this, even this. Sustained by your affection, I will trust to time, to events, to the kind-

ness of my friends, and to that overruling Providence, which will not desert affections so pure as ours, to bring about, sooner or later, some happier result. Confident in your love, I can live in solitude, and devote myself to your memory. I—

O, Ferdinand! kneel to your father, kneel to your kind mother; tell them all, tell them how I love you, how I will love them; tell them your Henrietta will have no thought but for their happiness; tell them she will be as dutiful to them as she is devoted to you. Ask not for our union, ask them only to permit you to cherish our acquaintance. Let them return to Armine; let them cultivate our friendship; let them know papa; let them know me—let them know me as I am, with all my faults, I trust not worldly, not selfish, not quite insignificant, not quite unprepared to act the part that awaits a member of their family, either in its splendour or its proud humility; and, if not worthy of their son, (as who can be?) yet conscious, deeply conscious of the value and blessing of his affection, and prepared to prove it by the devotion of my being. Do this, my Ferdinand, and happiness will yet come.

But, sweet, sweet Ferdinand, my own, my gentle love, on whatever course you may decide, remember your Henrietta. I do not reproach you, my darling; never will I reproach you; but remember the situation in which you have placed me. All my happy life I have never had a secret from my father; and now I am involved in a private engagement and a clandestine correspondence. Be just to him; be just to your Henrietta! Return, my darling, I beseech you on my knees; return instantly to Ducie; reveal every thing. He will be kind and gracious; he will be our best friend; in his hand and bosom we shall find solace and support. God bless you, Ferdinand! All will yet go well, mine own, own love. I smile amid my tears when I think that we shall so soon meet. O! what misery can there be in this world if we may but share it together!

Thy fond, thy faithful, thy devoted

HENRIETTA.

CHAPTER III.

CONTAINING THE ARRIVAL AT DUCIE OF A VERY DISTINGUISHED GUEST.

It was about three weeks after Ferdinand Armine had quitted Ducie that Mr. Temple entered the breakfast-room one morning, with an open note in his hand, and told Henrietta to prepare for visitors, as her old friend, Lady Bellair, had written, to apprise him of her intention to rest the night at Ducie, on her way to the north.

"She brings with her also the most charming woman in the world," added Mr. Temple with a smile.

"I have little doubt Lady Bellair deems her companion so at present," said Miss Temple, "whoever she may be; but, at any rate, I shall be glad to see her ladyship, who is certainly one of the most amusing women in the world."

This announcement of the speedy arrival of Lady Bellair made some bustle in the household of Ducie Bower; for her ladyship was in every respect a memorable character, and the butler, who had re-

membered her visits to the Temples before their residence at Ducie, very much interested the curiosity of his fellow-servants by his intimations of her ladyship's eccentricities.

"You will have to take care of the parrot, Mary," said the butler; "and you, Susan, must look after the page. We shall all be well cross-examined as to the state of the establishment; and so I advise you to be prepared. Her ladyship is a rum one, and that's the truth."

In due course of time, a very handsome travelling chariot, emblazoned with a viscount's coronet, and carrying on the seat behind a portly man-servant and a lady's-maid, arrived at Ducie. They immediately descended; and assisted the assembled household of the Bower to disembark the contents of the chariot; but Mr. Temple and his daughter were too well acquainted with Lady Bellair's character to appear at this critical moment. First came forth a very stately dame, of ample proportions and exceedingly magnificent attire, being dressed, indeed, in the very extreme of gorgeous fashion, and who, after being landed on the marble steps, was for some moments absorbed in the fluttering arrangement of her plumage; smoothing her maroon pelisse, shaking the golden riband of her emerald bonnet, and adjusting the glittering pelerine of point device that shaded the fall of her broad, but well formed, shoulders. In one hand the stately dame lightly swung a bag that was worthy of holding the great seal itself, so rich and so elaborate were its materials and embroidery; and in the other she at length took a glass, which was suspended from her neck by a chain-cable of gold, and glanced with a flashing eye, as dark as her ebony curls and as brilliant as her well-rouged cheek, at the surrounding scene.

The green parrot, in its sparkling cage, followed next, and then came forth the prettiest, liveliest, smallest, best dressed, and, stranger than all, oldest little lady in the world. Lady Bellair was of child-like stature, and quite erect, though ninety years of age; the tasteful simplicity of her costume, her little plain white silk bonnet, her gray silk dress, her apron, her gray mittens, and her Cinderella shoes, all admirably contrasted with the vast and flaunting splendour of her companion, not less than her ladyship's small yet exquisitely proportioned form, her highly-finished extremities, and her keen sarcastic gray eye. The expression of her ladyship's countenance now, however, was somewhat serious. An arrival was an important moment that required all her practical circumspection; there was so much to arrange, so much to remember, and so much to observe.

The portly serving-man had advanced, and taking his little mistress in his arms, as he would a child, had planted her on the steps. And then her ladyship's clear, shrill, and now rather fretful voice was heard.

"Here! where's the butler? I don't want you, stupid, (addressing her own servant,) but the butler of the house, Mister's butler; what is his name—Mr. Two-Shoes' butler? I cannot remember names.

"O! you are there, are you? I don't want you. How is your master? How is your charming lady? Where is the parrot? I don't want it. Where's the lady? Why don't you answer? Why do you stare so! Miss Temple! no! not Miss Temple! The lady, my lady, my charming friend, Mrs.

Floyd! To be sure so—why did not you say so before? But she has got two names. Why don't you say both names? My dear," continued Lady Bellair, addressing her travelling companion, "I don't know your name. Tell all these good people your name—your two names! I like people with two names. Tell them, my dear, tell them—tell them your name, Mrs. Thingabob, or whatever it is, Mrs. Thingabob Two-Shoes."

Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, though rather annoyed by this appeal, still contrived to comply with the request in the most dignified manner; and all the servants bowed to Mrs. Montgomery Floyd.

To the great satisfaction of this stately dame, Lady Bellair, after scanning every thing and every body with the utmost scrutiny, indicated some intention of entering, when suddenly she turned round—

"Man, there's something wanting. I had three things to take charge of. The parrot and my charming friend—that is only two. There is a third. What is it? You don't know! Here, you man, who are you? Mr. Temple's servant. I knew your master when he was not as high as that cage. What do you think of that?" continued her ladyship, with a triumphant smile. "What do you laugh at, sir? Did you ever see a woman ninety years old before? That I would wager you have not. What do I want? I want something. Why do you tease me by not remembering what I want. Now, I knew a gentleman who made his fortune by once remembering what a very great man wanted. But then the great man was a minister of state. I dare say if I were a minister of state, instead of an old woman ninety years of age, you would contrive somehow or other to find out what I wanted. Never mind, never mind. Come, my charming friend, let me take your arm. Now I will introduce you to the prettiest, the dearest, the most innocent and charming lady in the world. She is my greatest favourite. She is always my favourite. You are my favourite, too; but you are only my favourite for the moment. I always have two favourites: one for the moment, and one that I never change, and that is my sweet Henrietta Temple. You see I can remember her name, though I couldn't yours. But you are a good creature, a dear good soul, though you live in a bad set, my dear, a very bad set, indeed; vulgar people, my dear; they may be rich, but they have no ton. This is a fine place. Stop, stop," Lady Bellair exclaimed, stamping her little foot, and shaking her little arm, "Don't drive away, I remember what it was. Gregory! run, Gregory! It is the page! There was no room for him behind, and I told him to lie under the seat. Poor dear boy! He must be smothered. I hope he is not dead. O! there he is. Has Miss Temple got a page? Does her page wear a feather? My page has not got a feather, but he shall have one, because he was not smothered. Here! woman, who are you? The housemaid. I thought so. I always know a housemaid. You shall take care of my page. Take him at once, and give him some milk and water; and, page, be very good, and never leave this good young woman, unless I send for you. And, woman, good young woman, perhaps you may find an old feather of Miss Temple's page. Give it to this good little boy, because he was not smothered."

CHAPTER IV.

CONTAINING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE VISCONTESS
DOWAGER BELLAIR.

THE Viscountess Dowager Bellair was the last remaining link between the two centuries. Herself born of a noble family, and distinguished both for her beauty and her wit, she had reigned for a quarter of a century the favourite subject of Sir Joshua; had flirted with Lord Carlisle, and chatted with Dr. Johnson. But the most remarkable quality of her ladyship's destiny was her preservation. Time, that had rolled on nearly a century since her birth, had spared alike her physical and mental powers. She was almost as active in body, and quite as lively in mind, as when seventy years before she skipped in Marylebone Gardens, or puzzled the gentlemen of the Tuesday Night Club at Mrs. Cornely's masquerades. Those wonderful seventy years, indeed, had passed to Lady Bellair like one of those very masked balls in which she formerly sparkled; she had lived in a perpetual crowd of strange and brilliant characters. All that had been famous for beauty, rank, fashion, wit, genius, had been gathered round her throne; and at this very hour a fresh and admiring generation, distinguished for these qualities, cheerfully acknowledged her supremacy, and paid to her their homage. The heroes and heroines of her youth, her middle life, even of her old age, had vanished; brilliant orators, profound statesmen, inspired bards, ripe scholars, illustrious warriors, beauties whose dazzling charms had turned the world mad; choice spirits, whose flying words or fanciful manners made every saloon smile or wonder—all had disappeared. She had witnessed revolutions in every country in the world; she remembered Brighton a fishing-town, and Manchester a village; she had shared the pomp of nabobs and the profusion of loan-mongers; she had stimulated the early ambition of Charles Fox, and had sympathized with the last aspirations of George Canning; she had been the confidant of the loves alike of Byron and Alfieri; had worn mourning for General Wolfe, and given a festival to the Duke of Wellington; had laughed with George Selwyn, and smiled at Lord Alvauley; had known the first macaroni and the last dandy; remembered the Gummings, and introduced the Sheridans! But she herself was unchanged; still restless for novelty, still eager for amusement; still anxiously watching the entrance on the stage of some new stream of characters, and indefatigable in attracting the notice of every one whose talents might contribute to her entertainment, or whose attention might gratify her vanity. And, really, when one recollected Lady Bellair's long career, and witnessed at the same time her diminutive form and her unrivalled vitality, one might almost be tempted to believe, that if not absolutely immortal, it was at least her strange destiny not so much vulgarly to die, as to grow like the heroine of the fairy tale, each year smaller and smaller,

"Five by degrees and beautifully less."

until her ladyship might at length subside into airy nothingness, and so rather vanish than expire.

It was the fashion to say her ladyship had no heart; in most instances an unmeaning phrase; in her case certainly an unjust one. Ninety years of experience had assuredly not been thrown away

on a mind of remarkable acuteness, but Lady Bellair's feelings were still quick and warm, and could be even profound. Her fancy was so lively, that her attention was soon engaged; her taste so refined, that her affection was not so easily obtained. Hence she acquired a character, for caprice, because she repented at leisure those first impressions which with her were irresistible; for, in truth, Lady Bellair, though she had nearly completed her century, and had passed her whole life in the most artificial circles, was the very creature of impulse. Her first homage she always declared was paid to talent, her second to beauty, her third to blood. The favoured individual who might combine these three splendid qualifications, was, with Lady Bellair, a nymph, or a demi-god. As for mere wealth she really despised it, though she liked her favourites to be rich.

Her knowledge of human nature, which was considerable, her acquaintance with human weaknesses, which was unrivalled, were not thrown away upon Lady Bellair. Her ladyship's perception of character was fine and quick, and nothing delighted her so much as making a person a tool. Capable, where her heart was touched, of the finest sympathy and the most generous actions—where her feelings were not engaged, she experienced no compunction in turning her companions to account, or, indeed, sometimes in honouring them with her intimacy for that purpose. But if you had the skill to detect her plots, and the courage to make her aware of your consciousness of them, you never displeased her, and often gained her friendship. For Lady Bellair had a fine taste for humour, and when she chose to be candid—an indulgence which was not rare with her—she could dissect her own character and conduct with equal spirit and impartiality. In her own instance it cannot be denied that she comprised the three great qualifications she so much prized: for she was very witty; had blood in her veins, to use her own expression; and was the prettiest woman in the world—for her years. For the rest, though no person was more highly bred, she could be very impertinent; but if you treated her with servility, she absolutely loathed you.

Lady Bellair, after the London season, always spent two or three months at Bath, and then proceeded to her great-grandson's, the present viscount's, seat in the North, where she remained until London was again attractive. Part of her domestic diplomacy was employed each year, during her Bath visit, in discovering some old friend, or making some new acquaintance, who would bear her in safety, and save her harmless from all expenses and dangers of the road, to Northumberland; and she displayed often in these arrangements talents which Talleyrand might have envied. During the present season, Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, the widow of a rich East Indian, whose intention it was to proceed to her estate in Scotland at the end of the autumn, had been presented to Lady Bellair by a friend well acquainted with her ladyship's desired arrangements. What an invaluable acquaintance at such a moment for Lady Bellair! Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, very rich and very anxious to be fashionable, was intoxicated with the flattering condescension and anticipated companionship of Lady Bellair. At first, Lady B. had quietly suggested that they should travel together to Northumberland. Mrs. Montgomery Floyd was enchanted

with the proposal. Then Lady Bellair regretted that her servant was very ill, and that she must send her to town immediately in her own carriage; and then Mrs. Montgomery Floyd insisted, in spite of the offers of Lady Bellair, that her ladyship should take a seat in her carriage, and would not for an instant hear of Lady Bellair defraying, under such circumstances, any portion of the expense. Lady Bellair held out to the dazzled vision of Mrs. Montgomery Floyd a brilliant perspective of the noble lords and wealthy squires whose splendid seats, under the auspices of Lady Bellair, they were to make their resting-places during their progress; and in time Lady Bellair, who had a particular fancy for her own carriage, proposed that her servants should travel in that of Mrs. Montgomery Floyd. Mrs. Montgomery Floyd smiled a too willing assent. It ended by Mrs. Montgomery Floyd's servants travelling to Lord Bellair's, where their mistress was to meet them, in that lady's own carriage, and Lady Bellair travelling in her own chariot with her own servants, and Mrs. Montgomery Floyd defraying the expenditure of both expeditions.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH LADY BELLAIR GIVES SOME ACCOUNT OF SOME OF HER FRIENDS.

LADY BELLAIR really loved Henrietta Temple. She was her prime and her permanent favourite, and she was always lamenting that Henrietta would not come and stay with her in London, and marry a duke. Lady Bellair was a great match-maker. When, therefore, she was welcomed by the fair mistress of Ducie Bower, Lady Bellair was as genuine as she was profuse in her kind phrases. "My sweet, sweet young friend," she said, as Henrietta bowed her head and offered her lips to the little old lady, "it is something to have such a friend as you. What old woman has such a sweet friend as I have! Now let me look at you. It does my heart good to see you. I feel younger. You are handsomer than ever, I declare you are. Why will you not come and stay with me, and let me find you a husband? There is the Duke of De-randale—he is in love with you already; for I do nothing but talk of you. No, you should not marry him, he is not good enough. He is not refined. I love a duke, but I love a duke that is refined more. You shall marry Lord Fitzwarrene. He is my favourite; he is worthy of you. You laugh; I love to see you laugh. You are so fresh and innocent! There is your worthy father talking to my friend Mrs. Twoshoes; a very good creature, my love, a very worthy soul, but no ton; I hate French words, but what other can I use; and she will wear gold chains, which I detest. You never wear gold chains, I am sure. The Duke of — would not have me, so I came to you," continued her ladyship, returning the salutation of Mr. Temple, "Don't ask me if I am tired, I am never tired. There is nothing I hate so much as being asked if I am well. I am always well. There, I have brought you a charming friend; give her your arm; and you shall give me yours," said the old lady, smiling to Henrietta; "we make a good contrast; I like a good contrast, but not an ugly one. I cannot bear any thing that is ugly;

unless it is a very ugly man indeed who is a genius and very fashionable. I liked Wilkes, and I liked Curran; but they were famous, the best company in the world. When I was as young as you, Lady Lavington and I always hunted in couples, because she was tall, and I was called the Queen of the Fairies. Pretty women, my sweet child, should never be alone. Not that I was very pretty, but I was always with pretty women, and at last the men began to think that I was pretty too."

"A superbly pretty place," simpered the magnificent Mrs. Montgomery Floyd to Mr. Temple, "and of all the sweetly pretty persons I ever met, I assure you I think Miss Temple the most charming. Such a favourite too with Lady Bellair! You know she calls Miss Temple her real favourite," added the lady, with a playful smile.

The ladies were ushered to their apartments by Henrietta, for the hour of dinner was at hand, and Mrs. Montgomery Floyd indicated some anxiety not to be hurried in her toilet. Indeed, when she reappeared, it might have been matter of marvel how she could have effected such a complete transformation in so short a period. Except a train, she was splendid enough for a birth-day at St. James's, and wore so many brilliants that she glittered like a chandelier. However, as Lady Bellair loved a contrast, this was perhaps not unfortunate; for certainly her ladyship, in her simple costume, which had only been altered by the substitution of a cap that should have been immortalized by Mieris or Gerard Douw, afforded one not a little startling to her sumptuous fellow-traveller.

"Your dinner is very good," said Lady Bellair to Mr. Temple. "I eat very little and very plainly, but I hate a bad dinner; it dissatisfies everybody else, and they are all dull. The best dinners now are a new man's; I forget his name; the man who is so very rich. You never heard of him, and she (pointing with her fork to Mrs. Montgomery) knows nobody. What is his name? Gregory, what is the name of the gentleman I dine with so often? the gentleman I send to when I have no other engagement, and he always gives me a dinner, but who never dines with me. He is only rich, and I hate people who are only rich; but I must ask him next year. I ask him to my evening parties, mind; I don't care about them; but I will not have stupid people, who are only rich at my dinners. Gregory, what is his name?"

"Mr. Million de Stockville, my lady."

"Yes, that is the man, good Gregory. You have no deer, have you?" inquired her ladyship of Mr. Temple. "I thought not. I wish you had deer. You should send a haunch in my name to Mr. Million de Stockville, and that would be as good as a dinner to him. If your neighbour, the duke, had received me, I should have sent it from thence. I will tell you what I will do; I will write a note from this place to the duke, and get him to do it for me. He will do any thing for me. He loves me, the duke, and I love him: but his wife hates me."

"And you have had a gay season in town this year, Lady Bellair?" inquired Miss Temple.

"My dear, I always have a gay season."

"What happiness!" softly exclaimed Mrs. Montgomery Floyd. "I think nothing is more delightful than gaiety."

"And how is my friend Mr. Bonmot, this year?" said Mr. Temple.

"My dear, Bonmot is growing very old. He tells the same stories over again, and therefore I never see him. I cannot bear wits that have run to seed; I cannot ask Bonmot to my dinners, and I told him the reason why; but I said I was at home every morning from two till six, and he might come then—for he does not go out to evening parties—and he is huffy—and so we have quarrelled."

"Poor Mr. Bonmot," said Miss Temple.

"My dear, there is the most wonderful man in the world—I forget his name—but everybody is mad to have him. He is quite the fashion. I have him to my parties instead of Bonmot, and it is much better. Everybody has Bonmot; but my man is new, and I love something new. Lady Frederick Berrington brought him to me. Do you know Lady Frederick Berrington? O! I forgot, poor dear, you are buried alive in the country; I must introduce you to Lady Frederick. She is charming—she will taste you—she will be your friend; and you cannot have a better friend, my dear, for she is very pretty, very witty, and has got blood in her veins. I won't introduce you to Lady Frederick," continued Lady Bellair to Mrs. Montgomery Floyd; "she is not in your way. I shall introduce you to Lady Splash and Dashaway—she is to be your friend."

Mrs. Montgomery Floyd seemed consoled by the splendid future of being the friend of Lady Splash and Dashaway, and easily to endure with such a compensation the somewhat annoying remarks of her noble patroness.

"But as for Bonmot," continued Lady Bellair, "I will have nothing to do with him. General Faneville, he is a dear good man and gives me dinners. I love dinners: I never dine at home, except when I have company. General Faneville not only gives me dinners, but lets me always choose my own party. And he said to me the other day—'Now, Lady Bellair, fix your day and name your party.' I said directly—'General, anybody but Bonmot.' You know Bonmot is his particular friend."

"But surely that is very cruel," said Henrietta Temple, smiling.

"I am cruel," said Lady Bellair, "when I hate a person I am very cruel—and I hate Bonmot. Mr. Fox wrote me a copy of verses once, and called me 'cruel fair'; but I was not cruel to him, for I dearly loved Charles Fox: and I love you, and I love your father. The first party your father ever was at, was at my house. There, what do you think of that! And I love my grandchildren; I call them all my grandchildren. I think great-grandchildren sounds silly: I am so happy that they have married so well. My dear Selina is a countess; you shall be a countess, too," added the old lady, laughing. "I must see you a countess before I die. Mrs. Grenville is not a countess, and is rather poor; but they will be rich some day; and Grenville is a good name—it sounds well. That is a great thing. I hate a name that does not sound well."

CHAPTER VI.

CONTAINING A CONVERSATION NOT QUITE SO AMUSING AS THE LAST.

IN the evening, Henrietta amused her guests with music. Mrs. Montgomery Floyd was enthusiastically fond of music and very proud of her intimate friendship with Pasta.

"O! you know her, do you?" said Lady Bellair. "Very well: you shall bring her to my house; she shall sing at all my parties: I love music at my evenings, but I never pay for it, never. If she will not come in the evening, I will try to ask her to dinner, at least. I do not like singers and tumblers at dinner—but she is very fashionable, and young men like her, and what I want at my dinners are young men, young men of very great fashion. I rather want young men at my dinners. I have some—Lord Languid always comes to me, and he is very fine, you know, very fine indeed. He goes to very few places, but he always comes to me."

Mrs. Montgomery Floyd quitted the piano, and seated herself by Mr. Temple. Mr. Temple was gallant, and Mrs. Montgomery Floyd anxious to obtain the notice of a gentleman whom Lady Bellair had assured her was of the first ton. Her ladyship herself beckoned to Henrietta Temple to join her on the sofa, and, taking her hand very affectionately, explained to her all the tactics by which she intended to bring about a match between her and Lord Fitzwarrene, very much regretting, at the same time, that her dear grandson, Lord Bellair, was married; for he, after all, was the only person worthy of her. "He would taste you, my dear; he would understand you. Dear Bellair! he is so very handsome, and so very witty. Why did he go and marry! And yet I love his wife. Do you know her? O! she is charming: so very pretty, so very witty, and such good blood in her veins. I made the match. Why were you not in England! If you had only come to England a year sooner, you should have married Bellair. How provoking!"

"But really, dear Lady Bellair, your grandson is very happy. What more can you wish?"

"Well, my dear, it shall be Lord Fitzwarrene, then. I shall give a series of parties this year, and ask Lord Fitzwarrene to every one. Not that it is very easy to get him, my child. There is nobody so difficult as Lord Fitzwarrene. That is quite right. Men should always be difficult, I cannot bear men who come and dine with you when you want them."

"What a charming place is Ducie!" sighed Mrs. Montgomery Floyd to Mr. Temple. "The country is so delightful."

"But you would not like to live in the country only," said Mr. Temple.

"Ah! you do not know me!" sighed the sentimental Mrs. Montgomery Floyd. "If you only knew how I loved flowers!—I wish you could but see my conservatory in Park lane."

"And how did you find Bath this year, Lady Bellair?" inquired Miss Temple.

"O! my dear, I met a charming man there. I forget his name, but the most distinguished person I ever met; so very handsome, so very witty, and with blood in his veins, only I forget his name, and it is a very good name, too. My dear," addressing herself to Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, "tell me the name of my favourite."

Mrs. Montgomery Floyd looked a little puzzled "My great favourite!" exclaimed the irritated Lady Bellair, rapping her fan against the sofa. "O! why do you not remember names! I love people who remember names. My favourite, my Bath favourite. What is his name? He is to dine with me in town

What is the name of my Bath favourite who is certainly to dine with me in town?"

"Do you mean Captain Armine?" inquired Mrs. Montgomery Floyd. Miss Temple turned quite pale. "That is the man," said Lady Bellair. O! such a charming man. You shall marry him, my dear, you shall not marry Lord Fitzwarrene."

"But you forget he is going to be married," said Mrs. Montgomery Floyd.

Miss Temple tried to rise, but she could not. She held down her head. She felt the fever in her cheek. "Is our engagement then so notorious!" she thought to herself.

"Ah! yes, I forgot he was going to be married," said Lady Bellair. "Well, then, it must be Lord Fitzwarrene. Besides, Captain Armine is not rich, but he has got a very fine place, though, and I will go and stop there some day. And, besides, he is over head and ears in debt, so they say. However he is going to marry a very rich woman, and so all will be right. I like old families in decay to get round again."

Henrietta dreaded that her father should observe her confusion; she had recourse to every art to prevent it. "Dear Ferdinand," she thought to herself, "thy very rich wife will bring thee, I fear, but a poor dowry. Ah! would he were here!"

"Who is Captain Armine going to marry?" inquired Mr. Temple.

"O! a very proper person," said Lady Bellair. "I forgot her name. Miss Twoshoes, or something. What is her name, my dear?"

"You mean Miss Grandison, madam?" responded Mrs. Montgomery Floyd.

"To be sure, Miss Grandison, the great heiress. The only one left of the Grandisons. I knew her grandfather. He was my son's schoolfellow."

"Captain Armine is a near neighbour of ours," said Mr. Temple.

"O! you know him," said Lady Bellair, "Is he not charming?"

"Are you certain he is going to be married to Miss Grandison?" inquired Mr. Temple.

"O! there is no doubt in the world," said Mrs. Montgomery Floyd. "Every thing is quite settled. My most particular friend, Lady Julia Hartville, is to be one of the bride's-maids. I have seen all the presents. Both the families are at Bath at this very moment. I saw the happy pair together every day. They are related, you know. It is an excellent match, for the Armines have great estates, mortgaged to the very last pound. I have heard that Sir Ratcliffe Armine has not a thousand a-year he can call his own. We are all so pleased," added Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, as if she were quite one of the family. "Is not it delightful?"

"They are to be married next month," said Lady Bellair. "I did not quite make the match, but I did something. I love the Grandisons, because Lord Grandison was my son's friend fifty years ago."

"I never knew a person so pleased as Lady Armine is," continued Mrs. Montgomery Floyd. "The truth is, Captain Armine has been very wild, very wild indeed; a little of a roué; but then such a fine young man, so very handsome, so truly distinguished, as Lady Bellair says, what could you expect! But he has sown his wild oats now. They have been engaged these six months—ever since he came from a road. He has been at Bath

all the time, except for a fortnight or so, when he went to his place to make the necessary preparations. We all so missed him. Captain Armine was quite the life of Bath. I am almost ashamed to repeat what was said of him," added Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, blushing through her rouge; "but they said every woman was in love with him."

"Fortunate man!" said Mr. Temple, bowing, but with a grave expression.

"And he says, he is only going to marry, because he is wearied of conquests," continued Mrs. Montgomery Floyd; "how impertinent, is it not? But Captain Armine says such things! He is quite a privileged person at Bath!"

Miss Temple rose and left the room. When the hour of general retirement had arrived, she had not returned. Her maid brought a message that her mistress was not very well, and offered her excuses for not again descending.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH MR. TEMPLE PAYS A VISIT TO HIS DAUGHTER'S CHAMBER.

HENRIETTA, when she quitted the room, never stopped until she had gained her own chamber. She had no light, but a straggling moonbeam revealed sufficient. She threw herself upon her bed, choked with emotion. She was incapable of thought; a chaos of wild images flitted over her brain. Thus had she remained, perchance an hour, with scarcely self-consciousness, when her servant entered with a light to arrange her chamber, and nearly shrieked when, on turning round, she beheld her mistress.

This intrusion impressed upon Miss Temple the absolute necessity of some exertion, if only to preserve herself at this moment from renewed interruptions. She remembered where she was, she called back with an effort some recollection of her guests, and she sent that message to her father, which we have already noticed. Then she was again alone. How she wished at that moment that she might ever be alone; that the form and shape of human being should no more cross her vision; that she might remain in this dark chamber until she died! There was no more joy for her; her sun was set, the lustre of her life was gone; the lute had lost its tone, the flower its perfume, the bird its airy wing. Ah! what a fleet, as well as fatal tragedy! How swift upon her improvidence had come her heart-breaking pang! There was an end of faith, for he was faithless; there was an end of love, for love had betrayed her; there was an end of beauty, for beauty had been her bane. All that hitherto made life delightful, all the fine emotions, all the bright hopes, and the rare accomplishments of our nature, were dark delusions now, cruel mockeries, and false and cheating phantoms! What humiliation! what despair! And he had seemed so true; so pure, so fond, so gifted! What—could it be—could it be that a few short weeks back this man had knelt to her, had adored her! And she had hung upon his accents, and lived in the light of his enraptured eyes, and pledged to him her heart; dedicated to him her life, devoted to him all her innocent and passionate affections, worshipped

him as an idol! Why, what was life that it could bring upon its swift wing such dark, such agonizing vicissitudes as these? It was not life—it was frenzy!

Some one knocked gently at her door. She did not answer—she feigned sleep. Yet the door opened—she felt, though her eyes were shut and her back turned, that there was a light in the room. A tender step approached her bed. It could be but one person—that person whom she had herself deceived. She knew it was her father.

Mr. Temple seated himself by her bedside; he bent his head and pressed his lips upon her forehead. In her desolation some one still loved her. She could not resist the impulse—she held forth her hand without opening her eyes—her father held it clasped in his.

"Henrietta," he at length said, in a tone of peculiar sweetness.

"O! do not speak, my father. Do not speak. You alone have cause to reproach me. Spare me; spare your child."

"I came to console, not to reproach," said Mr. Temple. "But, if it please you, I will not speak; let me, however, remain."

"Father, we must speak. It relieves me even to confess my indiscretion, my fatal folly. Father, I feel—yet why, I know not—I feel that you know all!"

"I know much, my Henrietta, but I do not know all."

"And, if you knew all, you would not hate me?"

"Hate you, my Henrietta! These are strange words to use to a father—to a father, I would add, like me. No one can love you, Henrietta, as your father loves you; yet, speak to me not merely as a father; speak to me as your earliest, your best, your fondest, your most faithful friend."

She pressed his hand, but answer—that she could not.

"Henrietta, dearest, dearest Henrietta, answer me one question."

"I tremble, sir."

"Then we will speak to-morrow."

"O! no, to-night, to-night. To-morrow may never come. There is no night for me; I cannot sleep. I should go mad if it were not for you. I will speak; I will answer any questions. My conscience is quite clear except to you; no one, no power on earth or heaven, can reproach me except my father."

"He never will. But, dearest, tell me; summon up your courage to meet my question; are you engaged to this person?"

"I was."

"Positively engaged?"

"Long ere this I had supposed we should have claimed your sanction. He left me only to speak to his father."

"This may be the idle tattle of chattering women?"

"No, no," said Henrietta, in a voice of a deep melancholy; "my fears had foreseen this dark reality. This week has been a very hell to me; and yet, I hoped, and hoped, and hoped. O! what a fool have I been!"

"I know this person was your constant companion in my absence: that you have corresponded with him. Has he written very recently?"

"Within two days."

"And his letters?"

"Have been of late most vague. O! my father: indeed, indeed I have not conducted myself so ill as you perhaps imagine. I shrunk from this secret engagement; I opposed by every argument in my power, this clandestine correspondence; but it was only for a week, a single week; and reasons, plausible and specious reasons, were plentiful. Alas! alas! all is explained now. All that was strange, mysterious, perplexed in his views and conduct, and which, when it crossed my mind, I dismissed with contempt—all is now too clear."

"Henrietta, he is unworthy of you."

"Hush! hush! dear father. An hour ago I loved him. Spare him, if you only wish to spare me."

"Cling to my heart, my child, my pure and faultless child! A father's love has comfort. Is it not so?"

"I feel it is; I feel calmer since you came and we have spoken. Father, I never can be happy again; my spirit is quite broken. And yet I feel I have a heart now, which I thought I had not before you came. Dear, dear father," she said, rising and putting her hands round Mr. Temple's neck and leaning on his bosom, and speaking in a sweet yet very mournful voice, "henceforth your happiness shall be mine. I will not disgrace you; you shall not see me grieve; I will atone, I will endeavour to atone, for my great sins, for sins they were, towards you."

"My child, the time will come when we shall remember this bitterness only as a lesson. But I know the human heart too well to endeavour to stem your sorrow now; I only came to soothe it. My blessing is upon you, my sweet child. Let us talk no more. Henrietta, do me one favour; let me send your maid to you. Try, my love, to sleep; try to compose yourself."

"These people,—to-morrow,—what shall I do?"

"Leave all to me. Keep your chamber until they have gone. You need appear no more."

"O! that no human being might again see me!"

"Hush! sweetest! that is not a wise wish. Be calm; we shall yet be happy. To-morrow we will talk; and so good night, my child, good night, my own Henrietta."

Mr. Temple left the room. He bid the maid go to her mistress in as calm a tone as if, indeed, her complaint had been only a headache; and then he entered his own apartment. Over the mantelpiece was a portrait of his daughter, gay and smiling as the spring; the room was adorned with her drawings. He drew the chair near the fire, and gazed for some time abstracted upon the flame, and then hid his weeping countenance in his hands. He sobbed convulsively.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH GLASTONBURY IS VERY MUCH ASTONISHED.

It was a gusty autumnal night; Glastonbury sat alone in his tower; every now and then the wind, amid the chorus of groaning branches, and hissing rain, dashed against his window, then its power seemed gradually lulled, and perfect stillness

succeeded, until a low moan was heard again in the distance, which gradually swelled into storm. The countenance of the good old man was not so serene as usual. Occasionally his thoughts seemed to wander from the folio opened before him; and he fell into fits of reverie which impressed upon his visage an expression rather of anxiety than study.

The old man looked up to the portrait of the unhappy Lady Armine, and heaved a deep sigh.

Were his thoughts of her, or of her child?

He closed his book, he replaced it upon its shelf, and taking from a cabinet an ancient crucifix of carved ivory, he bent down before the image of his Redeemer.

Even while he was buried in his devotions, praying perchance for the soul of that sinning yet sainted lady, whose memory was never absent from his thoughts, or the prosperity of that family to whom he had dedicated his faithful life, the noise of ascending footsteps was heard in the sudden stillness, and immediately a loud knocking at the door of his outer chamber.

Surprised at this unaccustomed interruption, Glastonbury rose, and inquired the object of his yet unseen visitor; but, on hearing a well-known voice, the door was instantly unbarred, and Ferdinand Armine, pale as a ghost, and deluged to the skin, appeared before him. Glastonbury ushered his guest into his cell, replenished the fire, re-trimmed the lamp, and placed Ferdinand in his own easy seat.

"My Ferdinand, you have surprised me; but you are wet. I fear, thoroughly?"

"It matters not," said Captain Armine, in a hollow voice.

"From Bath?" inquired Glastonbury.

But his companion did not reply. At length he said, in a voice of utter wretchedness, "Glastonbury, you see before you the most miserable of human beings."

The good father started.

"Yes!" continued Ferdinand; "this is the end of all your care, all your affection, all your hopes, all your sacrifices. It is over, our house is fated, my life draws to an end."

"Speak, my Ferdinand," said Glastonbury, for his pupil seemed to have relapsed into moody silence; "speak to your friend and father. Disburden your mind of the weight that presses on it. Life is never without hope, and while this remains," pointing to the crucifix, "never without consolation."

"I cannot speak; I know not what to say. My brain sinks under the effort. It is a wild, a complicated tale; it relates to feelings with which you cannot sympathize, thoughts that you cannot share. O, Glastonbury! there is no hope; there is no solace."

"Calm yourself, my Ferdinand; not merely as your friend, but as a priest of our holy church, I call upon you to speak to me. Even to me, the humblest of its ministers, is given a power that can sustain the falling and make whole the broken spirit. Speak, and speak fearlessly; nor shrink from exposing the very inmost recesses of your breast, for I can sympathize with your passions, be they even as wild as I believe them."

Ferdinand turned his eyes from the fire, on which he was gazing, and shot a scrutinizing glance at his kind confessor, but the countenance of Glastonbury was placid though serious.

"You remember," Ferdinand at length murmured, "that we met—we met unexpectedly—some six weeks back."

"I have not forgotten it," replied Glastonbury.

"There was a lady," Ferdinand continued, in a hesitating tone.

"Whom I mistook for Miss Grandison," observed Glastonbury, "but who, it turned out, bore another name."

"You know it?"

"I know all; for her father has been here."

"Where are they?" exclaimed Ferdinand eagerly, starting from his seat, and seizing the hand of Glastonbury. "Only tell me where they are—only tell me where Henrietta is—and you will save me, Glastonbury. You will restore me to life, to hope, to heaven."

"I cannot," said Glastonbury, shaking his head. "It is more than ten days ago that I saw this lady's father, for a few brief and painful moments; for what purpose your conscience may inform you. From the unexpected interview between ourselves in the gallery, my consequent misconception, and the conversation which it occasioned, I was not so unprepared for this interview with him as I otherwise might have been. Believe me, Ferdinand, I was as tender to your conduct as was consistent with my duty to my God and to my neighbour."

"You betrayed me, then," said Ferdinand.

"Ferdinand!" said Glastonbury, reproachfully, "I trust that I am free from deceit of any kind. In the present instance I had not even to communicate any thing. Your own conduct had excited suspicion: some visitors from Bath, to this gentleman and his family, had revealed every thing; and, in deference to the claims of an innocent lady, I could not refuse to confirm what was no secret to the world in general—what was already known to them in particular; what was not even doubted—and, alas! not dubitable."

"O! my father, pardon me, pardon me; pardon the only disrespectful expression that ever escaped the lips of your Ferdinand towards you; most humbly do I ask your forgiveness. But if you know all—God! God! my heart is breaking. You have seen her, Glastonbury, you have seen her. Was there ever on earth a being like her? So beautiful, so highly gifted—with a heart as fresh, as fragrant, as the dawn of Eden; and that heart mine—and all lost—all gone and lost. O! why am I alive?" He threw himself back in his chair, and covered his face, and wept.

"I would that deed or labour of mine could restore you both to peace," said Glastonbury, with streaming eyes.

"So innocent, so truly virtuous!" continued Ferdinand. "It seemed to me I never knew what virtue was till I knew her. So frank, so generous! I think I see her now, with that dear smile of hers, that never more may welcome me!"

"My child, I know not what to say—I know not what advice to give—I know not what even to wish. Your situation is so complicated, so mysterious, that it passes my comprehension. There are others whose claims, whose feelings, should be considered. You are not, of course, married?"

Ferdinand shook his head.

"Does Miss Grandison know all?"

"Nothing."

"Your family?"

Ferdinand shook his head again.

"What do you yourself wish? What object are you aiming at? What game have you yourself been playing? I speak not in harshness; but I really do not understand what you have been about. If you have your grandfather's passions, you have his brain too. I did not ever suppose that you were 'infirm of purpose.'"

"I have only one wish, only one object. Since I first saw Henrietta, my heart and resolution have never for an instant faltered; and if I do not now succeed in them, I am determined not to live."

"The God of all goodness have mercy on this distracted house!" exclaimed Glastonbury, as he lifted his pious hands to heaven.

"You went to Bath to communicate this great change to your father," he continued. "Why did you not? Painful as the explanation must be to Miss Grandison, the injustice of your conduct towards her is aggravated by delay."

"There were reasons," said Ferdinand, "reasons which I never intended any one to know—but now I have no secrets. Dear Glastonbury, even amid all this overwhelming misery, my cheek burns when I confess to you that I have, and have had for years, private cares of my own, of no slight nature."

"Debts?" inquired Glastonbury.

"Debts," replied Ferdinand, "and considerable ones."

"Poor child!" exclaimed Glastonbury. "And this drove you to the marriage?"

"To that every worldly consideration impelled me: my heart was free then: in fact I did not know I had a heart, and I thought the marriage would make all happy. But now—as far as I am myself concerned—O! I would sooner be the commonest peasant in this country, with Henrietta Temple for the partner of my life, than live at Armine with all the splendour of my ancestors."

"Honour be to them; they were great men," exclaimed Glastonbury.

"I am their victim," replied Ferdinand. "I owe my ancestors nothing—nay! worse than nothing, I owe them—"

"Hush! hush!" said Glastonbury. "If only for my sake, Ferdinand, be silent."

"For yours, then, not for theirs."

"But why did you remain at Bath?" inquired Glastonbury.

"I had not been there more than a day or two, when my principal creditor came down from town and menaced me. He had a power of attorney from a usurer at Malta, and talked of applying to the Horse Guards. The report that I was going to marry an heiress had kept these fellows quiet; but the delay, and my absence from Bath, had excited his suspicion. Instead, therefore, of coming to an immediate explanation with Katherine, brought about, as I had intended, by my coldness and neglect, I was obliged to be constantly seen with her in public, to prevent myself from being arrested. Yet I wrote to Ducie daily. I had confidence in my energy and skill. I thought that Henrietta might be for a moment annoyed or suspicious; I thought, however, she would be supported by the fervour of my love—I anticipated no other evil. Who could have supposed that these infernal visitors would have come at such a moment to this retired spot!"

"And now, is all known now?" inquired Glastonbury.

"Nothing," replied Ferdinand; "the difficulty

of my position was so great, that I was about to cut the knot, by quitting Bath and leaving a letter addressed to Katherine confessing all. But the sudden silence of Henrietta drove me mad. Day after day elapsed; two, three, four, five, six days, and I heard nothing. The moon was bright—the mail was just going off. I yielded to an irresistible impulse. I bid adieu to no one. I jumped in. I was in London only ten minutes. I dashed to Ducie. It was deserted; an old woman told me the family had gone, had utterly departed. She knew not where, but she thought for foreign parts. I sank down, I tottered to a seat in that hall where I had been so happy. Then it flashed across my mind, that I might discover their course and pursue them. I hurried to the nearest posting town. I found out their route. I lost it forever at the next stage. The clue was gone; it was market-day, and, in a great city, where horses are changed every minute, there is so much confusion, that my inquiries were utterly baffled. And here I am, Mr. Glastonbury," added Ferdinand, with a kind of mad smile. "I have travelled four days, I have not slept a wink, I have tasted no food; but I have drunk, I have drunk well. Here I am, and I have half a mind to set fire to that cursed pile, called Armine Castle, for my funeral pyre."

"Ferdinand, you are not well," said Mr. Glastonbury, grasping his hand. "You need rest. You must retire; indeed you must. I must be obeyed. My bed is yours."

"No! Let me go to my own room," murmured Ferdinand, in a faint voice. "That room where my mother said the day would come—O! what did my mother say? Would there were only mother's love, and then I should not be here or thus."

"I pray you, my child, rest here."

"No! Let us to the Place. For an hour; I shall not sleep more than an hour. I am off again directly the storm is over. If it had not been for the cursed rain, I should have caught them. And yet perhaps they are in countries where there is no rain. Ah! who would believe what happens in this world? Not I for one. Now! give me your arm. Good Glastonbury! you are always the same. You seem to me the only thing in the world that is unchanged."

Glastonbury, with an air of great tenderness and anxiety, led his former pupil down the stairs. The weather was more calm. There were some dark blue rifts in the black sky, which revealed a star or two. Ferdinand said nothing in their progress to the Place except once, when he looked up to the sky, and said, as it were to himself, "She loved the stars."

Glastonbury had some difficulty in rousing the man and his wife, who were the inmates of the Place; but it was not very late, and, fortunately, they had not retired for the night. Lights were brought into Lady Armine's drawing-room. Glastonbury led Ferdinand to a sofa, on which he rather permitted others to place him than seated himself. He took no notice of any thing that was going on, but remained with his eyes open, gazing feebly with a rather vacant air.

Then the good Glastonbury looked to the arrangement of his sleeping-room, drawing the curtains, seeing that the bed was well aired and warmed, and himself adding blocks to the wood fire which soon kindled. Nor did he forget to prepare, with

the aid of the good woman, some hot potion that might soothe and comfort his stricken and exhausted charge, who in this moment of distress and desolation had come as it were and thrown himself on the bosom of his earliest friend. When all was arranged, Glastonbury descended to Ferdinand, whom he found in exactly the same position as that in which he left him. He offered no resistance to the invitation of Glastonbury to retire to his chamber. He neither moved nor spoke, and yet seemed aware of all they were doing. Glastonbury and the stout serving-man bore him to his chamber, relieved him from his wet garments, and placed him in his earliest bed. When Glastonbury bade him good night, Ferdinand faintly pressed his hand, but did not speak; and it was remarkable, that while he passively submitted to their undressing him, and seemed incapable of affording them the slightest aid, yet he thrust forth his hand to guard a lock of dark hair that was placed next to his heart.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH GLASTONBURY FINDS THAT A SERENE TEMPER DOES NOT ALWAYS BRING A SERENE LIFE.

THOSE quiet slumbers, that the regular life and innocent heart of the good Glastonbury generally insured, were sadly broken this night, as he lay awake meditating over the distracted fortunes of the house of Armine. They seemed now indeed to be most turbulent and clouded; and that brilliant and happy future, in which of late he had so fondly indulged, offered nothing but gloom and disquietude. Nor was it indeed the menaced disruption of those ties whose consummation was to restore the greatness and splendour of the family, and all the pain, and disappointment, and mortification, and misery that must be its consequence, that alone made him sorrowful. Glastonbury had a reverence for that passion which sheds such a lustre over existence, and is the pure and prolific source of much of our better conduct; the time had been when he, too, had loved, and with a religious sanctity worthy of his character and office; he had been for a long life the silent and hopeless votary of a passion almost ideal, yet happy though "he never told his love;" and, indeed, although the unconscious mistress of his affections had been long removed from that world where his fidelity was almost her only comfort, that passion had not waned, and the feelings that had been inspired by her presence were now cherished by her memory. His tender and romantic nature, which his venerable gray hairs had neither dulled nor hardened, made him deeply sympathize with his unhappy pupil; the radiant image of Henrietta Temple, too, vividly impressed on his memory as it was, rose up before him; he recollected his joy that the chosen partner of his Ferdinand's bosom should be worthy of her destiny; he thought of this fair creature, perchance in solitude and sickness, a prey to the most mortifying and miserable emotions, with all her fine and generous feelings thrown back upon herself; deeming herself deceived, deserted, outraged, where she had looked for nothing but fidelity, and fondness, and support; losing all confidence in the world and the world's ways; but recently so lively with ex-

pectation and airy with enjoyment, and now aimless, hopeless, wretched—perhaps broken-hearted.

The tears trickled down the pale cheek of Glastonbury, as he revolved in his mind these mournful thoughts; and almost unconsciously he wrung his hands as he felt his utter want of power to remedy these sad and piteous circumstances. Yet he was not absolutely hopeless. There was ever open to the pious Glastonbury one perennial source of trust and consolation. This was a fountain that was ever fresh and sweet, and he took refuge from the world's harsh courses and exhausting cares in its salutary flow and its refreshing shade; when, kneeling before his crucifix, he commended the unhappy Ferdinand and his family to the superintending care of a merciful Omnipotence.

The morning brought fresh anxieties, Glastonbury was at the Place at an early hour, and found Ferdinand in a high state of fever. He had not slept an instant, was very excited, talked of departing immediately, and rambled in his discourse. Glastonbury blamed himself for having left him for a moment, and resolved to do so no more. He endeavoured to soothe him; assured him that if he would be calm, all would go well; and they would consult together what was best to be done: and that he would make inquiries after the Temple family. In the mean time he despatched the servant for the most eminent physician of the county; but, as hours must necessarily elapse before his arrival, the difficulty of keeping Ferdinand still was very great. Talk he would, and of nothing but Henrietta. It was really agonizing to listen to his frantic appeals to Glastonbury, to exert himself to discover her abode; yet Glastonbury never left his side; and with promises, expressions of confidence, and the sway of an affected calmness—for in truth dear Glastonbury was scarcely less agitated than his patient—Ferdinand was prevented from rising, and the physician at length arrived.

After examining Ferdinand, with whom he remained a very short space, this gentleman quietly invited Glastonbury to descend below, and they left the patient in the charge of the servant.

"This is a bad case," said the physician.

"Almighty God preserve him!" exclaimed the agitated Glastonbury. "Tell me the worst!"

"Where are Sir Ratcliffe and Lady Armine?"

"At Bath."

"They must be sent for instantly."

"Is there any hope?"

"There is hope; that is all. I shall now bleed him copiously, and then blister; but I can do little. We must trust to nature. I am afraid of the brain. I cannot account for his state by his getting wet, or his rapid travelling. Has he any thing on his mind?"

"Much," said Glastonbury.

The physician shook his head.

"It is a precious life!" said Glastonbury, seizing his arm. "My dear doctor, you must not leave us."

They returned to the bed-chamber.

"Captain Armine," said the physician, taking his hand and seating himself on the bed, "you have a bad cold and some fever—I think we should lose a little blood."

"Can I leave Armine to-day, if I am blooded?" inquired Ferdinand, eagerly. "For go I must."

"I would not move to-day," said the physician.

I must, indeed I must. Mr. Glastonbury will tell you I must."

"If you set off early to-morrow, you will get over as much ground in four-and-twenty hours as if you went this evening," said the physician, fixing the bandage on the arm as he spoke, and nodding to Mr. Glastonbury to prepare the basin.

"To-morrow morning?" said Ferdinand.

"Yes, to-morrow," said the physician, opening his lancet.

"Are you sure that I shall be able to set off to-morrow?" said Ferdinand.

"Quite," said the physician, opening the vein.

The dark blood flowed sullenly; the physician exchanged an anxious glance with Glastonbury; at length the arm was bandaged up, a composing draught, with which the physician had been prepared, given to his patient, and the doctor and Glastonbury withdrew. The former now left Armine for three hours, and Glastonbury prepared himself for his painful office of communicating to the parents the imminent danger of their only child.

Never had a more difficult task devolved upon an individual than that which now fell to the lot of the good Glastonbury in conducting the affairs of a family labouring under such remarkable misconceptions as to the position and views of its various members. It immediately occurred to him, that it was highly probable that Miss Grandison, at such a crisis, would choose to accompany the parents of her intended husband. What incident, under the present circumstances, could be more awkward and more painful? Yet how to prevent its occurrence? How crude to communicate the real state of such affairs at any time by letter! How impossible at the moment he was preparing the parents for the alarming, perhaps fatal, illness of their child, to enter on such subjects at all, much more when the very revelation, at a moment which required all their energy and promptitude, would only be occasioning at Bath scenes scarcely less distracting and disastrous than those occurring at Armine. It was clearly impossible to enter into any details at present; and yet Glastonbury, while he penned the sorrowful lines, and softened the sad communication with his sympathy, added a somewhat sly postscript, wherein he impressed upon Lady Armine the advisability, for various reasons, that she should only be accompanied by her husband

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH FERDINAND ARMINE IS MUCH CONCERNED.

THE contingency which Glastonbury feared, surely happened. Miss Grandison insisted upon immediately rushing to her Ferdinand; and as the maiden aunt was still an invalid, and was quite incapable of enduring the fatigues of a rapid and anxious journey, she was left behind. Within a few hours of the receipt of Glastonbury's letter, Sir Ratcliffe and Lady Armine, and their niece, were on their way. They found letters from Glastonbury in London, which made them travel to Armine, even through the night.

In spite of all his remedies, the brain fever,

which the physician foresaw, had occurred; and when his family arrived, the life of Ferdinand was not only in danger, but desperate. It was impossible even that the parents could see their child, and no one was allowed to enter his chamber but his nurse, the physician, and occasionally Glastonbury; for this name, with others less familiar to the household, sounded so often on the frenzied lips of the sufferer, that it was recommended that Glastonbury should often be at his bedside. Yet he must leave it, to receive the wretched Sir Ratcliffe and his wife, and their disconsolate companion. Never was so much unhappiness congregated together under one roof; and yet, perhaps, Glastonbury, though the only one who retained the least command over himself, was, with his sad secret, the most wo-begone of the tribe.

As for Lady Armine, she sat without the door of her son's chamber the whole day and night, clasping a crucifix in her hands; nor would she ever undress, or lie down, except upon a sofa which was placed for her, but was absorbed in silent prayer. Sir Ratcliffe remained below, prostrate. The unhappy Katherine in vain offered the consolation she herself so needed; and would have wandered about that Armine of which she had heard so much, and where she was to have been so happy, a forlorn and solitary being, had it not been for the attentions of the considerate Glastonbury, who embraced every opportunity of being her companion. His patience, his heavenly resignation, his pious hope, his vigilant care, his spiritual consolation, occasionally even the gleams of agreeable converse with which he attempted to divert her brooding mind, consoled and maintained her. How often did she look at his benignant countenance, and not wonder that the Armines were so attached to this engaging and devoted friend.

For three days did this unhappy family expect in terrible anticipation that each moment would witness the last event in the life of their son. His distracted voice caught too often the vigilant and agonized ear of his mother; yet she gave no evidence of the pang, except by clasping her crucifix with increased energy. She had promised the physician that she would command herself, that no sound should escape her lips, and she rigidly fulfilled the contract on which she was permitted to remain.

On the eve of the fourth day Ferdinand, who had never yet closed his eyes, but who had become, during the last twelve hours, somewhat more composed, fell into a slumber. The physician lightly dropped the hand which he had scarcely ever quitted, and, stealing out of the room, beckoned, his finger pressed to his lip, to Lady Armine to follow him. Assured by the symbol that the worst had not yet happened, she followed the physician to the end of the gallery, and he then told her that immediate danger was past. Lady Armine swooned in his arms.

"And now, my dear madam," said the physician to her, when she had revived, "you must breathe some fresh air. Oblige me by descending."

Lady Armine no longer refused; she repaired with a slow step to Sir Ratcliffe: she leaned upon her husband's breast as she murmured to him her hopes. They went forth together. Katherine and Glastonbury were in the garden. The appearance of Lady Armine gave them hopes. There was a faint smile on her face which needed not words to

explain it. Katherine sprang forward, and threw her arms around her aunt's neck.

"He may be saved, he may be saved," whispered the mother; for in this hushed house of impending death they had lost almost the power, as well as the habit of speaking in any other tone.

"He sleeps," said the physician, "all present danger is past."

"It is too great joy," murmured Katherine; and Glastonbury advanced and caught in his arms her insensible form.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH FERDINAND BEGINS TO GET A LITTLE TROUBLESOME.

FROM the moment of this happy slumber, Ferdinand continued to improve. Each day the bulletin was more favourable, until his progress, though slow, was declared certain, and even relapse was no longer apprehended. But his physician would not allow him to see any one of his family. It was at night, and during his slumbers, that Lady Armine stole into his room to gaze upon her beloved child; and if he moved even in the slightest degree, faithful to her promise and the injunction of the physician, she instantly glided behind his curtain, or a large Indian screen which she had placed there purposely. Often, indeed, did she remain in this fond lurking-place, silent and trembling, when her child was even awake, listening to every breath, and envying the nurse, that might gaze on him undisturbed; nor would she allow any sustenance that he was ordered, to be prepared by any but her own fair, fond hands; and she brought it herself even to his door. For Ferdinand himself, though his replies to the physician satisfactorily attested the healthy calmness of his mind, he indeed otherwise never spoke, but lay on his bed without repining, and seemingly plunged in mild and pensive abstraction. At length one morning he inquired for Glastonbury, who, with the sanction of the physician, immediately attended him.

When he met the eye of that faithful friend, he tried to extend his hand. It was so wan, that Glastonbury trembled while he touched it.

"I have given you much trouble," he said in a faint voice.

"I think only of the happiness of your recovery," said Glastonbury.

"Yes, I am recovered," murmured Ferdinand; "it was not my wish."

"O! be grateful to God for this great mercy, my Ferdinand."

"You have heard nothing?" inquired Ferdinand.

Glastonbury shook his head.

"Fear not to speak; I can struggle no more. I am resigned. I am very much changed."

"You will be happy, dear Ferdinand," said Glastonbury, to whom this mood gave hopes.

"Never" he said in a more energetic tone. "Never."

"There are so many that love you," said Glastonbury, leading his thoughts to his family.

"Love!" exclaimed Ferdinand, with a sigh, and in a tone almost reproachful.

"You dear mother," said Glastonbury.

"Yes! my dear mother," replied Ferdinand, musingly. Then in a quicker tone. "Does she know of my illness? Did you write to them?"

"She knows of it."

"She will be coming, then. I dread her coming. I can bear to see no one. You, dear Glastonbury, you—it is a consolation to see you, because you have seen"—and here his voice faltered—"you have seen—her."

"My Ferdinand, think only of your health; and happiness, believe me, will yet be yours."

"If you could only find out where she is," continued Ferdinand, "and go to her. Yes! my dear Glastonbury, good, dear Glastonbury, go to her," he added in an imploring tone; "she would believe you; every one believes you. I cannot go, I am powerless; and if I went, alas! she would not believe me."

"It is my wish to do every thing you desire," said Glastonbury, "I should be content to be ever labouring for your happiness. But I can do nothing unless you are calm."

"I am calm; I will be calm; I will act entirely as you wish. Only I beseech you see her."

"On that head let us say no more," replied Glastonbury, who feared that excitement might lead to relapse; yet anxious to soothe him, he added, "Trust in my humble services ever, and in the bounty of a merciful Providence."

"I have had dreadful dreams," said Ferdinand. "I thought I was in a farmhouse; every thing was so clear, so vivid. Night after night she seemed to be sitting on this bed. I touched her, her hand was in mine, it was so burning hot! Once, O! once, once I thought she had forgiven me!"

"Hush! hush! hush!"

"No more: we will speak of her no more. When comes my mother?"

"You may see her to-morrow, or the day after."

"Ah! Glastonbury, she is here."

"She is."

"Is she alone?"

"Your father is with her."

"My mother and my father. It is well." Then after a minute's pause he added with some earnestness, "Do not deceive me, Glastonbury; see what deceit has brought me to. Are you sure that they are quite alone?"

"There are none here but your dearest friends, none whose presence should give you the slightest care."

"There is one," said Ferdinand.

"Dear Ferdinand, let me now leave you, or sit by your side in silence. To-morrow you will see your mother."

"To-morrow. Ah! to-morrow. Once to me to-morrow was brighter even than to-day." He turned his back and spoke no more: Glastonbury glided out of the room.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTAINING THE INTIMATION OF A SOMEWHAT MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURE.

It was absolutely necessary that Lady Armine's interview with her son should be confined merely

to observations about his health. Any allusion to the past might not only produce a relapse of his fever, but occasion explanations, at all times most painful, but at the present full of difficulty and danger. It was therefore with feelings of no uncommon anxiety, that Glastonbury prepared the mother for this first visit to her son, and impressed upon her the absolute necessity of not making any allusion at present to Miss Grandison, and especially to her presence in the house. He even made for this purpose a sort of half-confidant of the physician, who, in truth, had heard enough during the fever to excite his suspicions; but this is a class of men essentially discreet, and it is well, for few are the family secrets ultimately concealed from them.

The interview occurred without any disagreeable results. The next day, Ferdinand saw his father for a few minutes. In a few days, Lady Armine was established as nurse to her son; Sir Ratcliffe, easy in his mind, amused himself with his sports; and Glastonbury devoted himself to Miss Grandison. The intimacy, indeed, between the tutor of Ferdinand and his intended bride became daily more complete, and Glastonbury was almost her inseparable companion. She found him a very interesting one. He was the most agreeable guide amid all the haunts of Armine and its neighbourhood, and drove her delightfully in Lady Armine's pony phaeton. He could share, too, all her pursuits, and open to her many new ones. Though time had stolen something of its force from the voice of Adrian Glastonbury, it still was wondrous sweet; his musical accomplishments were complete; and he could guide the pencil or prepare the herbal, and indite fair stanzas in his fine Italian handwriting in a lady's album. All his collections, too, were at Miss Grandison's service. She handled with rising curiosity his medals, copied his choice drawings, and even began to study heraldry. His interesting conversation, his mild and benignant manners, his captivating simplicity, and the elegant purity of his mind, secured her confidence and won her heart. She loved him as a father, and he soon exercised over her an influence almost irresistible.

Every morning as soon as he awoke, every evening before he composed himself again for his night's repose, Ferdinand sent for Glastonbury, and always saw him alone. At first he requested his mother to leave the room, but Lady Armine, who attributed these regular visits to a spiritual cause, scarcely needed the expression of this desire. His first questions to Glastonbury were ever the same. "Had he heard any thing? Were there any letters? He thought there might be a letter—was he sure? Had he sent to Bath—to London—for his letters?" When he was answered in the negative, he usually dwelt no more upon the subject. One morning he said to Glastonbury, "I know Katherine is in the house."

"Miss Grandison *is* here," replied Glastonbury.

"Why don't they mention her? Is all known?"

"Nothing is known," said Glastonbury.

"Why don't they mention her, then? Are you sure all is not known?"

"At my suggestion, her name has not been mentioned. I was unaware how you might receive the intelligence; but the true cause of my suggestion is still a secret."

"I must see her," said Ferdinand, "I must speak to her."

"You can see her when you please," replied Glastonbury; "but I would not speak upon the great subject at present."

"But she is existing all this time under a delusion. Every day makes my conduct to her more infamous."

"Miss Grandison is a wise and most admirable young lady," said Glastonbury. "I love her from the bottom of my heart; I would recommend no conduct that could injure her, assuredly none that can disgrace you."

"Dear Glastonbury, what shall I do?"

"Be silent; the time will come when you may speak. At present, however anxious she may be to see you, there are plausible reasons for your not meeting. Be patient, my Ferdinand."

"Good Glastonbury, good, dear Glastonbury, I am too quick and fretful. Pardon me, dear friend. You know not what I feel. Thank God you do not, but my heart is broken."

When Glastonbury returned to the library, he found Sir Ratcliffe playing with his dogs, and Miss Grandison copying a drawing.

"How is Ferdinand?" inquired the father.

"He mends daily," replied Glastonbury. "If only May-day were at hand instead of Christmas, he would soon be himself again; but I dread the winter."

"And yet the sun shines?" said Miss Grandison.

Glastonbury went to the window and looked at the sky. "I think, my dear lady, we might almost venture upon our promised excursion to the Abbey to-day. Such a day as this may not quickly be repeated. We might take our sketch book."

"It would be delightful," said Miss Grandison; "but before I go, I must pick some flowers for Ferdinand." So saying, she sprang from her seat, and ran out into the garden.

"Kate is a sweet creature," said Sir Ratcliffe to Glastonbury. "Ah! my dear Glastonbury, you know not what happiness I experience in the thought that she will soon be my daughter."

Glastonbury could not refrain from sighing. He took up the pencil and touched her drawing.

"Do you know, dear Glastonbury," resumed Sir Ratcliffe, "I had little hope in our late visitation. I cannot say I had prepared myself for the worst, but I anticipated it. We have had so much unhappiness in our family, that I could not persuade myself that the cup was not going to be dashed from our lips."

"God is merciful," said Glastonbury.

"You are his minister, dear Glastonbury, and a worthy one. I know not what we should have done without you in this awful trial; but, indeed, what could I have done throughout life without you?"

"Let us hope that every thing is for the best," said Glastonbury.

"And his mother, his poor mother—what would have become of her! She never could have survived his loss. As for myself, I would have quitted England forever, and gone into a monastery."

"Let us only remember that he lives," said Glastonbury.

"And that we shall soon all be happy," said Sir Ratcliffe, in a more animated tone. "The

future is, indeed, full of solace. But we must take care of him; he is too rapid in his movements. He has my father's blood in him, that is clear. I never could well make out why he left Bath so suddenly, and rushed down in so strange a manner to this place."

"Youth is impetuous," said Glastonbury.

"It was lucky you were here, Glastonbury."

"I thank God that I was," said Glastonbury, earnestly; then checking himself, he added—"that I have been of any use."

"You are always of use. What should we do without you? I should long ago have sunk. Ah! Glastonbury, God in his mercy sent you to us."

"See here," said Katherine, entering, her fair cheek glowing with animation; "only dahlias, but they will look pretty, and enliven his room. O! that I might write him a little word, and tell him I am here! Do not you think I might, Mr. Glastonbury?"

"He will know that you are here to-day," said Glastonbury. "To-morrow—"

"You always postpone it," said Miss Grandison, in a tone half playful, half reproachful; "and yet it is selfish to murmur. It is for his good that I bear this bereavement, and that thought should console me. Heigho!"

Sir Ratcliffe stepped forward and kissed his niece. Glastonbury was busied on the drawing; he turned away his face, for a tear was trickling down his cheek.

Sir Ratcliffe took up his gun. "God bless you, dear Kate," he said: "a pleasant drive and a choice sketch. We shall meet at dinner."

"At dinner, dear uncle; and better sport than yesterday."

"Ha! ha!" said Sir Ratcliffe. "But Armine is not like Grandison. If I were in the old preserves, you should have no cause to sneer at my sportsmanship."

Miss Grandison's good wishes were prophetic: Sir Ratcliffe found excellent sport, and returned home very late, and in capital spirits. It was the dinner hour, and yet Katherine and Glastonbury had not returned. He was rather surprised. The shades of evening were fast descending, and the distant lawns of Armine were already invisible; the low moan of the rising wind might be just distinguished; and the coming night promised to be raw and cloudy, perhaps tempestuous. Sir Ratcliffe stood before the crackling fire in the dining-room, otherwise in darkness—but the flame threw a bright yet glancing light upon the Snyders, so that the figures seemed really to move in the shifting shades, the eye of the infuriate boar almost to emit sparks of rage, and there wanted but the shouts of the huntsmen and the panting of the dogs to complete the tumult of the chase.

Just as Sir Ratcliffe was anticipating some mischance to his absent friends, and was about to steal upon tiptoe to Lady Armine, who was with Ferdinand, to consult her, the practised ear of a man who lived much in the air caught the distant sound of wheels, and he went out to welcome them.

"Why, you are late," said Sir Ratcliffe, as the phaeton approached the house. "All right, I hope."

He stepped forward to assist Miss Grandison. The darkness of the evening prevented him from observing her swollen eyes and agitated countenance. She sprang out of the carriage in silence, and immediately ran up into her room. As for

Glastonbury, he only observed it was very cold, and entered the house with Sir Ratcliffe.

"This fire is hearty," said Glastonbury, warming himself before it; "you have had good sport, I hope! We are not to wait dinner for Miss Grandison, Sir Ratcliffe. She will not come down this evening; she is not very well."

"Not very well! Ah! the cold, I fear. You have been very imprudent in staying so late. I must run and tell Lady Armine."

"Oblige me, I pray, by not doing so," said Glastonbury; "Miss Grandison most particularly requested that she should not be disturbed."

It was with difficulty that Glastonbury could contrive that Miss Grandison's wishes should be complied with; but at length he succeeded in getting Sir Ratcliffe to sit down to dinner, and affecting a cheerfulness which was, indeed, far from his spirit. The hour of ten at length arrived, and Glastonbury, before retiring to his tower, paid his evening visit to Ferdinand.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH THE FAMILY PERPLEXITIES RATHER INCREASE THAN DIMINISH.

If ever there were a man who deserved a serene and happy life, it was Adrian Glastonbury. He had pursued a long career without injuring or offending a human being; his character and conduct were alike spotless; he was void of guile; he had never told a falsehood, never been entangled in the slightest deceit; he was very easy in his circumstances; he had no relations to prey upon his purse or his feelings; and though alone in the world, was blessed with such a sweet and benignant temper, gifted with so many resources, and adorned with so many accomplishments, that he appeared to be always employed, amused, and content. And yet, by a strange contrariety of events, it appeared this excellent person had become placed in a situation which is generally the consequence of impetuous passions not very scrupulous in obtaining their ends. That breast, which heretofore would have shrunk from being analyzed only from the refined modesty of its nature, had now become the repository of terrible secrets; the day could scarcely pass over without finding him in a position which rendered equivocation on his part almost a necessity; while all the anxieties inseparable from pecuniary embarrassments were forced upon his attention, and his feelings were racked from sympathy with individuals who were bound to him by no other tie, but to whose welfare he felt himself engaged to sacrifice all his pursuits, and devote all his time and labour. And yet he did not murmur, although he had scarcely hope to animate him. In whatever light he viewed coming events, they appeared ominous only of evil. All that he aimed at now was to soothe and support, and it was his unshaken confidence in Providence that alone forbade him to despair.

When he repaired to the Place in the morning, he found every thing in confusion. Miss Grandison was very unwell; and Lady Armine, frightened by the recent danger from which they had escaped, very alarmed. She could no longer conceal from Ferdinand that his Katherine was here, and perhaps

Lady Armine was somewhat surprised at the calmness with which her son received the intelligence. But Miss Grandison was not only very unwell, but very obstinate. She would not leave her room, but insisted that no medical advice should be called in. Lady Armine protested, supplicated, adjured; Miss Grandison appealed to Mr. Glastonbury; and Glastonbury, who was something of a physician, was called in, and was obliged to assure Lady Armine that Miss Grandison was only suffering from a cold, and only required repose. A very warm friendship subsisted between Lady Armine and her niece. She had always been Katherine's favourite aunt, and during the past year there had been urgent reasons why Lady Armine should have cherished this predisposition in her favour. Lady Armine was a very fascinating person, and all her powers had been employed to obtain an influence over the heiress. They had been quite successful. Miss Grandison looked forward almost with as much pleasure to being Lady Armine's daughter as her son's bride. The intended mother-in-law was in turn as warm-hearted as her niece was engaging; and eventually Lady Armine loved Katherine, not merely because she was to marry her son, and make his fortune.

In a few days, however, Miss Grandison announced she was quite recovered, and Lady Armine again devoted her unbroken attention to her son, who was now about to rise for the first time from his bed. But, although Miss Grandison was no longer an invalid, it is quite certain that if the attention of the other members of the family had not been so entirely engrossed, that a very great change in her behaviour could not have escaped their notice. Her flowers and drawings seemed to have lost their relish; her gaiety to have deserted her. She passed a great portion of the morning in her own room, and although it was announced to her that Ferdinand was aware of her being an inmate of the Place, and that in a day or two they might meet, she scarcely evinced, at this prospect of resuming his society, as much gratification as might have been expected; and though she daily took care that his chamber should still be provided with flowers, it might have been remarked that the note she had been so anxious to send him, was never written. But how much, under the commonest course of circumstances, happens in all domestic circles, that is never observed, or never remarked, till the observation is too late!

At length the day arrived when Lady Armine invited her niece to visit her son. Miss Grandison expressed her readiness to accompany her aunt, but took an opportunity of requesting Glastonbury to join them; and all three proceeded to the chamber of the invalid.

The white curtain of the room was drawn, but though the light was softened, the apartment was by no means obscure. Ferdinand was sitting in an easy chair, supported by pillows. A black handkerchief was just twined round his forehead, for his head had been shaved, except a few curls on the side and front, which looked stark and lustreless. He was so thin and pale, and his eyes and cheeks were so wan and hollow, that it was scarcely credible that in so short a space of time a man could have become such a wreck. When he saw Katherine he involuntarily dropped his eyes, but extended his hand to her with some effort of earnestness. She was almost as pale as he, but she took his hand.

It was so light and cold, it felt so much like death, that the tears stole down her cheek.

"You hardly know me, Katherine," said Ferdinand, very feebly. "This is good of you to visit a sick man."

Miss Grandison could not reply, and Lady Armine made an observation to break the awkward pause.

"And how do you like Armine?" said Ferdinand. "I wish that I could be your guide. But Glastonbury is so kind!"

A hundred times Miss Grandison tried to reply, to speak, to make the commonest observation, but it was in vain. She grew paler every moment; her lips moved, but they sent forth no sound.

"Kate is not well," said Lady Armine. "She has been very unwell. This visit," she added in a whisper to Ferdinand, "is a little too much for her."

Ferdinand sighed.

"Mother," he at length said, "you must ask Katherine to come and sit here with you; if indeed she will not feel the imprisonment."

Miss Grandison turned in her chair, and hid her face with her handkerchief.

"My sweet child," said Lady Armine, rising and kissing her, "this is too much for you. You really must restrain yourself. Ferdinand will soon be himself again, he will indeed."

Miss Grandison sobbed aloud. Glastonbury was much distressed, but Ferdinand avoided catching his eye; and yet, at last, Ferdinand said with an effort and in a very kind voice, "Dear Kate, come and sit by me."

Miss Grandison went into hysterics, Ferdinand sprang from his chair and seized her hand; Lady Armine tried to restrain her son; Glastonbury held the agitated Katherine.

"For God's sake, Ferdinand, be calm," exclaimed Lady Armine. "This is most unfortunate. Dear, dear Katherine—but she has such a heart! All the women have in our family, but none of the men, 'tis so odd. Mr. Glastonbury, water if you please, that glass of water—*sal volatile*; where is the *sal volatile*? My own, own Katherine, pray, pray restrain yourself! Ferdinand is here; remember Ferdinand is here, and he will soon be well; soon quite well. Believe me, he is already quite another thing. There, drink that, darling, drink that. You are better now?"

"I am so foolish," said Miss Grandison, in a mournful voice. "I can never pardon myself for this. Let me go."

Glastonbury bore her out of the room; Lady Armine turned to her son. He was lying back in his chair, his hands covering his eyes. The mother stole gently to him, and wiped tenderly his brow, on which hung the light drops of perspiration, occasioned by his recent exertion.

"We have done too much, my own Ferdinand. Yet who could have expected that dear girl would have been so affected? Glastonbury was indeed right in preventing you so long from meeting. And yet it is a blessing to see that she has so fond a heart. You are fortunate, my Ferdinand; you will indeed be happy with her."

Ferdinand groaned.

"I shall never be happy," he murmured.

"Never happy, my Ferdinand! O! you must not be so low-spirited. Think how much better you are; think, my Ferdinand, what a change there is for the better. You will soon be well, dearest, and

then, my love, you know you cannot help being happy."

"Mother," said Ferdinand, "you are deceived, you are all deceived—I, I—"

"No! Ferdinand, indeed we are not. I am confident, and I praise God for it, that you are getting better every day. But you have done too much, that is the truth. I will leave you now, love, and send the nurse, for my presence excites you. Try to sleep, darling." And Lady Armine rang the bell and quitted the room.

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH SOME LIGHT IS THROWN UPON SOME CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WERE BEFORE RATHER MYSTERIOUS.

LADY ARMINE now proposed that the family should meet in Ferdinand's room after dinner; but Glastonbury, whose opinion on most subjects generally prevailed, scarcely approved of this suggestion. It was, therefore, but once acted upon during the week that followed the scene described in our last chapter, and on that evening Miss Grandison had so very severe a headach, that it was quite impossible for her to join the circle. At length, however, Ferdinand made his appearance below, and established himself in the library: it now, therefore, became absolutely necessary that Miss Grandison should steel her nerves to the altered state of her betrothed, which had at first apparently so much affected her sensibility, and, by the united influence of habit and Mr. Glastonbury, it is astonishing what progress she made. She even at last could so command her feelings, that she apparently greatly contributed to his amusement. She joined in the family concerts, once even read to him. Every morning, too, she brought him a flower, and often offered him her arm. And yet Ferdinand could not resist observing a very great difference in her behaviour towards him since he had last quitted her at Bath. Far from conducting herself as he had nervously apprehended, as if her claim to be his companion were irresistible, her carriage, on the contrary, indicated the most retiring disposition; she annoyed him with no expressions of fondness, and listened to the kind words which he occasionally urged himself to bestow upon her, with a sentiment of grave regard and placid silence, which almost filled him with astonishment.

One morning, the weather being clear and fine, Ferdinand insisted that his mother, who had as yet scarcely quitted his side, should drive out with Sir Ratcliffe; and, as he would take no refusal, Lady Armine agreed to comply. The carriage was ordered, was at the door; and as Lady Armine bade him adieu, Ferdinand rose from his seat and took the arm of Miss Grandison, who seemed on the point of retiring; for Glastonbury remained, and therefore Ferdinand was not without a companion.

"I will see you go off," said Ferdinand.

"Adieu!" said Lady Armine. "Take care of him, dear Kate," and the phaeton was soon out of sight.

"It is more like May than January," said Ferdinand to his cousin. "I fancy I should like to walk a little."

"Shall I send for Mr. Glastonbury?" said Katherine.

"Not if my arm be not too heavy for you," said Ferdinand. So they walked slowly on, perhaps some fifty yards, until they arrived at a garden-seat, very near the rose tree whose flowers Henrietta Temple had so much admired. It had no flowers now, but seemed as desolate as their unhappy loves.

"A moment's rest," said Ferdinand, and sighed.

"Dear Kate, I wish to speak to you."

Miss Grandison turned very pale.

"I have something on my mind, Katherine, of which I would endeavour to relieve myself."

Miss Grandison did not reply, but she trembled.

"It concerns you, Katherine."

Still she was silent, and expressed no astonishment at this strange address.

"If I were any thing now but an object of pity, a miserable and broken-hearted man," continued Ferdinand, "I might shrink from this communication; I might delegate to another this office, humiliating as it might then be to me, painful as it must, under any circumstances, be to you. But," and here his voice faltered, "but I am far beyond the power of any mortification now. The world, and the world's ways touch me no more. There is a duty to fulfil—I will fulfil it. I have offended against you, my sweet and gentle cousin—grievously, bitterly, infamously offended."

"No, no, no!" murmured Miss Grandison.

"Katherine, I am unworthy of you; I have deceived you. It is neither for your honour nor your happiness that these ties, which our friends anticipate, should occur between us. But, Katherine, you are avenged."

"O! I want no vengeance!" muttered Miss Grandison, her face pale as marble, her eyes convulsively closed. "Cease, cease, Ferdinand; this conversation is madness; you will be ill again."

"No, Katherine, I am calm. Fear not for me. There is much to tell; it must be told, if only that you should not believe that I was a systematic villain, or that my feelings were engaged to another when I breathed to you those vows—"

"O! any thing but that; speak of any thing but that!"

Ferdinand took her hand.

"Katherine, listen to me. I honour you, my gentle cousin, I admire, I esteem you; I could die content if I could but see you happy. With your charms and virtues, I thought that we might be happy. My intentions were as sincere as my belief in our future felicity. O! no, dear Katherine, I could not trifle with so pure and gentle a bosom."

"Have I accused you, Ferdinand?"

"But you will—when you know all."

"I do know all," said Miss Grandison, in a hollow voice.

Her hand fell from the weak and trembling grasp of her cousin.

"You do know all!" he at length exclaimed. "And can you, knowing all, live under the same roof with me! Can you see me! Can you listen to me? Is not my voice torture to you? Do you not hate and despise me?"

"It is not my nature to hate any thing; least of all could I hate you."

"And could you, knowing all, still minister to all my wants and watch my sad necessities? This gentle arm of yours, could you, knowing all, let me lean upon it this morning? O! Katherine, a happy lot be yours, for you deserve one!"

"Ferdinand, I have acted as duty, religion, and,

t may be, some other considerations, prompted me. My feelings have not been so much considered that they need now be analyzed."

"Reproach me, Katherine—I deserve *your* reproaches."

"Mine may not be the only reproaches that you have deserved, Ferdinand; but permit me to remark, from me you have received none. I pity you, I sincerely pity you."

"Glastonbury has told you?" said Ferdinand.

"That communication is among the other good offices we owe him," replied Miss Grandison.

"He told you?" said Ferdinand, inquiringly.

"All that was necessary I should know for your honour, or, as some might think, for my own happiness; no more, I would listen to no more. I had no idle curiosity to gratify. It is enough that your heart is another's; I seek not, I wish not to know that person's name."

"I cannot mention it," said Ferdinand; "but there is no secret from you. Glastonbury may, should tell all."

"Amid the wretched, she is not the least miserable," said Miss Grandison.

"O! Katherine," said Ferdinand, after a moment's pause, "tell me that you do not hate me; tell me that you pardon me; tell me that you think me more mad than wicked!"

"Ferdinand," said Miss Grandison, "I think we are both unfortunate."

"I am without hope," said Ferdinand: "but you, Katherine, your life must still be bright and fair."

"I can never be happy, Ferdinand, if you are not. I am alone in the world. Your family are my only relations; I cling to them. Your mother is my mother; I love her with the passion of a child. I looked upon our union only as the seal of that domestic feeling that had long bound us all. My happiness now entirely depends upon your family, theirs I feel is staked upon you. It is the conviction of the total desolation that must occur, if our estrangement be suddenly made known to them—and you, who are so impetuous, decide upon any rash course, in consequence—that has induced me to sustain the painful part I now uphold. This is the reason that I would not reproach you, Ferdinand, that I would not quarrel with you, that I would not desert them in this hour of their affliction."

"Katherine, beloved Katherine!" exclaimed the distracted Ferdinand, "why did we ever part?"

"No, Ferdinand, let us not deceive ourselves. For me, that separation, however fruitful, at the present moment, in mortification and unhappiness, must not be considered altogether an event of unmingled misfortune. In my opinion, Ferdinand, it is better to be despised for a moment, than to be neglected for a life."

"Despised! Katherine, for God's sake spare me; for God's sake do not use such language! Despised! Katherine, at this moment I declare most solemnly all that I feel is, how thoroughly, how infamously unworthy I am of you! Dearest Katherine, we cannot recall the past, we cannot amend it, but let me assure you that at this very hour there is no being on earth I more esteem, more reverence, than yourself."

"It is well, Ferdinand. I would not willingly relieve that your feelings towards me were otherwise than kind and generous. But let us under-

stand each other. I shall remain at present under this roof. Do not misapprehend my views. I seek not to recall your afflictions. The past has proved to me that we are completely unfitted for each other. I have not those dazzling qualities that could enchain a fiery brain like yours. I know myself; I know you; and there is nothing that would fill me with more terror now than our anticipated union. And, now, after this frank conversation, let our future intercourse be cordial and unembarrassed; let us remember we are kinsfolk. The feelings between us should by nature be kind and amiable: no incident has occurred to disturb them; for I have not injured or offended you; and as for your conduct towards me, from the bottom of my heart I pardon and forget it."

"Katherine," said Ferdinand, with streaming eyes, "kindest, most generous of women! My heart is too moved, my spirit too broken, to express what I feel. We are kinsfolk; let us be more. You say my mother is your mother. Let me be assert the privilege of that admission. Let me be a brother to you; you shall find me, if I live, a faithful one."

CHAPTER XV.

WHICH LEAVES AFFAIRS IN GENERAL IN A SCARCELY MORE SATISFACTORY POSITION THAN THE FORMER ONE.

FERDINAND felt much calmer in his mind after this conversation with his cousin. Her affectionate attention to him now, instead of filling him, as it did before, with remorse, was really a source of consolation, if that be not too strong a phrase to describe the state of one so thoroughly wretched as Captain Armine; for his terrible illness and impending death had not in the slightest degree allayed or affected his profound passion for Henrietta Temple. Her image unceasingly engaged his thoughts; he still clung to the wild idea that she might yet be his. But his health improved so slowly, that there was faint hope of his speedily taking any steps to induce such a result. All his inquiries after her—and Glastonbury, at his suggestion, had not been idle—were quite fruitless. He made no doubt that she had quitted England. What might not happen, far away from him, and believing herself betrayed and deserted? Often, when he brooded over these terrible contingencies, he regretted his recovery.

Yet his family—thanks to the considerate conduct of his admirable cousin—were still content and happy. His slow convalescence now was their only source of anxiety. They regretted the unfavourable season of the year: they looked forward with hope to the genial influence of the coming spring. That was to cure all their cares; and yet they might well suspect, when they watched his ever pensive and often suffering, countenance, that there were deeper causes than physical debility and bodily pain to account for that moody and wo-begone expression. Alas! how changed from that Ferdinand Armine, so full of hope, and courage, and youth, and beauty, that had burst upon their enraptured vision, on his return from Malta. Where was that gaiety now that made all eyes sparkle, that vivacious spirit that kindled energy in every bosom? How miserable to see him crawling

about with a wretched stick, with his thin, pale face, and tottering limbs, and scarcely any other pursuit than to creep about the plaisance, where, when the day was fair, his servant would place a campstool opposite the cedar tree where he had first beheld Henrietta Temple; and there he would sit, until the unkind winter breeze would make him shiver, gazing on vacancy; yet peopled to his mind's eye with beautiful and fearful apparitions.

And it is love, it is the most delightful of human passions, that can bring about such misery! Why will its true course never run smooth! Is there a spell upon our heart that its finest emotions should lead only to despair? When Ferdinand Armine, in his reveries, dwelt upon the past; when he recalled the hour that he had first seen her, her first glance, the first sound of her voice, his visit to Ducie, all the passionate scenes to which it led—those sweet wanderings through its enchanted bowers—those bright mornings, so full of expectation that was never balked—those soft eyes, so redolent of tenderness that could never cease—when from the bright, and glowing, and gentle scenes his memory conjured up, and all the transports and the thrill that surrounded them like an atmosphere of love—he turned to his shattered and broken-hearted self, the rigid heaven above, and what seemed to him, perhaps unwise and ungrateful, spirit, the mechanical sympathy and commonplace affliction of his companions—it was as if he had wakened from some too vivid and too glorious dream, or as if he had fallen from some brighter and more favoured planet upon our cold, dull earth.

And yet it would seem that the roof of Armine Place protected a family that might yield to few in the beauty and engaging qualities of its inmates, their happy accomplishments, and their kind and cordial hearts. And all were devoted to him. It was on him alone the noble spirit of his father dwelt still with pride and joy; it was to soothe and gratify him that his charming mother exerted all her graceful care and all her engaging gifts. It was for him, and his sake, the generous heart of his cousin had submitted to mortification without a murmur, or indulged her unhappiness only in solitude; and it was for him that Glastonbury exercised a devotion that might alone induce a man to think with complacency both of his species and himself. But the heart, the heart, the jealous and despotic heart! it rejects all substitutes, it spurns all compromise, and it will have its purpose or it will break.

What may be the destiny of Ferdinand Armine, whether a brighter light is to fall on his gloomy fortunes, or whether his sad end may add to our moral instances another example of the fatal consequences of unbridled passions and ill-regulated conduct, will be recorded in the future books of this eventful history.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING THE APPEARANCE ON OUR STAGE OF A NEW AND IMPORTANT CHARACTER.

THE MARQUESS OF MONTFORT was the grandson of that nobleman who had been Glastonbury's

earliest patron. The old duke had been dead some years; his son had succeeded to his title, and Digby, that youth whom the reader may recollect was about the same age as Ferdinand Armine, and was his companion during that happy week in London which preceded his first military visit to the Mediterranean, now bore the second title of the family.

The young marquess was an excellent specimen of a class superior in talents, intelligence, and accomplishments, in public spirit and in private virtues, to any in the world—the English nobility. His complete education had been carefully conducted; and although his religious creed, (for it will be remembered that he was a Catholic,) had deprived him of the advantage of matriculating at an English university, the zeal of an able and learned tutor, and the resources of a German alma mater, had afforded every opportunity to the development of his considerable talents. Nature had lavished upon him other gifts besides his distinguished intelligence and his amiable temper: his personal beauty was remarkable, and his natural grace was not less evident than his many acquired accomplishments.

On quitting the university of Bonn, Lord Montfort had passed several years on the continent of Europe, and had visited and resided at most of its courts and capitals—an admired and cherished guest: for, debarred at the period of our story from occupying the seat of his ancestors in the senate his native country offered no very urgent claims upon his presence. He had ultimately fixed upon Rome as his principal residence, for he was devoted to the arts, and in his palace were collected some of the rarest specimens of ancient and modern invention.

At Pisa, Lord Montfort had made the acquaintance of Mr. Temple, who was residing in that city for the benefit of his daughter's health; who, it was feared by her physician, was in a decline. I say, the acquaintance of Mr. Temple; for Lord Montfort was aware of the existence of his daughter only by the occasional mention of her name; for Miss Temple was never seen. The agreeable manners, varied information, and accomplished mind of Mr. Temple, had attracted and won the attention of the young nobleman, who shrank in general from the travelling English, and all their arrogant ignorance. Mr. Temple was in turn equally pleased with a companion alike refined, amiable, and enlightened; and their acquaintance would have ripened into intimacy, had not the illness of Henrietta, and her repugnance to see a third person, and the unwillingness of her father that she should be alone, offered in some degree a bar to its cultivation.

Yet Henrietta was glad that her father had found a friend and was amused, and impressed upon him not to think of her, but to accept Lord Montfort's invitations to his villa. But Mr. Temple invariably declined them.

"I am always uneasy when I am from you, dearest," said Mr. Temple: "I wish you would go about a little. Believe me, it is not for myself that I make the suggestion, but I am sure you would derive benefit from the exertion. I wish you would go with me and see Lord Montfort's villa. There would be no one there but himself. He would not in the least annoy you, he is so quiet; and he and I could stroll about, and look at the busts, and talk to each other. You would

nardly know he was present. He is such a very quiet person."

Henrietta shook her head, and Mr. Temple would not urge the request.

Fate, however, had decided that Lord Montfort and Henrietta Temple should become acquainted. She had more than once expressed a wish to see the Campo Santo; it was almost the only wish that she had expressed since she left England. Her father, pleased to find that any thing could interest her, was in the habit of almost daily reminding her of this desire, and suggesting that she should gratify it. But there was ever an excuse for procrastination. When the hour of exertion came, she would say, with a faint smile, "Not to-day, dearest papa;" and then arranging her shawl, as if even in this soft climate she shivered, composed herself upon that sofa which now she scarcely ever quitted.

And this was Henrietta Temple! that gay and glorious being, so full of graceful power and beautiful energy, that seemed born for a throne, and to command a nation of adoring subjects! What are those political revolutions, whose strange and mighty vicissitudes we are ever dilating on, compared with the moral mutations that are passing daily under our own eye; uprooting the hearts of families, shattering to pieces domestic circles, scattering to the winds the plans and prospects of a generation, and blasting, as with mildew, the ripening harvest of long cherished affection.

"It is here that I would be buried," said Henrietta Temple.

They were standing, the father and daughter, in the Campo Santo. She had been gay that morning: her father had seized a happy moment, and she had gone forth—to visit the dead.

That vast and cloistered cemetery was silent and undisturbed: not a human being was there save themselves and the keeper. The sun shone brightly on the austere and ancient frescoes, and Henrietta stood opposite that beautiful sarcophagus, that seemed prepared and fitting to receive her destined ashes.

"It is here that I would be buried," said she.

Her father almost unconsciously turned his head to gaze upon the countenance of his daughter, to see if there were indeed reason that she should talk of death. That countenance was changed since the moment I first feebly attempted to picture it. That flashing eye had lost something of its brilliancy, that superb form something of its roundness and that staglike state; the crimson glory of that mantling cheek had faded like the fading eye; and yet—it might be thought, it might be suffering, perhaps the anticipation of approaching death, and as it were the imaginary contact with a sereener existence; but certainly there was a more spiritual expression diffused over the whole appearance of Henrietta Temple, and which by many might be preferred even to that more lively and glowing beauty which, in her happier hours, made her the very queen of flowers and sunshine.

"It is strange, dear papa," she continued, "that my first visit should be to a cemetery."

At this moment their attention was attracted by the sound of the distant gates of the cemetery opening, and several persons soon entered. This party consisted of some of the authorities of the city, and some porters bearing on a slab of verd antique a magnificent cinerary vase, that was about to be

placed in the Campo. In reply to his inquiries Mr. Temple learned that the vase had been recently excavated in Catania, and that it had been purchased, and presented to the Campo by the Marquess of Montfort. Henrietta would have hurried her father away, but, with all her haste, they had not reached the gates before Lord Montfort appeared.

Mr. Temple found it impossible, although Henrietta pressed his arm in token of disapprobation, not to present Lord Montfort to his daughter. He then admired his lordship's urn, and then his lordship requested that he might have the pleasure of showing it to them himself. They turned; Lord Montfort explained to them its rarity, and pointed out to them its beauty. His voice was soft and low, his manner simple but rather reserved. While he paid that deference to Henrietta which her sex demanded, he addressed himself chiefly to her father. She was not half so much annoyed as she had imagined: she agreed with her father that he was a very quiet man; she was even a little interested by his conversation, which was elegant yet full of intelligence; and she was delighted that he did not seem to require her to play any part in the discourse, but appeared quite content in being her father's friend. Lord Montfort pleased her very much, if only for this circumstance, that he seemed to be attached to her father, and to appreciate him. And this was always a great recommendation to Henrietta Temple.

The cinerary urn led to a little controversy between Mr. Temple and his friend; and Lord Montfort wished that Mr. Temple would some day call on him at his house in the Lung' Arno, and he would show him some specimens which he thought might influence his opinion. "I hardly dare to ask you to come now," said his lordship, looking at Miss Temple; "and yet Miss Temple might like to rest."

It was evident to Henrietta that her father would be very pleased to go, and yet that he was about to refuse for her sake. She could not bear that he should be deprived of so much and such refined amusement, and be doomed to an uninteresting morning at home, merely to gratify her humour. She tried to speak, but could not at first command her voice; at length she expressed her wish that Mr. Temple should avail himself of the invitation. Lord Montfort bowed lowly, Mr. Temple seemed very gratified, and they all turned together and quitted the cemetery.

As they walked along to the house, conversation did not flag. Lord Montfort expressed his admiration of Pisa. "Silence and art are two great charms," said his lordship.

At length they arrived at his palace. A venerable Italian received them. They passed through an immense hall, in which were statues, ascended a magnificent double staircase, and entered a range of saloons. One of them was furnished with more attention to comfort than an Italian cares for; and herein was the cabinet of urns and vases his lordship had mentioned.

"This is little more than a barrack," said Lord Montfort; "but I can find a sofa for Miss Temple." So saying, he arranged with great care the cushions of the couch, and when she seated herself, placed a footstool near her. "I wish you would allow me some day to welcome you at Rome," said the young marquess. "It is there that I indeed reside."

Lord Montfort and Mr. Temple examined the

contents of the cabinet. There was one vase which Mr. Temple greatly admired for the elegance of its form. His host immediately brought it and placed it on a small pedestal near Miss Temple. Yet he scarcely addressed himself to her, and Henrietta experienced none of that troublesome attention, from which, in the present state of her health and mind, she shrank. While Mr. Temple was interested with his pursuit, Lord Montfort went to a small cabinet opposite, and brought forth a curious casket of antique gems. "Perhaps," he said, placing it by Miss Temple, "the contents of this casket might amuse you;" and then he walked away to her father.

In the course of an hour a servant brought in some fruit and wine.

"The grapes are from my villa," said Lord Montfort. "I ventured to order them, because I have heard their salutary effects have been marvellous. Besides, at this season, even in Italy, they are rare. At least you cannot accuse me of prescribing a very disagreeable remedy," he added with a slight smile, as he handed a plate to Miss Temple. She moved to receive them. Her cushions slipped from behind her, Lord Montfort immediately arranged them with the greatest skill and care. He was so kind that she really wished to thank him; but before she could utter a word, he was again conversing with her father.

At length Mr. Temple indicated his intention to retire; and spoke to his daughter.

"This has been a great exertion for you, Henrietta," he said; "this has indeed been a busy day."

"I am not wearied, papa; and I am sure we have been very much pleased." It was the firmest tone in which she had spoken for a long time. There was something in her manner which recalled to Mr. Temple her vanished animation. The affectionate father looked for a moment quite happy. The sweet music of these simple words dwelt on his ear.

He went forward and assisted Henrietta to rise; she closed the casket with care, and delivered it herself to her considerate host. Mr. Temple bid him adieu; Henrietta bowed and nearly extended her hand. Lord Montfort attended them to the gate—a carriage was waiting there.

"Ah! we have kept your lordship at home," said Mr. Temple.

"I took the liberty of ordering the carriage for Miss Temple," said his lordship. "I feel a little responsible for her kind exertion to-day."

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH LORD MONTFORT CONTRIVES THAT MISS TEMPLE SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE.

"AND how do you like my friend, Henrietta?" said Mr. Temple, as they drove home.

"I like your friend very much, papa. He is quite as quiet as you said; he is almost the only person I have seen since I quitted England, who has not jarred my nerves. I felt quite sorry that I had so long prevented you both from cultivating each other's acquaintance. He does not interfere with me in the least."

"I wish I had asked him to look in upon us in the evening," said Mr. Temple, rather inquiringly.

"Not to-day," said Henrietta. "Another day dearest papa."

The next day Lord Montfort sent a note to Mr. Temple, to inquire after his daughter, and to press upon her the importance of eating his grapes. His servant left a basket. The rest of the note was about cinerary urns. Mr. Temple, while he thanked him, assured him of the pleasure it would give both his daughter and himself to see him in the evening. This was the first invitation to his house that Mr. Temple had ventured to give, though they had now known each other for some time.

In the evening Lord Montfort appeared. Henrietta was lying on her sofa, and her father would not let her rise. Lord Montfort had brought Mr. Temple some English journals, which he had received from Leghorn. The gentlemen talked a little on foreign politics; and discussed the character of several of the most celebrated foreign ministers. Lord Montfort gave an account of his visit to Prince Esterhazy. Henrietta was amused. German politics and society led to German literature. Lord Montfort on this subject seemed completely informed. Henrietta could not refrain from joining in a conversation for which she was fully qualified. She happened to deplore her want of books. Lord Montfort had a library; but it was at Rome: no matter; it seemed that he thought nothing of sending to Rome. He made a note very quietly of some books that Henrietta expressed a wish to see, and begged that Mr. Temple would send the memorandum to his servant.

"But surely to-morrow will do," said Mr. Temple. "Rome is too far to send to this evening."

"That is an additional reason for instant departure," said his lordship, very calmly.

Mr. Temple summoned a servant.

"Send this note to my house," said his lordship. "My courier will bring us the books in four days," he added, turning to Miss Temple. "I am sorry you should have to wait, but at Pisa I really have nothing."

From this day, Lord Montfort passed every evening at Mr. Temple's house. His arrival never disturbed Miss Temple; she remained on her sofa. If she spoke to him, he was always ready to converse with her, yet he never obtruded his society. He seemed perfectly contented with the company of her father. Yet with all this calmness and reserve, there was no air of affected indifference, no intolerable nonchalance; he was always attentive, always considerate, often kind. However apparently engaged with her father, it seemed that his vigilance anticipated all her wants. If she moved, he was at her side; if she required any thing, it would appear that he read her thoughts, for it was always offered. She found her sofa arranged as if by magic. And if a shawl were for a moment missing, Lord Montfort always knew where it had been placed. In the mean time, every morning brought something for the amusement of Mr. Temple and his daughter; books, prints, drawings, newspapers, journals, of all countries, and caricatures from Paris and London, were mingled with engravings of Henrietta's favourite Campo Santo.

One evening Mr. Temple and his guest were speaking of a very celebrated professor of the university. Lord Montfort described his extraordinary acquirements and discoveries, and his rare simplicity. He was one of those eccentric geniuses that are sometimes found in decayed cities with ancient

institutions of learning. Henrietta was interested in his description; almost without thought she expressed a wish to see him.

"He shall come to-morrow," said Lord Montfort, "if you please. Believe me," he added, in a tone of great kindness, "that if you could prevail upon yourself to cultivate Italian society a little, it would repay you."

The professor was brought. Miss Temple was very much entertained. In a few days he came again, and introduced a friend scarcely less distinguished. The society was so easy, that even Henrietta found it no burden. She remained upon her sofa; the gentlemen drank their coffee and conversed. One morning, Lord Montfort had prevailed on her to visit the studio of a celebrated sculptor. The artist was full of enthusiasm for his pursuit, and showed them, with pride, his great work, a Diana that might have made one envy Endymion. The sculptor declared it was the perfect resemblance of Miss Temple, and appealed to her father. Mr. Temple could not deny the very striking likeness. Miss Temple smiled; she looked almost herself again; even the reserved Lord Montfort was in raptures.

"O! it is very like," said his lordship. "Yes! now it is exactly like. Miss Temple does not often smile; but now one would believe she really was the model."

They were bidding the sculptor farewell.

"Do you like him?" whispered Lord Montfort to Miss Temple.

"Extremely; he is full of ideas."

"Shall I ask him to come to you this evening?"

"Yes! do."

And so it turned out that in time Henrietta found herself the centre of a little circle of eminent and accomplished men. Her health improved as she brooded less over her sorrows.

It delighted her to witness the pleasure of her father. She was not always on her sofa now. Lord Montfort had sent her an English chair, which suited her delightfully.

They even began to take drives with him in the country an hour or so before sunset. The country round Pisa is rich as well as picturesque. And their companion always contrived that there should be an object in their brief excursions. He spoke, too, the dialect of the country, and they paid, under his auspices, a visit to a Tuscan farmer. All this was agreeable; even Henrietta was persuaded that it was better than staying at home. The variety of pleasing objects diverted her mind in spite of herself. She had some duties to perform in this world yet remaining. There was her father; her father who had been so devoted to her—who had never uttered a single reproach to her for all her faults and follies, and who, in her hour of tribulation, had clung to her with such fidelity. Was it not some source of satisfaction to see him again comparatively happy? How selfish for her to mar this graceful and innocent enjoyment! She exerted herself to contribute to the amusement of her father and his kind friend, as well as to share it. The colour returned a little to her cheek; sometimes she burst for a moment into something like her old gaiety, and, though these ebullitions were often followed by a gloom and moodiness, against which she found it in vain to contend, still, on the whole, the change for the better was decided,

and Mr. Temple yet hoped that in time his sight might again be blessed, and his life illustrated by his own brilliant Henrietta.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH MR. TEMPLE AND HIS DAUGHTER, WITH THEIR NEW FRIEND, MAKE AN UNEXPECTED EXCURSION.

ONE delicious morning, remarkable even in the south, Lord Montfort called upon them in his carriage, and proposed a little excursion. Mr. Temple looked at his daughter, and was charmed that Henrietta consented. She rose from her seat, indeed, with unwonted animation, and the three friends had soon quitted the city and entered its agreeable environs.

"It was wise to pass the winter in Italy," said Lord Montfort, "but to see Tuscany in perfection, I should choose the autumn. I know nothing more picturesque, than the carts laden with grapes, and drawn by milk-white steers."

They drove gaily along at the foot of green hills, crowned ever and anon by a convent or a beautiful stone pine. The landscape attracted the admiration of Miss Temple. A Palladian villa rose from the bosom of a gentle elevation, crowned with these picturesque trees. A broad terrace of marble extended in front of the villa, on which were ranged orange trees. On either side spread an olive grove. The sky was without a cloud, and deeply blue, the bright beams of the sun illuminated the building. The road had wound so curiously into this last branch of the Apennine, that the party found themselves in a circus of hills, clothed with Spanish chestnuts and olive trees, from which there was apparently no outlet. A soft breeze, which it was evident had passed over the wild flowers of the mountains, refreshed and charmed their senses.

"Could you believe we were only two hours' drive from a city?" said Lord Montfort.

"Indeed," said Henrietta, "if there be peace in this world, one would think that the dweller in that beautiful villa enjoyed it."

"He has little to disturb him," said Lord Montfort; "thanks to his destiny and his temper."

"I believe we make our miseries," said Henrietta, with a sigh. "After all, nature always offers us consolation. But who lives here?"

"I sometimes steal to this spot," replied his lordship.

"O! this then is your villa! Ah! you have surprised us."

"I aimed only to amuse you."

"You are very kind, Lord Montfort," said Mr. Temple, "and we owe you much."

They stopped—they ascended the terrace—they entered the villa. A few rooms only were furnished, but their appearance indicated the taste and pursuits of its occupier. Busts and books were scattered about; a table was covered with the implements of art; and the principal apartment opened into an English garden.

"This is one of my native tastes," said Lord Montfort, "that will, I think, never desert me."

The memory of Henrietta was recalled to the flowers of Ducie and of Armine. Amid all the sweets and sunshine she looked sad. She walked

away from her companions; she seated herself on the terrace—her eyes were suffused with tears. Lord Montfort took the arm of Mr. Temple, and led him away to a bust of Germanicus.

"Let me show it to Henrietta," said Mr. Temple; "I must fetch her."

Lord Montfort laid his hand gently on his companion. The emotion of Henrietta had not escaped his quick eye.

"Miss Temple has made a great exertion," he said. "Do not think me pedantic, but I am something of a physician. I have long perceived that although Miss Temple should be amused, she must sometimes be left alone."

Mr. Temple looked at his companion; but the countenance of Lord Montfort was inscrutable. His lordship offered him a medal, and then opened a portfolio of Marc Antonius.

"These are very rare," said Lord Montfort; "I bring them into the country with me, for really at Rome there is no time to study them. By-the-by, I have a plan," continued his lordship, in a somewhat hesitating tone; "I wish I could induce you and Miss Temple to visit me at Rome."

Mr. Temple shrugged his shoulders and sighed.

"I feel confident that a residence at Rome would benefit Miss Temple," said his lordship, in a voice a little less calm than usual. "There is much to see, and I would take care that she should see it in a manner which would not exhaust her. It is the most delightful climate, too, at this period. The sun shines here to-day, but the air of these hills at this season is sometimes treacherous. A calm life, with a variety of objects, is what she requires. Pisa is calm, but for her it is too dull. Believe me, there is something in the blended refinement and interest of Rome, that she would find exceedingly beneficial. She would see no one but ourselves; society shall be at her command if she desires it."

"My dear lord," said Mr. Temple, "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your considerate sympathy; but I cannot flatter myself that Henrietta could avail herself of your really friendly offer. My daughter is a great invalid. She——"

But here Miss Temple joined them.

"We have a relic of a delicate temple here," said Lord Montfort, directing her gaze to another window. "You see it now to advantage—the columns glitter in the sun. There, perhaps, was worshipped some wood-nymph or some river god."

The first classic ruin that she had yet beheld attracted the attention of Miss Temple. It was not far, and she acceded to the proposition of Lord Montfort to visit it. That little ramble was delightful. The novelty and the beauty of the object greatly interested her. It was charming also to view it under the auspices of a guide so full of information and feeling.

"Ah!" said Lord Montfort. "If I might only be your cicerone at Rome!"

"What say you, Henrietta?" said Mr. Temple, with a smile. "Shall we go to Rome?"

The proposition did not alarm Miss Temple as much as her father anticipated. Lord Montfort pressed the suggestion with delicacy; he hinted at some expedients by which the journey might be rendered not very laborious. But as she did not reply, his lordship did not press the subject; sufficiently pleased, perhaps, that she had not met with an immediate and decided negative.

When they returned to the villa they found a

collation prepared for them worthy of so elegant an abode. In his capacity of a host, Lord Montfort departed a little from that placid and even constrained demeanour which generally characterized him. His manner was gay and flowing; and he poured out a goblet of Monte Pulciano and presented it to Miss Temple.

"You must pour a libation," said he, "to the nymph of the fane."

CHAPTER IV.

SHOWING THAT IT IS THE FIRST STEP THAT IS EVER THE MOST DIFFICULT.

ABOUT a week after this visit to the villa, Mr. Temple and his daughter were absolutely induced to accompany Lord Montfort to Rome. It is impossible to do justice to the tender solicitude with which his lordship made all the arrangements for the journey. Wherever they halted, they found preparations for their reception; and so admirably had every thing been concerted, that Miss Temple at length found herself in the Eternal City, with almost as little fatigue as she had reached the Tuscan villa.

The palace of Lord Montfort was in the most distinguished quarter of the city, and situated in the midst of vast gardens full of walls of laurel, arches of ilex, and fountains of lions. They arrived at twilight, and the shadowy hour lent even additional space to the huge halls and galleries. Yet in the suite of rooms prepared for the reception of Mr. Temple and his daughter, every source of comfort seemed to have been collected. The marble floors were covered with Indian mats and carpets, the windows were well secured from the air which might have proved fatal to an invalid, while every species of chair, and couch, and sofa courted the languid or capricious form of Miss Temple—and she was ever favoured with an English stove, and guarded by an Indian screen. The apartments were supplied with every book which it could have been supposed might amuse her: there were guitars of the city and of Florence, and even an English piano; a library of the choicest music; and all the materials of art. The air of elegance and cheerful comfort that pervaded these apartments, so unusual in this land, the bright blaze of the fire, even the pleasant wax-lights, all combined to deprive the moment of that feeling of gloom and exhaustion which attends an arrival at a strange place at a late hour—and Henrietta looked around her, and almost fancied she was once more at Ducie. Lord Montfort introduced his fellow-travellers to their apartments, presented to them the servant who was to assume the management of their little household, and then reminding them of their mutual promises, that they were to be entirely their own masters, and not trouble themselves about him any more than if they were at Pisa, he shook them both by the hand, and bade them good-night.

It must be confessed that the acquaintance of Lord Montfort had afforded great consolation to Henrietta Temple. It was impossible to be insensible to the sympathy and solicitude of one so highly gifted and so very amiable. Nor should it be denied that this homage, from one of his distinguished rank, was entirely without its charm. To

find ourselves, when deceived and deserted, unexpectedly an object of regard and consideration, will bring balm to most bosoms; but to attract, in such a situation, the friendship of an individual whose deferential notice, under any circumstances, must be flattering; and to be admired by one whom all admire—these are accidents of fortune which few could venture to despise. And Henrietta had now few opportunities to brood over the past; a stream of beautiful and sublime objects passed unceasingly before her vision. Her lively and refined taste, and her highly-cultivated mind, could not refrain from responding to these glorious spectacles. She saw before her all that she had long read of, all that she had long mused over. Her mind became each day more serene and harmonious, as she gazed on these ideal creations, and dwelt on their beautiful repose. Her companion, too, exerted every art to prevent these amusements from degenerating into fatiguing expeditions. The Vatican was open to Lord Montfort, when it was open to none others. Short visits, but numerous ones, was his system! Sometimes they entered merely to see a statue or a picture they were reading or conversing about the preceding eve; and then they repaired to some modern studio, where their entrance always made the sculptors' eyes sparkle. At dinner there was always some distinguished guest, whom Henrietta wished to see; and as she thoroughly understood the language, and spoke it indeed with fluency and grace, she was tempted to enter into conversations, where all seemed delighted that she played her part. Sometimes, indeed, Henrietta would fly to her chamber to sigh, but suddenly the palace resounded with tones of the finest harmony, or the human voice, with its most felicitous skill, stole upon her from the distant galleries. Although Lord Montfort was not himself a musician, and his voice could not pour forth those fatal sounds that had ravished her soul from the lips of Ferdinand Armine, he was well acquainted with the magic of music; and while he hated a formal concert, the most eminent performers were often at hand in his palace to contribute at the fitting moment to the delight of his guests. Who could withstand the soft influence of a life so elegant and serene, or refuse to yield up their spirit to its gentle excitement and its mild distraction? The colour returned to Henrietta's cheek and the lustre to her languid eye; her form regained its airy spring of health; the sunshine of her smile burst forth once more.

It would have been impossible for an indifferent person not to perceive that Lord Montfort witnessed these changes with feelings of no slight emotion. Perhaps he prided himself upon his skill as a physician, but he certainly watched the apparent convalescence of his friend's daughter with zealous interest. And yet Henrietta herself was not aware that Lord Montfort's demeanour to her differed in any degree from what it was at Pisa. She had never been alone with him in her life; she certainly spoke more to him than she used, but then she spoke more to everybody; and Lord Montfort certainly seemed to think of nothing but her pleasure, and convenience, and comfort; but he did and said every thing so quietly, that all this kindness and solicitude appeared to be the habitual impulse of his generous nature. He certainly was more intimate, much more intimate, than during the first week of their acquaintance, but scarcely more kind; for she remembered he had arranged her sofa the very first

day they met, though he did not even remain to receive her thanks.

One day a discussion rose about Italian society between Mr. Temple and his host. His lordship was a great admirer of the domestic character and private life of the Italians. He maintained that there was no existing people who more completely fulfilled the social duties than this much scandalized nation, respecting whom so many silly prejudices are entertained by the English, whose travelling fellow-countrymen, by-the-by, seldom enter into any society but that tainted circle that must exist in all capitals.

"You have no idea," he said, turning to Henrietta, "what amiable and accomplished people are the better order of Italians. I wish you would let me light up this dark house some night and give you an Italian party."

"I should like it very much," said Mr. Temple.

Whenever Henrietta did not enter her negative, Lord Montfort always implied her assent, and it was resolved that the Italian party should be given.

All the best families in Rome were present, and not a single English person. There were some, perhaps, whom Lord Montfort might have wished to have invited, but Miss Temple had chanced to express a wish that no English might be there, and he instantly acted upon her suggestion.

The palace was magnificently illuminated. Henrietta had scarcely seen before its splendid treasures of art. Lord Montfort, in answer to her curiosity, had always playfully depreciated them, and said that they must be left for rainy days. The most splendid pictures and long rows of graceful or solemn statues, were suddenly revealed to her; rooms and galleries were opened that had never been observed before; on all sides cabinets of vases, groups of imperial busts, rare bronzes, and vivid masses of tessellated pavement. Over all these choice and beautiful objects, a clear yet soft light was diffused, and Henrietta never recollected a spectacle more complete and effective.

These rooms and galleries were soon filled with guests, and Henrietta could not be insensible to the graceful and engaging dignity with which Lord Montfort received the Roman world of fashion. That constraint which at first she had attributed to reserve, but which of late she had ascribed to modesty, now entirely quitted him. Frank, yet always dignified, smiling, apt, and ever felicitous, it seemed that he had a pleasing word for every ear, and a particular smile for every face. She stood at some distance leaning on her father's arm, and watching him. Suddenly he turned and looked around. "I was they whom he wished to catch. He came up to Henrietta and said, "I wish to introduce you to the Princess —. She is an old lady, but of the first distinction here. I would not ask this favour of you, unless I thought you would be pleased."

Henrietta could not refuse his request. Lord Montfort presented her and her father to the princess, the most agreeable and important person in Rome; and having now provided for their immediate amusement, he had time to attend to his guests in general. An admirable concert now in some degree hushed the general conversation. The voices of the most beautiful women in Rome echoed in those apartments. When the music ceased, the guests wandered about the galleries, and at length the principal saloons were filled with dancers. Lord Montfort approached Miss Temple. "There is one

room in the palace you have never yet visited," he said, "my tribune; 'tis open to-night for the first time."

Henrietta accepted his offered arm. "And how do you like the princess?" he said as they walked along. "It is agreeable to live in a country where your guests amuse themselves."

At the end of the principal gallery, Henrietta perceived an open door, which admitted them into a small octagon chamber, of Ionic architecture. The walls were not hung with pictures, and one work of art alone solicited their attention. Elevated on a pedestal of porphyry, surrounded by a rail of bronze arrows of the lightest workmanship, was that statue of Diana, which they had so much admired at Pisa. The cheek, by an ancient process, the secret of which has been recently regained at Rome, was tinted with a delicate glow.

"Do you approve of it," said Lord Montfort to the admiring Henrietta. "Ah! dearest Miss Temple," he continued, "it is my happiness that the rose has also returned to a fairer cheek than this."

CHAPTER V.

WHICH CONTAINS SOME FARTHER PAINFUL EXPLANATIONS.

THE reader will not, perhaps, be very much surprised that the Marquess of Montfort soon became the declared admirer of Miss Temple. His lordship made the important declaration after a very different fashion to the unhappy Ferdinand Armine; he made it to the lady's father. Long persuaded that Miss Temple's illness had its origin in the mind, and believing that in that case the indisposition of a young lady had probably arisen, from one cause or another, in the disappointment of her affections, Lord Montfort resolved to spare her feelings, unprepared, the pain of a personal appeal. The beauty, the talent, the engaging disposition, and the languid melancholy of Miss Temple, had excited his admiration and his pity, and had finally won a heart capable of deep affections, but gifted with great self-control. He did not conceal from Mr. Temple the conviction that impelled him to the course which he had thought proper to pursue, and this delicate conduct relieved Mr. Temple greatly from the unavoidable embarrassment of his position. Mr. Temple contented himself with communicating to Lord Montfort, that his daughter had indeed entered into an engagement with one who was not worthy of her affections, and that the moment her father had been convinced of the character of the individual, he had quitted England with his daughter. He expressed his unqualified approbation of the overture of Lord Montfort, to whom he was indeed sincerely attached, and which gratified all those worldly feelings from which Mr. Temple was naturally not exempt. In such an alliance Mr. Temple recognised the only mode by which his daughter's complete recovery could be secured. Lord Montfort in himself offered every thing which it would seem that the reasonable fancy of woman could desire. He was young, handsome, amiable, accomplished, sincere, and exceedingly clever; while, at the same time, as Mr. Temple was well aware, his great position would insure that reasonable gratification of vanity from which none are free, which is a fertile

source of happiness, and which would, at all times subdue any bitter recollections which might occasionally arise to cloud the retrospect of his daughter.

It was Mr. Temple who, exerting all the arts of his abandoned profession, now indulging in intimations and now in panegyric, conveying to his daughter, with admirable skill, how much the intimate acquaintance with Lord Montfort contributed to his happiness, gradually fanning the feeling of gratitude to so kind a friend, which had already been excited in his daughter's heart, into one of zealous regard, and finally seizing his opportunity with practised felicity—it was Mr. Temple who at length ventured to communicate to his daughter the overture which had been confided to him.

Henrietta shook her head.

"I have too great regard for Lord Montfort, to accede to his wishes," said Miss Temple. "He deserves something better than a bruised spirit, if not a broken heart."

"But, my dearest Henrietta, you really take a wrong, an impracticable view of affairs. Lord Montfort must be the best judge of what will contribute to his own happiness."

"Lord Montfort is acting under a delusion," replied Miss Temple. "If he knew all that had occurred, he would shrink from blending his life with mine."

"Lord Montfort knows every thing," said the father; "that is, every thing he should know."

"Indeed!" said Miss Temple. "I wonder he does not look upon me with contempt, at the least with pity."

"He loves you, Henrietta," said her father.

"Ah! love, love, love! name not love to me. No, Lord Montfort cannot love me. It is not love that he feels."

"You have gained his heart, and he offers you his hand. Are not these proofs of love?"

"Generous! good young man!" exclaimed Henrietta; "I respect, I admire him. I might have loved him. But it is too late."

"My beloved daughter, O! do not say so! For my sake do not say so," exclaimed Mr. Temple. "I have no wish—I have had no wish, my child, but for your happiness. Lean upon your father, listen to him, be guided by his advice. Lord Montfort possesses every quality which can contribute to the happiness of woman. A man so rarely gifted I never met. There is not a woman in the world, however exalted her rank, however admirable her beauty, however gifted her being, who might not feel happy and honoured in the homage of such a man. Believe me, my dearest daughter, that this is a union which must lead to happiness. Indeed, were it to occur, I could die content. I should have no more cares, no more hopes. All would then have happened that the most sanguine parent, even with such a child as you, could wish or imagine. We should be so happy! For his sake, for my sake, for all our sakes, dearest Henrietta, grant his wish. Believe me, believe me, he is indeed worthy of you."

"I am not worthy of him," said Henrietta, in a melancholy voice.

"Ah! Henrietta, who is like you!" exclaimed the fond and excited father.

At this moment the servant announced that Lord Montfort would, with their permission, wait upon them. Henrietta seemed plunged in thought.

Suddenly she said, "I cannot rest until this is settled. Papa, leave me with him a few moments alone." Mr. Temple retired.

A faint blush rose to the cheek of her visitor when he perceived that Miss Temple was alone. He seated himself at her side, but he was unusually constrained.

"My dear Lord Montfort," said Miss Temple, very calmly, "I have to speak upon a painful subject, but I have undergone so much suffering, that I shall not shrink from this. Papa has informed me this morning that you have been pleased to pay me the highest compliment that a man can pay a woman. I wish to thank you for it. I wish to acknowledge it in terms the strongest and the warmest I can use. I am sensible of the honour, the high honour that you have intended me. It is indeed an honour of which any woman might be proud. You have offered me a heart of which I know the worth. No one can appreciate the value of your character better than myself. I do justice, full justice, to your virtues, your accomplishments, your commanding talents, and your generous soul. Except my father, there is no one who holds so high a place in my affections as yourself. You have been my kind and true friend; and a kind and true friendship, faithful and sincere, I return you. More than friends we never can be, for I have no heart to give."

"Ah! dearest Miss Temple," said Lord Montfort, in an agitated tone, "I ask nothing but that friendship; but let me enjoy it in your constant society; let the world recognise my right to be your consoler."

"You deserve a better and a brighter fate, my lord. I should not be your friend if I could enter into such an engagement."

"The only aim of my life is to make you happy," said Lord Montfort.

"I am sure that I ought to be happy with such a friend," said Henrietta Temple, "and I *am* happy. How different is the world to me to what it was before I knew you! Ah! why will you disturb this life of consolation? Why will you call me back to recollections that I would fain banish? Why?"—

"Dearest Miss Temple," said Lord Montfort, "do not reproach me! You make me wretched. Remember, dear lady, that I have not sought this conversation; that if I were presumptuous in my plans and hopes, I at least took precautions that I should be the only sufferer by their non-fulfilment."

"Best and most generous of men! I would not for the world be unkind to you. Pardon my distracted words. But you know all! Has papa told you all? It is my wish."

"It is not mine," replied Lord Montfort; "I wish not to penetrate your sorrows, but only to soothe them."

"O! if we had but met earlier," said Henrietta Temple; "if we had but known each other a year ago! when I was—not worthy of you—but more worthy of you. But now, with health shattered, the lightness of my spirit vanished, the freshness of my feelings gone—no! my kind friend, my dear and gentle friend, my affection for you is too sincere to accede to your request; and a year hence, Lord Montfort will thank me for my denial."

"I scarcely dare to speak," said Lord Montfort, in a low tone, as if suppressing his emotion. "If I were to express my feelings, I might agitate you.

I will not then venture to reply to what you have urged: to tell you I think you the most beautiful and engaging being that ever breathed; or how I dote upon your pensive spirit, and can sit for hours together gazing on the language of those dark eyes. O! Miss Temple, to me you never could have been more beautiful, more fascinating. Alas! I may not even breathe my love; I am unfortunate. And yet, sweet lady, pardon this agitation I have occasioned you; try to love me yet; endure at least my presence; and let me continue to cherish that intimacy that has thrown over my existence a charm so inexpressible." So saying, he ventured to take her hand, and pressed it with devotion to his lips.

CHAPTER VI.

WHICH CONTAINS AN EVENT NOT LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE ONE WHICH CONCLUDED OUR FOURTH CHAPTER OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

LORD MONTFORT was scarcely disheartened by this interview with Miss Temple. His lordship was a devout believer in the influence of time. It was unnatural to suppose that one so young and so gifted as Henrietta could ultimately maintain that her career was terminated because her affections had been disappointed by an intimacy which was confessedly of so recent an origin as the fatal one in question. Lord Montfort differed from most men in this respect, that the consciousness of this intimacy did not cost him even a pang. He preferred, indeed, to gain the heart of a woman like Miss Temple, who, without having in the least degree forfeited the innate purity of her nature and the native freshness of her feelings, had yet learned in some degree to penetrate the mystery of the passions, to one so untutored in the world's ways, that she might have bestowed upon him a heart less experienced indeed, but not more innocent. He was convinced that the affection of Henrietta, if once obtained, might be relied on, and that the painful past would only make her more finely appreciate his high-minded devotion, and amid all the dazzling characters and seducing spectacles of the world, cling to him with a firmer gratitude and a more faithful fondness. And yet Lord Montfort was a man of deep emotions, and of a very fastidious taste. He was a man of as romantic a temperament as Ferdinand Armine; but with Lord Montfort, life was the romance of reason, with Ferdinand, the romance of imagination. The first was keenly alive to all the imperfections of our nature, but he also gave that nature credit for all its excellencies. He observed finely, he calculated nicely, and his result was generally happiness. Ferdinand, on the contrary, neither observed nor calculated. His imagination created fantasies, and his impetuous passions struggled to realize them.

Although Lord Montfort carefully abstained from pursuing the subject which nevertheless engrossed his thoughts, he had a vigilant and skilful ally in Mr. Temple. That gentleman lost no opportunity of pleading his lordship's cause, while he appeared only to advocate his own; and this was the most skilful mode of controlling the judgment of his daughter.

Henrietta Temple, the most affectionate and dutiful of children, left to reflect, sometimes asked her

self whether she were justified, that from what she endeavoured to believe was a mere morbid feeling, from accomplishing the happiness of that parent who loved her so well? There had been no concealment of her situation, or of her sentiments. There had been no deception as to the past. Lord Montfort knew all. She had told him she could only bestow a broken spirit. Lord Montfort aspired only to console it. She was young. It was not probable that the death which she had once sighed for would be accorded to her. Was she always to lead this life? Was her father to pass the still long career which probably awaited him, in ministering to the wearisome caprices of a querulous invalid? This was a sad return for all his goodness—a gloomy catastrophe of all his bright hopes. And if she could ever consent to blend her life with another's, what individual could offer pretensions which might ensure her tranquillity, or even happiness, equal to those proffered by Lord Montfort? Ah! who was equal to him?—so amiable, so generous, so interesting!

It was in such a mood of mind that Henrietta would sometimes turn with a glance of tenderness and gratitude to that being who seemed to breathe only for her solace and gratification. If it be agonizing to be deserted, there is at least consolation in being cherished. And who cherished her? One whom all admired—one, to gain whose admiration, or even attention, every woman sighed. What was she before she knew Montfort? If she had not known Montfort, what would she have been even at this present? She recalled the hours of anguish, the long days of bitter mortification, the dull, the wearisome, the cheerless, hopeless, uneventful hours that were her lot when lying on her solitary sofa at Pisa, brooding over the romance of Armine and all its passion—the catastrophe of Ducie, and all its baseness. And now there was not a moment without kindness, without sympathy, without considerate attention and innocent amusement. If she were querulous, no one murmured; if she were capricious, every one yielded to her fancies; but if she smiled every one was happy. Dear, noble Montfort, thine was the magic that had worked this change! And for whom were all these choice exertions made? For one whom another had trifled with, deserted, betrayed! And Montfort knew it. He dedicated his life to the consolation of a despised woman. Leaning on the arm of Lord Montfort, Henrietta Temple might meet the eye of Ferdinand Armine and his rich bride, at least without feeling herself an object of pity!

Time had flown on. The Italian spring, with all its splendour, illumed the glittering palaces and purple shores of Naples. Lord Montfort and his friends were returning from Capua in his galley. Miss Temple was seated between her father and their host. The Ausonian clime, the beautiful scene, the sweet society, had all combined to produce a day of exquisite enjoyment. Henrietta Temple could not refrain from expressing her delight. Her eye sparkled like the star of eve that glittered over the glowing mountains; her cheek was as radiant as the sunset.

"Ah! what a happy day has this been!" she exclaimed.

The gentle pressure of her hand reminded her of the delight her exclamation had afforded one of her companions. Strange to say, that pressure was returned. With a trembling heart Lord Mont-

fort leaned back in the galley; and yet, ere the morning sun had flung its flaming beams over the city Henrietta Temple was his betrothed.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

WHICH CONTAINS A REMARKABLE CHANGE OF FORTUNE.

ALTHOUGH Lord Montfort was now the received and recognised admirer of Miss Temple, their intended union was not immediate. Henrietta was herself averse to such an arrangement, but it was not necessary for her to urge this somewhat ungracious desire, as Lord Montfort was anxious that she should be introduced to his family before their marriage, and that the ceremony should be performed in his native country. Their return to England, therefore, was now meditated. That event was hastened by an extraordinary occurrence.

Good fortune in this world, they say, is seldom single. Mr. Temple at this moment was perfectly content with his destiny. Easy in his own circumstances, with his daughter's future prosperity about to be provided for by a union with the heir to one of the richest peerages in the kingdom, he had nothing to desire. His daughter was happy, he entertained the greatest esteem and affection for his future son-in-law, and the world went well with him in every respect.

It was in this fulness of his happiness that destiny, with its usual wild caprice, resolved "to gild refined gold, and paint the lily;" and it was determined that Mr. Temple should wake one morning among the wealthiest commoners of England.

There happened to be an old baronet, a great humourist, without any very near relations, who had been a godson of Mr. Temple's grandfather. He had never invited or encouraged any intimacy or connexion with the Temple family, but had always throughout life kept himself aloof from any acquaintance with them. Mr. Temple, indeed, had only seen him once, but certainly under rather disadvantageous circumstances. It was when Mr. Temple was minister at the German court, to which we have alluded, that Sir Temple Devereux was a visiter at the capital at which Mr. Temple was resident. The Minister had shown him some civilities, which was his duty: and Henrietta had appeared to please him. But he had not remained long at this place; had refused at the time to be more than their ordinary guest; and had never, by any letter, message, or other mode of communication, conveyed to them the slightest idea that the hospitable minister and his charming daughter had dwelt a moment on his memory. And yet Sir Temple Devereux had now departed from the world, where it had apparently been the principal object of his career to avoid ever making a friend, and had left the whole of his immense fortune to the Right Honourable Pelham Temple, by this bequest proprietor of one of the finest estates in the county of York, and a very considerable personal property, the accumulated savings of a large rental and a long life.

This was a great event. Mr. Temple had the

most profound respect for property. It was impossible for the late baronet to have left his estate to an individual who could more thoroughly appreciate its possession. Even personal property was not without its charms—but a large landed estate, and a large landed estate in the county of York, and that large landed estate in the county of York flanked by a good round sum of three per cent. consols duly recorded in the Rotunda of Threadneedle street—it was a combination of wealth, power, consideration, and convenience, which exactly lit the ideal of Mr. Temple, and to the fascination of which I should rather think the taste of few men would be insensible. Mr. Temple being a man of family, had none of the awkward embarrassments of a parvenu to contend with. “It was the luckiest thing in the world,” he would say, “that poor Sir Temple was my grandfather’s godson, not only because in all probability it obtained us his fortune, but because he bore the name of Temple; we shall settle down in Yorkshire scarcely as strangers, we shall not be looked upon as a new family, and in a little time the whole affair will be considered rather one of inheritance than bequest. But, after all, what is it to me? It is only for your sake, Dicky, that I rejoice. I think it will please your family. I will settle every thing immediately on Henrietta. They shall have the gratification of knowing that their son is about to marry the richest heiress in England.”

The richest heiress in England! Henrietta Temple the richest heiress in England! Ah! how many feelings will that thought arise! Strange to say, the announcement of this extraordinary event brought less joy than might have been supposed to the heiress herself.

It was in her chamber and alone, that Henrietta Temple mused over this freak of destiny. It was in vain to conceal it, her thoughts recurred to Ferdinand. They might have been so happy! Why was he not true! And perhaps he had sacrificed himself to his family, perhaps even personal distress had driven him to the fatal deed. Her kind, feminine fancy conjured up every possible extenuation of his dire offence. She grew very sad. She could not believe that he was false at Ducie; O, no! she never could believe it! He must have been sincere: and if sincere, O! what a heart was lost there! What would she have not given to have been the means of saving him from all his sorrows! She recalled his occasional melancholy, his desponding words, and how the gloom left his brow and his eyes brightened when she fondly prophesied that she would restore the house. She might restore it now; and now he was another’s, and she—what was she? A slave like him. No longer her own mistress, at the only moment she had the power to save him. Say what they like, there is a pang in balked affection, for which no wealth, power, or place, watchful indulgence or sedulous kindness, can compensate. Ah! the heart, the heart!

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE READER IS AGAIN INTRODUCED TO CAPTAIN ARMINE, DURING HIS VISIT TO LONDON.

WE must not forget our friends at Armine Place. Their career was not as eventful as that of the

Temple family. Miss Grandison had resolved upon taking a house in London for the season, and had obtained a promise from her uncle and aunt to be her guest. Lady Armine’s sister was to join them from Bath. As for Ferdinand, the spring had gradually restored him to health, but not to his former frame of mind. He remained moody and indolent, incapable of exertion, and a prey to the darkest humours; circumstances however occurred, which rendered some energy on his part absolutely necessary. His creditors grew importunate, and the arrangement of his affairs, or departure from his native land, was an alternative now become inevitable. The month of April, which witnessed the arrival of the Temples and Lord Montfort in England, welcomed also to London Miss Grandison and her guests. A few weeks after, Ferdinand, who had evaded the journey with his family, and who would not on any account become a guest of his cousin, settled himself down at a quiet hotel in the vicinity of Grosvenor Square; but not quite alone, for almost at the last hour Glastonbury had requested permission to accompany him, and Ferdinand, who duly valued the society of the only person with whom he could converse about his broken fortunes and his blighted hopes without reserve, acceded to his wish with the greatest satisfaction.

A sudden residence in a vast metropolis, after a life of rural seclusion, has, without doubt, a very peculiar effect upon the mind. The immense population, the multiplicity of objects, the important interests hourly impressed upon the intelligence, the continually occurring events, the noise, the bustle, the general and widely-spread excitement, all combine to make us keenly sensible of our individual insignificance; and those absorbing passions, that in our solitude, fed by our imagination, have assumed such gigantic and substantial shapes, rapidly subside, by an almost imperceptible process, into less colossal proportions, and seem invested, as it were, with a more shadowy aspect. As Ferdinand Armine jostled his way through the crowded streets of London, urged on by his own harassing and inexorable affairs, and conscious of the impending peril of his career, while power and wealth dazzled his eyes in all directions, he began to look back upon the passionate past with feelings of less keen sensation than heretofore, and almost to regret that a fatal destiny, or his impetuous soul, had entailed upon him so much anxiety, and prompted him to reject the glittering cup of fortune that had been proffered to him so opportunely. He sighed for enjoyment and repose: the memory of his recent sufferings made him shrink from that reckless indulgence of the passions, of which the consequences had been so severe.

It was in this mood, exhausted by a visit to his lawyer, that he stepped into a military club, of which he was a member, and took up a newspaper. Caring little for politics, his eye wandered over, uninterested, its pugnacious leading articles and tedious parliamentary reports; and he was about to throw it down, when a paragraph caught his notice, which instantly engrossed all his attention. It was in “the Morning Post” that he thus read:—

“The Marquis of Montfort, the eldest son of the Duke of —, whose return to England we recently noticed, has resided for several years in Italy. His lordship is considered one of the most accomplished noblemen of the day, and was celebrated at

Rome for his patronage of the arts. Lord Montfort will shortly be united to the beautiful Miss Temple, the only daughter of the Right Honourable Pelham Temple. Miss Temple is esteemed one of the richest heiresses in England, as she will doubtless inherit the whole of the immense fortune to which her father so unexpectedly acceded: Mr. Temple is a widower, and has no son. Mr. Temple was formerly our minister at several of the German courts, where he was distinguished by his abilities, and his hospitality to his travelling countrymen. It is said that the rent-roll of the Yorkshire estates of the late Sir Temple Devercux is not less than £15,000 per annum. The personal property also is very considerable. We understand that Mr. Temple has purchased the mansion of the Duke of ****, in Grosvenor Square. Lord Montfort accompanied Mr. Temple and his amiable daughter to this country."

What a wild and fiery chaos was the mind of Ferdinand Armine, when he read this paragraph. The wonders it revealed succeeded each other with such rapidity, that for some time he was deprived of the power of reflection. Henrietta Temple in England!—Henrietta Temple one of the greatest heiresses in the country!—Henrietta Temple about to be immediately married to another! His Henrietta Temple, the Henrietta Temple who had joined her lips to his, whom he adored, and by whom he had been worshipped!—The Henrietta Temple whose beautiful lock was at this very moment on his heart!—The Henrietta Temple, for whom he had forfeited fortune, family, power, almost life!

O, woman, woman! Put not thy trust in woman! And yet, could he reproach her? Did she not believe herself trilled with by him, outraged, deceived, deluded, deserted? And did she, could she love another? Was there another, to whom she had poured forth her heart as to him, and all that beautiful flow of fascinating and unrivalled emotion? Was there another, to whom she had pledged her pure and passionate soul? Ah! no; he would not, he could not believe it. Light and false Henrietta could never be. She had been seen, she had been admired, she had been loved—who that saw her would not admire and love? and he was the victim of her pique, perhaps of her despair.

But, she was not yet married. They were, according to these lines, to be soon united. It appeared they had travelled together; that thought gave him a pang. Could he not see her? Could he not explain all? Could he not prove his heart had ever been true and fond? Could he not tell her all that had happened, all that he had suffered, all the madness of his misery; and could she resist that voice whose accents had once been her joy, that glance which had once filled her heart with rapture? And, when she found that Ferdinand, her own Ferdinand, had never deceived her, was worthy of her choice affection, and suffering even at this moment for her sweet sake, what were all the cold-blooded ties in which she had since involved herself? She was his, by an older and more ardent bond—should he not claim his right? Could she deny it!

Claim what? The hand of an heiress! Should it be said that an Armine came crouching for lucre, where he ought to have commanded for love? Never! Whatever she might think, his conduct had been faultless to her. It was not for Henrietta to complain. She was not the victim, if one, in-

deed, there might chance be. He had loved her; she had returned his passion; for her sake he had made the greatest of sacrifices, forfeited a splendid inheritance, and a fond and faithful heart. When he had thought of her before, pining perhaps in some foreign solitude, he had never ceased reproaching himself for his conduct, and had accused himself of deception and cruelty; but now, in this moment of her flush prosperity, "esteemed one of the richest heiresses in England," (he ground his teeth as he recalled that phrase,) and the affianced bride of a great noble, (his old companion, Lord Montfort, too; what a strange thing is life!) proud, smiling, and prosperous, while he was alone, with a broken heart, and worse than desperate fortunes, and all for her sake, his soul became bitter; he reproached her with want of feeling; he pictured her as void of genuine sensibility, he dilated on her indifference since they had parted; her silence, so strange, now no longer inexplicable; the total want of interest she had exhibited as to his career; he sneered at the lightness of her temperament; he cursed her caprice; he denounced her infernal treachery; in the distorted phantom of his agonized imagination, she became to him even an object of hatred.

Poor Ferdinand Armine! it was the first time he had experienced the maddening pangs of jealousy.

Yet how he had loved this woman! How he had doted on her. And now they might have been so happy! There is nothing that depresses a man so much as the conviction of had fortune. There seemed, in this sudden return, great fortune, and impending marriage of Henrietta Temple, such a combination as far as Ferdinand Armine was concerned, of vexatious circumstances; it would appear that he had been so near perfect happiness and missed it, that he felt quite weary of existence, and seriously meditated depriving himself of it.

It so happened that he had promised this day to dine at his cousin's; for Glastonbury, who was usually his companion, had accepted an invitation this day to dine with the noble widow of his old patron. Ferdinand, however, found himself quite incapable of entering into any society, and he hurried to his hotel to send a note of excuse to Brook street. As he arrived, Glastonbury was just about to step into a hackney-coach, so that Ferdinand had no opportunity of communicating his sorrows to his friend, even had he been inclined.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH GLASTONBURY MEETS THE VERY LAST PERSON IN THE WORLD HE EXPECTED, AND THE STRANGE CONSEQUENCES.

WHEN Glastonbury arrived at the mansion of the good old dutchess, he found nobody in the drawing-room but a young man of very distinguished appearance, whose person was unknown to him, but who, nevertheless, greeted him with remarkable cordiality. The good Glastonbury returned, with some confusion, his warm salutation.

"It is many years since we last met, Mr. Glastonbury," said the young man. "I am not surprised you have forgotten me. I am Lord Montfort; Digby, perhaps you recollect?"

"My dear child! my dear lord! You have indeed changed! You are a man, and I am a very old one."

"Nay! my dear sir, I do assure you I observe little change. Believe me, I have often recalled your image in my long absence, and I find now that my memory has not deceived me."

Glastonbury and his companion fell into some conversation about his lordship's travels, and residence at Rome, in the midst of which their hostess entered.

"I have asked you, my dear sir, to meet our family circle," said her grace, "for I do not think I can well ask you to meet any who love you better. It is long since you have seen Digby."

"Mr. Glastonbury did not recognise me, grandmamma," said Lord Montfort.

"These sweet children have all grown out of your sight, Mr. Glastonbury," said the dutchess, "but they are very good. And as for Digby, I really think he comes to see his poor grandmother every day."

The duke and dutchess, and two very young daughters, were now announced.

"I was so sorry that I was not at home when you called, Glastonbury," said his grace, "but I thought I should soon hear of you at grandmamma's."

"And, dear Mr. Glastonbury, why did you not come up and see me?" said the younger dutchess.

"And, dear Mr. Glastonbury, do you remember me?" said one beautiful daughter.

"And me, Mr. Glastonbury, me; I am Isabella."

Blushing, smiling, bowing, constrained from the novelty of his situation, and yet every now and then quite at ease when his ear recalled a familiar voice, dear Mr. Glastonbury was very gratified and very happy. The duke took him aside, and they were soon engaged in conversation.

"How is Henrietta to-day, Digby?" inquired Isabella. "I left her an hour ago; we have been riding, and expected to meet you all. She will be here immediately."

There was a knock, and soon the drawing-room door opened, and Miss Temple was announced.

"I must make papa's apologies," said Henrietta, advancing and embracing the old dutchess. "I hope he may get here in the evening: but he bade me remind your grace that your kind invitation was only provisionally accepted."

"He is quite right," said the old lady; "and indeed I hardly expected him, for he told me there was a public dinner which he was obliged to attend. I am sure that our dinner is a very private one, indeed," continued the old lady with a smile. "It is really a family party, though there is one member of the family here whom you do not know, my dear Miss Temple, and whom I am sure, you will love as much as all of us do. Digby, where is —?"

At this moment dinner was announced, Lord Montfort offered his arm to Henrietta. "There, lead the way," said the old lady; "the girls must bear themselves, for I have no young men to-day for them. I suppose man and wife must be parted, so I must take my son's arm; Mr. Glastonbury, you will hand down the dutchess." But, before Glastonbury's name was mentioned, Henrietta was halfway down stairs.

The duke and his son presided at the dinner. Henrietta sat on one side of Lord Montfort, his mother on the other. Glastonbury sat on the right

hand of the duke, and opposite their hostess; the two young ladies in the middle. All the guests had been seated without Glastonbury and Henrietta recognising each other; and, as he sat on the same side of the table as Miss Temple, it was not until Lord Montfort asked Mr. Glastonbury to take wine with him that Henrietta heard a name that might well, indeed, turn her pale.

Glastonbury! It never entered into her head at the moment that it was the Mr. Glastonbury! whom she had known. Glastonbury!—what a name! What dreadful associations did it not induce! She looked forward—she caught the well-remembered visage—she sunk back in her chair. But Henrietta Temple had a strong mind; this was surely an occasion to prove it. Mr. Glastonbury's attention was not attracted to her: he knew, indeed, there was a lady at the table called Henrietta, but he was engrossed with his neighbours, and his eye never caught the daughter of Mr. Temple. It was not until the ladies rose to retire that Mr. Glastonbury beheld that form which he had not forgotten, and looked upon a lady whose name was associated in his memory with the most disastrous and mournful moments of his life. Miss Temple followed the dutchess out of the room, and Glastonbury, perplexed and agitated, resumed his seat.

But Henrietta was the prey of emotions far more acute and distracting. It seemed to her that she had really been unacquainted with the state of her heart until this sudden apparition of Glastonbury. How his image recalled the past! She had school-ed herself to consider it all a dream; now it lived before her. Here was one of the principal performers in that fatal tragedy of Armine. Glastonbury in the house—under the same roof as she! Where was Ferdinand? There was one at hand who could tell her. Was he married? She had enjoyed no opportunity of ascertaining since her return: she had not dared to ask. Of course he was married; but was he happy? And Glastonbury, who, if he did not know all, knew so much—how strange it must be to Glastonbury to meet her! Dear Glastonbury! She had not forgotten the days when she so fondly listened to Ferdinand's charming narratives of all his amiable and simple life! Dear, dear Glastonbury, whom she was so to love! And she met him now, and did not speak to him, or looked upon him as a stranger; and he, he would, perhaps, look upon her with pity, certainly with pain. O! life—what a heart-breaking thing is life! And our affections, our sweet and pure affections, fountains of such joy and solace, that nourish all things, and make the most barren and rigid soil teem with life and beauty—O! why do we disturb the flow of their sweet waters and pollute their immaculate and salutary source! Ferdinand, Ferdinand Armine, why were you false?

The door opened. Mr. Glastonbury entered, followed by the duke and his son. Henrietta was sitting in an easy chair—one of Lord Montfort's sisters, seated on an ottoman at her side, held her hand. Henrietta's eye met Glastonbury's; she bowed to him.

"How your hand trembles, Henrietta!" said the young lady.

Glastonbury approached her with a hesitating step. He blushed faintly—he looked exceedingly perplexed—at length he reached her, and stood before her, and said nothing.

"You have forgotten me, Mr. Glastonbury," said Henrietta; for it was absolutely necessary that some one should break the awkward silence, and she pointed to a chair at her side.

"That would indeed be impossible," said Glastonbury.

"O! you knew Mr. Glastonbury before," said the young lady. "Grandmamma, only think, Henrietta knew Mr. Glastonbury before."

"We were neighbours in Nottinghamshire," said Henrietta in a quick tone.

"Isabella," said her sister, who was seated at the piano, "the harp awaits you." Isabella rose, Lord Montfort was approaching Henrietta, when the old dutchess called to him.

Henrietta and Glastonbury were alone.

"This is a strange meeting, Mr. Glastonbury," said Henrietta.

What could poor Glastonbury say! Something he murmured, but not very much to the purpose. "Have you been in Nottinghamshire lately?" said Henrietta.

"I left it about ten days back with" (and here Glastonbury stopped) "with a friend," he concluded.

"I trust all your friends are well," said Henrietta, in a tremulous voice.

"No—yes—that is," said Glastonbury, "something better than they were."

"I am sorry that my father is not here," said Miss Temple; "he has a lively remembrance of all your kindness."

"Kindness, I fear," said Glastonbury, in a melancholy tone, "that was most unfortunate."

"We do not deem it so, sir," was the reply.

"My dear young lady," said Glastonbury, but his voice faltered as he added, "we have had great unhappiness."

"I regret it," said Henrietta; "you had a marriage, I believe, expected in your family?"

"It has not occurred," said Glastonbury.

"Indeed!"

"Alas! madam," said her companion, "if I might venture indeed to speak of one whom I will not name, and yet—"

"Pray speak, sir," said Miss Temple, in a kind, yet hushed voice.

"The child of our affections, madam, is not what he was. God, in his infinite mercy, has visited him with great afflictions."

"You speak of Captain Armine, sir!"

"I speak, indeed, of my broken-hearted Ferdinand; I would I could say yours. O! Miss Temple, he is a wreck."

"Yes! yes!" said Henrietta, in a low tone.

"What he has endured," continued Glastonbury, "passes all description of mine. His life has indeed been spared, but under circumstances that almost make me regret he lives."

"He has not married?" muttered Henrietta.

"He came to Ducie to claim his bride, and she was gone," said Glastonbury; "his mind sunk under the terrible bereavement. For weeks he was a maniac; and, though Providence spared him again to us, and his mind, thanks to God, is again whole, he is the victim of a profound melancholy, that seems to defy alike medical skill and worldly vicissitude."

"Digby, Digby!" exclaimed Isabella, who was at the harp, "Henrietta is fainting."

Lord Montfort rushed forward just in time to seize her cold hand.

"The room is too hot," said one sister.

"The coffee is too strong," said the other.

"Air," said the young dutchess.

Lord Montfort carried Henrietta into a distant room. There was a balcony opening into a garden. He seated her on a bench, and never quitted her side, but contrived to prevent any one approaching her. The women clustered together.

"Sweet creature!" said the old dutchess, "she often makes me tremble; she has but just recovered, Mr. Glastonbury, from a long and terrible illness."

"Indeed!" said Glastonbury.

"Poor dear Digby," continued her grace, "this will quite upset him again. He was in such spirits about her health the other day."

"Lord Montfort?" inquired Glastonbury.

"Our Digby. You know that he is to be married to Henrietta next month."

"Holy Virgin!" muttered Glastonbury; and, taking up Lord Montfort's hat by mistake, he seized advantage of the confusion, and effected his escape.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH MR. GLASTONBURY INFORMS CAPTAIN ARMINE OF HIS MEETING WITH MISS TEMPLE.

It was still an early hour when Mr. Glastonbury arrived at his hotel. He understood, however, that Captain Armine had already returned and retired. Glastonbury knocked gently at his door, and was invited to enter. The good man was pale and agitated. Ferdinand was already in bed. Glastonbury took a chair and seated himself by his side.

"My dear friend, what is the matter?" said Ferdinand.

"I have seen her—I have seen her," said Glastonbury.

"Henrietta! seen Henrietta!" inquired Ferdinand.

Glastonbury nodded assent, but with a most rueful expression of countenance.

"What has happened! what did she say?" asked Ferdinand in a quick voice.

"You are two innocent lambs," said Glastonbury, wringing his hands.

"Speak—speak, my Glastonbury."

"I wish that my death could make you both happy," said Glastonbury: "but I fear that would do you no good."

"Is there any hope!" said Ferdinand.

"None," said Glastonbury. "Prepare yourself, my dear child, for the worst."

"Is she married?" inquired Ferdinand.

"No; but she is going to be."

"I know it," said Ferdinand.

Glastonbury stared.

"You know it! what, to Digby?"

"Digby, or whatever his name may be; damn him."

"Hush! hush!" said Glastonbury.

"May all the curses——"

"God forbid," said Glastonbury, interrupting him.

"Unfeeling, fickle, false, treacherous——"

"She is an angel," said Glastonbury, "a very angel. She has fainted, and nearly in my arms."

"Fainted! nearly in your arms! O! tell me all, tell me all, Glastonbury," exclaimed Ferdinand, starting up in his bed with an eager voice and sparkling eyes. "Does she love me?"

"I fear so," said Glastonbury.

"Fear!"

"O! how I pity her poor innocent heart," said Glastonbury.

"When I told her of all your sufferings—"

"Did you tell her! What then?"

"And she herself has barely recovered from a long and terrible illness."

"My own Henrietta! Now I could die happy," said Ferdinand.

"I thought it would break your heart," said Glastonbury.

"It is the only happy moment I have known for months," said Ferdinand.

"I was so overwhelmed that I lost my presence of mind," said Glastonbury. "I really never meant to tell you any thing. I do not know how I came into your room."

"Dear, dear Glastonbury, I am myself again!"

"Only think," said Glastonbury, "I never was so unhappy in my life."

"I have endured for the last four hours the tortures of the damned," said Ferdinand, "to think that she was going to be married, to be married to another; that she was happy, proud, prosperous, totally regardless of me, perhaps utterly forgetful of the past, and that I was dying like a dog in this cursed caravanserai—O! Glastonbury, nothing that I have ever endured has been equal to the hell of this day! And now you have come and made me comparatively happy. I shall get up directly."

Glastonbury looked quite astonished; he could not comprehend how this fatal intelligence could have produced effects so directly contrary to those he had anticipated. However, in answer to Ferdinand's reiterated inquiries, he contrived to give a detailed account of every thing that had occurred, and Ferdinand's running commentary continued to be one of constant self-congratulation.

"There is however one misfortune," said Ferdinand, "with which you are unacquainted, my dear friend."

"Indeed!" said Glastonbury, "I thought I knew enough."

"Alas! she has become a great heiress!"

"Is that it?" said Glastonbury.

"'Tis the devil," said Ferdinand. "Were it not for that, by the soul of my grandfather, I would tear her from the arms of this stripling!"

"Stripling!" said Glastonbury. "I never saw a truer nobleman in my life."

"The deuce," said Ferdinand.

"Nay! second scarcely to yourself. I could not believe my eyes," continued Glastonbury. "He was but a child when I saw him last, but so were you, Ferdinand. Believe me, he is no ordinary rival."

"Good-looking?"

"Altogether of a most princely presence. I have rarely met a personage so highly accomplished, or who more quickly impressed you with his moral and intellectual excellence."

"And they are positively engaged?"

"To be married next month," replied Glastonbury.

"O! Glastonbury, why do I live!" exclaimed Ferdinand, "why did I recover!"

"My dear child, but just now you were comparatively happy."

"Happy! you cannot mean to insult me Happy! O! is there in this world a thing so deplorable as I am!"

"I thought I did wrong to say any thing," said Glastonbury, speaking as it were to himself, "I have got a wrong hat too!"

Ferdinand made no observation. He turned himself in his bed, with his face averted from Glastonbury.

"Good night," said Glastonbury, after remaining some time in silence.

"Good night," said Ferdinand, in a faint and mournful tone.

CHAPTER V.

WHICH, ON THE WHOLE, IS PERHAPS AS REMARKABLE A CHAPTER AS ANY IN THE WORK.

WRETCHED as he was, the harsh business of life could not be neglected; Captain Armine was obliged to be in Lincoln's Inn by ten o'clock the next morning. It was on his return from his lawyer, as he was about to cross Berkeley Square, that a carriage suddenly stopped in the middle of the road, and a female hand apparently beckoned to him from the window. He was at first very doubtful, whether he were indeed the person to whom the signal was addressed, but as on looking around, there was not a single human being in sight, he at length slowly approached the equipage, from which a white handkerchief now waved with considerable agitation. Somewhat perplexed by this incident, the mystery was, however, immediately explained by the voice of Lady Bellair.

"You wicked man," said her little ladyship, in a great rage. "O! how I hate you! I could cut you into minced meat; that I could. Here I have been giving parties every night, all for you too. And you have been in town; never called on me. Tell me your name. How is your wife? O! you are not married. You should marry; I hate a *ci-devant jeune homme*. However, you can wait a little. Here, James, Thomas, Peter, what is your name, open the door and let him in. There, get in, get in; I have a great deal to say to you." And Ferdinand found that it was absolutely necessary to comply.

"Now, where shall we go?" said her ladyship; "I have got till two o'clock. I make it a rule to be at home every day from two till six, to receive my friends. You must come and call upon me. You may come every day if you like. Do not leave your card. I hate people who leave cards. I never see them; I order all to be burned. I cannot bear people who leave bits of paper at my house. Do you want to go anywhere!—You do not!—Why do not you? How is your worthy father, Sir Peter?—Is his name Sir Peter or Sir Paul!—Well, never mind; you know who I mean. And your charming mother, my favourite friend?—She is charming; she is quite one of my favourites.—And were not you to marry?—Tell me, why have you not!—Miss—Miss—you know whom I mean, whose grandfather was my son's friend. In town are they?—Where do they live?—Brook Street!—I will go and call upon them. There, pull the string, and tell him where they live."

And so, in a few minutes, Lady Bellair's carriage stopped opposite the house of Miss Grandison.

"Are they early risers?" said her ladyship; "I get up every morning at six. I dare say they will not receive me, but do you show yourself, and then they cannot refuse."

In consequence of this diplomatic movement, Lady Bellair effected an entrance. Leaning on the arm of Ferdinand, her ladyship was ushered into the morning-room, where she found Lady Armine and Katherine.

"My dear lady, how do you do? And my sweet miss!—O! your eyes are so bright, that it makes me young to look upon them! I quite love you, that I do.—Your grandfather and my poor son were bosom friends.—And, my dear lady, where have you been all this time? Here have I been giving parties every night, and all for you; for all my Bath friends; telling everybody about you; talking of nothing else; everybody longing to see you; and you have never been near me. My dinner parties are over; I shall not give any more dinners until June. But I have three evenings yet; to-night you must come to me, to-night, and Thursday, and Saturday; you must come on all three nights.—O! why did you not call upon me? I should have asked you to dinner.—I would have asked you to meet Lord Colonnade and Lady Ionia! They would have just suited you; they would have tasted you!—But I tell you what I will do; I will come and dine with you some day.—Now, when will you have me?—Let me see, when am I free?" So saying, her ladyship opened a little red book, which was her inseparable companion in London. "All this week I am ticketed; Monday, the Derricourts—dull, but then he is a duke. Tuesday I dine with Bonmot; we have made it up; he gives me a dinner. Wednesday—Wednesday—where is Wednesday? General Faneville, my own party. Thursday, the Maxburys—bad dinner, but good company. Friday, Waring Cutts—a famous house for eating; but that is not in my way; however, I must go, for he sends me pines. And Saturday I dine off a rabbit, by myself, at one o'clock, to go and see my dear, darling Lady St. Julian at Richmond. So it cannot be this or next week. I will send you a note; I will tell you to-night. And now I must go, for it is five minutes to two—I am always at home from two to six—I receive my friends—you may come every day—and you must come to see my new squirrel; my darling, funny, little grand-son gave it to me—and, my dear miss, where is that wicked Lady Grandison? Do you ever see her, or are you enemies?—She has got the estate, has not she?—She never calls upon me—tell her she is one of my greatest favourites—O! why does not she come?—I should have asked her to dinner; and now all my dinners are over till June. Tell me where she lives, and I will call upon her to-morrow."

So saying, and bidding them all farewell very cordially, her ladyship took Ferdinand's arm and retired.

Captain Armine returned to his mother and cousin, and sat an hour with them, until their carriage was announced. Just as he was going away, he observed Lady Bellair's little red book, which she had left behind.

"Poor Lady Bellair! what will she do?" said Miss Grandison; "we must take it to her immediately."

"I will leave it," said Ferdinand, "I shall pass her house."

Bellair House was the prettiest mansion in May Fair. It was a long building, in the Italian style, situated in the midst of gardens, which, though not very extensive, were laid out with so much art and taste, that it was very difficult to believe that you were in a great city. The house was furnished and adorned with all that taste for which Lady Bellair was distinguished. All the receiving-rooms were on the ground floor, and were all connected. Ferdinand, who remembered Lady Bellair's injunctions not to leave cards, attracted by the spot, and not knowing what to do with himself, determined to pay her ladyship a visit, and was ushered into an octagon library, lined with well-laden dwarf-cases of brilliant volumes, crowned with no lack of marble busts, bronzes, and Etruscan vases. On each side opened a magnificent saloon, furnished in that classic style which the late accomplished and ingenious Mr. Hope first rendered popular in this country. The wings, projecting far into the gardens, comprised respectively a dining-room and a conservatory of considerable dimensions. Isolated in the midst of the gardens was a long building, called the summer-room, lined with Indian matting, and screened on one side from the air merely by Venetian blinds. The walls of this chamber were almost entirely covered with caricatures and prints of the country seats of Lady Bellair's friends, all of which she took care to visit. Here also were her parrots, and some birds of a sweeter voice, a monkey, and the famous squirrel.

Lady Bellair was seated in a chair, the back of which was much higher than her head; at her side was a little table with writing materials, and on which also was placed a magnificent bell, by Benvenuto Cellini, with which her ladyship summoned her page, who, in the mean time, loitered in the hall.

"You have brought me my book!" she exclaimed, as Ferdinand entered with the mystical volume. "Give it me—give it me. Here I cannot tell Mrs. Fancourt what day I can dine with her. I am engaged all this week and all next, and I am to dine with your dear family when I like. But Mrs. Fancourt must choose her day, because they will keep. You do not know this gentleman?" she said, turning to Mrs. Fancourt. "Well, I shall not introduce you; he will not suit you; he is a fine gentleman, and only dines with dukes."

Mrs. Fancourt consequently looked very anxious for an introduction.

"General Faneville," Lady Bellair continued to a gentleman on her left, "what day do I dine with you? Wednesday. Is our party full? You must make room for him; he is my greatest favourite. All the ladies are in love with him."

General Faneville expressed his deep sense of the high honour; Ferdinand protested he was engaged on Wednesday; Mrs. Fancourt looked very disappointed that she had thus lost another opportunity of learning the name of so distinguished a personage.

There was another knock. Mrs. Fancourt departed. Lady Maxbury, and her daughter, Lady Selina, were announced.

"Have you got him?" asked Lady Bellair, very eagerly, as her new visitors entered.

"He has promised most positively," answered Lady Maxbury.

"Dear, good creature!" exclaimed Lady Bellair, "you are the dearest creature that I know! And you are charming," she continued, addressing herself to Lady Selina; "if I were a man, I would marry you directly. There, now, he (turning to Ferdinand) cannot marry you, because he is married already; but he should, if he were not. And how will he come?" inquired Lady Bellair.

"He will find his way," said Lady Maxbury.

"And I am not to pay any thing?" inquired Lady Bellair.

"Not any thing," said Lady Maxbury.

"I cannot bear paying," said Lady Bellair. "But will he dance, and will he bring his bows and arrows? Lord Dorfield protests 'tis nothing without the bows and arrows."

"What, the New Zealand chief, Lady Bellair?" inquired the general.

"Have you seen him?" inquired Lady Bellair, eagerly.

"Not yet," replied the gentleman.

"Well, then, you will see him to-night," said Lady Bellair, with an air of triumph. "He is coming to me to-night."

Ferdinand rose, and was about to depart.

"You must not go without seeing my squirrel," said her ladyship, "that my dear funny grandson gave me—he is such a funny boy! You must see it, you must see it," added her ladyship in a peremptory tone. "There, go out of that door; and you will find your way to my summer-room, and there you will find my squirrel."

The restless Ferdinand was content to quit the library, even with the stipulation of first visiting the squirrel. He walked through a saloon, entered the conservatory, emerged into the garden, and at length found himself in the long summer-room. At the end of the room a lady was seated looking over a book of prints; as she heard a footstep she raised her eyes, and the thunderstruck Ferdinand beheld—Henrietta Temple!

He was literally speechless; he felt rooted to the ground; all power of thought and motion alike deserted him. There he stood confounded and aghast. Nor indeed was his companion less disturbed. She remained with her eyes fixed on Ferdinand, with an expression of fear, astonishment, and distress impressed upon her features. At length Ferdinand in some degree rallied, and he followed the first impulse of his mind—when mind indeed returned to him—he moved to retire.

He had retraced half his steps, when a voice, if human voice indeed it were that sent forth tones so full of choking anguish, pronounced his name.

"Captain Armine!" said the voice.

How he trembled, yet mechanically obedient to his first impulse, he still proceeded to the door.

"Ferdinand!" said the voice.

He stopped, he turned, she waved her hand wildly, and then leaning her arm on the table, buried her face in it. Ferdinand walked to the table at which she was sitting; she heard his footsteps near her, yet she neither looked up nor spoke. At length he said in a still yet clear voice, "I am here."

"I have seen Mr. Glastonbury," she muttered.

"I know it," he replied.

"Your illness has distressed me," she said, after a slight pause, her face still concealed, and speaking in a very hushed tone. Ferdinand made no

reply: and there was another pause, which Miss Temple broke.

"I would that we were at least friends," she said. The tears came into Ferdinand's eyes when she said this, for her tone, though low, was now sweet. It touched his heart.

"Our mutual feelings now are of little consequence," he replied.

She sighed, but made no reply. At length Ferdinand said, "Farewell, Miss Temple."

She started, she looked up, her mournful countenance harrowed his heart. He knew not what to do; what to say. He could not bear her glance, he in his turn averted his eyes.

"Our misery, is—has been great," she said, in a firmer tone, "but was it of my making?"

"The miserable can bear reproaches: do not spare me—my situation, however, proves my sincerity. I have erred, certainly," said Ferdinand; "I could not believe that you could have doubted me. It was a mistake," he added, in a tone of great bitterness.

Miss Temple again covered her face, as she said, "I cannot recall the past: I wish not to dwell upon it. I desire only to express to you the interest I take in your welfare, my hope that you may yet be happy. Yes! you can be happy, Ferdinand—Ferdinand, for my sake you will be happy."

"O! Henrietta, if Henrietta I indeed may call you, this is worse than that death I curse myself for having escaped."

"No, Ferdinand, say not that. Exert yourself only exert yourself, bear up against irresistible fate. Your cousin—every one says she is so amiable—surely—"

"Farewell, madam, I thank you for your counsel."

"No, Ferdinand, you shall not go, you shall not go, in anger. Pardon me, pity me, I spoke for your sake, I spoke for the best."

"I, at least, will never be false," said Ferdinand, with energy. "It shall not be said of me, that I broke vows consecrated by the finest emotions of our nature. No, no, I have had my dream; it was but a dream; but while I live, I will live upon its sweet memory."

"Ah! Ferdinand, why were you not frank, why did you conceal your situation from me?"

"No explanations of mine can change our respective situations," said Ferdinand; "I content myself therefore by saying, that it was not Miss Temple who had occasion to criticise my conduct."

"You are very bitter."

"The lady whom I injured, pardoned me. She is the most generous, the most amiable of her sex; if only in gratitude for all her surpassing goodness, I would never affect to offer her a heart which never can be hers. Katherine is indeed more than woman. Amid my many and almost unparalleged sorrows, one of my keenest pangs is the recollection that I should have clouded the life, even for a moment, of that admirable person. Alas! alas! that in all my misery, the only woman who sympathizes with my wretchedness, is the woman whom I have injured. And so delicate as well as so generous! She would not even inquire the name of the individual who had occasioned our mutual desolation."

"Would that she knew all!" murmured Henrietta, "would that I knew her!"

"Your acquaintance could not influence affairs. My very affection for my cousin, the complete appreciation which I now possess of her character, before so little estimated and so feebly comprehended by me, is the very circumstance, that, with my feelings, would prevent our union. She may—I am confident she will yet, be happy. I can never make her so. Our engagement in old days was rather the result of family arrangements than of any sympathy. I love her far better now than I did then, and yet she is the very last person in the world that I would marry. I trust, I believe that my conduct, if it have clouded for a moment her life, will not ultimately, will not long obscure it; and she has every charm and virtue, and accident of fortune, to attract the admiration and attention of the most favoured. Her feelings towards me at any time could have been but mild and calm. It is a mere abuse of terms to style such sentiments love. But," added he, sarcastically, "this is too delicate a subject for me to dilate on to Miss Temple."

"For God's sake do not be so bitter," she exclaimed; and then she added, in a voice half of anguish, half of tenderness, "let me never be taunted by those lips! O! Ferdinand, why cannot we be friends?"

"Because we are more than friends. To me such a word from your lips is mere mockery. Let us never meet. That alone remains for us. Little did I suppose that we ever should have met again. I go nowhere—I enter no single house; my visit here this morning was one of these whimsical vagaries which cannot be counted on. This old lady, indeed, seems, somehow or other, connected with our destiny. I believe I am greatly indebted to her?"

The page entered the room. "Miss Temple," said the lad, "my lady bid me say the dutchess and Lord Montfort were here."

Ferdinand started—and darting, almost unconsciously, a glance of fierce reproach at the miserable Henrietta, he rushed out of the room; and made his escape from Bellair House without re-entering the library.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTAINING AN EVENING ASSEMBLY AT BELLAIR HOUSE.

SEATED on an ottoman in the octagon library, occasionally throwing a glance at her illuminated and crowded saloons, or beckoning, with a fan almost as long as herself, to a distant guest, Lady Bellair received the world on the evening of the day that had witnessed the strange rencontre between Henrietta Temple and Ferdinand Armine. Her page, who stood at the library door in a new fancy dress, received the announcement of the company from the other servants, and himself communicated the information to his mistress.

"Mr. Million de Stockville, my lady," said the page.

"Hem!" said her ladyship, rather gruffly, as, with no very amiable expression of countenance, she bowed, with her haughtiest dignity, to a rather common-looking personage in a very gorgeously embroidered waistcoat.

"Lady Ionias Colonnade, my lady."

Lady Bellair bestowed a smiling nod on this fair and classic dame, and even indicated, by a movement of her fan, that she might take a seat on her ottoman.

"Sir Ratcliff and Lady Armine, my lady, and Miss Grandison."

"Dear, good people!" exclaimed Lady Bellair, "how late you are! and where is your wicked son! There, go into the next room, go, go, and see the wonderful man. Lady Ionias, you must know Lady Armine; she is like you; she is one of my favourites. Now, then, there all of you go together. I will not have anybody stay here, except my niece. This is my niece," Lady Bellair added, pointing to a very young lady seated by her side; "I give this party for her."

"General Faneville, my lady."

"You are very late," said Lady Bellair.

"I dined at Lord Rochfort's," said the general, bowing.

"Rochfort's! O! where are they?—where are the Rochfort's! they ought to be here. I must—I will see them. Do you think Lady Rochfort wants a nursery governess! Because I have a charming person who would just suit her. Go and find her out, general, and inquire; and if she do not want one, find out some one who does. Ask Lady Maxbury. There, go—go."

"Mr. and Miss Temple, my lady."

"O! my darling!" said Lady Bellair, "my real darling! sit by me. I sent Lady Ionias away, because I determined to keep this place for you. I give this party entirely in your honour, so you ought to sit here. You are a good man," she continued, addressing Mr. Temple; "but I can't love you as well as your daughter."

"I should be too fortunate," said Mr. Temple, smiling.

"I knew you when you eat pap," said Lady Bellair, laughing.

"Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, my lady."

Lady Bellair assumed her coldest and haughtiest glance. Mrs. Montgomery appeared more gorgeous than ever. The splendour of her sweeping train almost required a page to support it; she held a bouquet which might have served for the centre-piece of a dinner-table. A slender youth, rather distinguished in appearance, simply dressed, with a rose-bud just twisted into his black coat, but whose person distilled odours whose essence might have exhausted a conservatory, lounged at her side.

"May I have the honour to present to your ladyship Lord Catchinwhocan," breathed forth Mrs. Montgomery, exulting in her companion, perhaps in her conquest.

Lady Bellair gave a short and ungracious nod. Mrs. Montgomery recognised Mr. and Miss Temple. "There, go, go," said Lady Bellair, interrupting her, "nobody must stop here; go and see the wonderful man in the next room."

"Lady Bellair is so strange," whimpered Mrs. Montgomery in an apologetical whisper to Miss Temple, and she moved away, covering her retreat by the graceful person of Lord Catchinwhocan.

"Some Irish guardsman, I suppose," said Lady Bellair. "I never heard of him; I hate guardsmen."

"Rather a distinguished looking man, I think," said Mr. Temple.

"Do you think so?" said Lady Bellair, who was

always influenced by the last word. "I will ask him for Thursday and Saturday. I think I must have known his grandfather. I must tell him not to go about with that horrid woman. She is so very fine, and she uses musk; she puts me in mind of the Queen of Sheba," said the little lady, laughing, "all precious stones and frankincense. I quite hate her."

"I thought she was quite one of your favourites, Lady Bellair!" said Henrietta Temple, rather maliciously.

"A Bath favourite, my dear, a Bath favourite. I wear my old bonnets at Bath, and use my new friends; but in town I have old friends and new dresses."

"Lady Frederick Berrington, my lady."

"O! my dear Lady Frederick, now I will give you a treat. I will introduce you to my sweet, sweet friend, whom I am always talking to you of. You deserve to know her; you will taste her, there, sit down, sit by her, and talk to her, and make love to her."

"Lady Womandeville, my lady."

"Ah! she will do for the lord—she loves a lord. My dear lady, you come so late, and yet I am always so glad to see you. I have such a charming friend for you, the handsomest, most fashionable, witty person, quite captivating, and his grandfather was one of my dearest friends. What is his name? what is his name? Lord Catchinwhoan. Mind, I introduce you to him, and ask him to your house very often."

Lady Womandeville smiled, expressed her delight, and moved on.

Lord Montfort, who had arrived before the Temples, approached the ottoman.

"Is the dutchess here?" inquired Henrietta, as she shook hands with him.

"And Isabella," he replied. Henrietta arose, and, taking his arm, bid adieu to Lady Bellair.

"God bless you," said her ladyship, with great emphasis. "I will not have you speak to that odious Mrs. Floyd, mind."

When Lord Montfort and Henrietta succeeded in discovering the dutchess, she was in the conservatory, which was gayly illumined with coloured lamps among the shrubs. Her grace was conversing with great cordiality with a lady of very prepossessing appearance, and in whom the traces of a beauty once distinguished were indeed still considerable, and her companion, an extremely pretty person, in the very bloom of girlhood. Lord Montfort and Henrietta were immediately introduced to these ladies, as Lady Armine and Miss Grandison. After the scene of the morning, it was not very easy to deprive Miss Temple of her equanimity; after that shock, indeed, no incident connected with the Armine family could be very surprising; she was even desirous of becoming acquainted with Miss Grandison, and she congratulated herself upon the opportunity which had so speedily offered itself to gratify her wishes. The dutchess was perfectly delighted with Lady Armine, whose manners, indeed, were very fascinating; between the families there was some distant connection of blood, and Lady Armine, too, had always retained a lively sense of the old duke's services to her son. Henrietta had even to listen to iniquities made after Ferdinand, and she learned that he was recovering from an almost fatal illness, that he could not yet endure the fatigues of society,

and that he was even living at a hotel for the sake of quiet. Henrietta watched the countenance of Katherine, as Lady Armine gave this information. It was serious, but not disturbed. Her grace did not separate from her new friends the whole of the evening, and they parted with a mutually expressed wish that they might speedily and often meet. The dutchess pronounced Lady Armine the most charming person she ever met, while, on the other hand, Miss Grandison was warm in her admiration of Henrietta Temple and Lord Montfort, whom she thought quite worthy even of so rare a prize.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTAINING A VERY IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION.

BETWEEN the unexpected meeting with Captain Armine in the morning, and the evening assembly at Bellair House, a communication had been made by Miss Temple to Lord Montfort, which ought not to be quite unnoticed. She had returned home with his mother and himself, and her silence and depression had not escaped him. Soon after their arrival they were left alone, and then Henrietta said, "Digby, I wish to speak to you!"

"My own!" said Lord Montfort, as he seated himself by her on the sofa; and took her hand.

Miss Temple was calm, but he would have been a light observer, who had not detected her suppressed agitation.

"Dearest Digby," she continued, "you are so generous and so kind, that I ought to feel no reluctance in speaking to you upon this subject; and yet it pains me very much." She hesitated—

"I can only express my sympathy with any sorrow of yours, Henrietta," said Lord Montfort. "Speak to me as you always do, with that frankness which so much delights me."

"Let your thoughts recur to the most painful incident of my life, then," said Henrietta.

"If you require it," said Lord Montfort, in a serious tone.

"It is not my fault, dearest Digby, that a single circumstance connected with that unhappy event should be unknown to you. I wished originally that you should know all. I have a thousand times since regretted that your consideration for my feelings should ever have occasioned an imperfect confidence between us; and something has occurred to-day, which makes me lament it most bitterly."

"No, no, dearest Henrietta; you feel too keenly," said Lord Montfort.

"Indeed, Digby, it is so," said Henrietta, very mournfully.

"Speak, then, dearest Henrietta."

"It is necessary that you should know the name of that person who once exercised an influence over my feelings, which I never affected to disguise to you."

"Is it indeed necessary?" inquired Lord Montfort.

"It is for my happiness," replied Henrietta.

"Then, indeed, I am anxious to learn it."

"He is in this country," said Henrietta; "he is in this town; he may be in the same room with you to-morrow; he has been in the same room with me even this day."

"Indeed!" said Lord Montfort.

"He bears a name not unknown to you," said Henrietta, "a name, too, that I must teach myself to mention, and yet——"

Lord Montfort rose and took a pencil and a sheet of paper from the table. "Write it," he said in a most kind tone.

Henrietta took the pencil, and wrote—"AR-
MINE."

"The son of Sir Ratcliffe?" said Lord Montfort.

"The same," replied Henrietta.

"You heard then of him last night?" inquired her companion.

"Even so; of that, too, I was about to speak."

"I am aware of the connexion of Mr. Glastonbury with the Armine family," said Lord Montfort, very quietly.

There was a dead pause. At length Montfort said, "Is there any thing you wish me to do?"

"Much," said Henrietta. "Dearest Digby," she continued, after a moment's hesitation, "do not misinterpret me; my heart, if such a heart be indeed worth possessing, is yours. I can never forget who solaced me in all my misery; I can never forget all your delicate tenderness, my Digby. Would that I could make a return to you more worthy of all your goodness; but, if the grateful devotion of my life can repay you, you shall be satisfied."

He took her hand and pressed it to his lips. "It is of you, and of your happiness, that I can alone think," he murmured.

"Now let me tell you all," said Henrietta, with desperate firmness. "I have done this person great injustice."

"Hah!" said Lord Montfort.

"It cuts me to the heart," said Henrietta.

"You have then misconceived his conduct?" inquired Lord Montfort.

"Utterly."

"It is indeed a terrible situation for you," said Lord Montfort; "for all of us," he added, in a lower tone.

"No, Digby; not for all of us; not even for myself; for, if you are happy, I will be. But for him—yes! I will not conceal it from you—I feel for him."

"Your destiny is in your own hands, Henrietta."

"No, no, Digby; do not say so," exclaimed Miss Temple, very earnestly; "do not speak in that tone of sacrifice. There is no need of sacrifice; there shall be none. I will not—I do not falter. Be you firm. Do not desert me in this moment of trial. It is for support I speak; it is for consolation. We are bound together by ties the purest, the holiest. Who shall sever them? No! Digby, we will be happy; but I am interested in the destiny of this unhappy person. You—you can assist me in rendering it more serene; in making him, perhaps, not less happy than ourselves."

"I would spare no labour," said Lord Montfort.

"O! that you would not!" exclaimed Miss Temple. "You are so good, so noble! You would sympathize even with him. What other man in your situation would?"

"What can be done?"

"Listen: he was engaged to his cousin, even on that fatal day when we first met; a lady with every charm and advantage that one would think could make a man happy; young, noble, and beautiful; of a most amiable and generous disposition, as her

subsequent conduct has proved; and of immense wealth."

"Miss Grandison?" said Lord Montfort.

"Yes: his parents looked forward to their union with delight, not altogether unmixed with anxiety. The Armines, with all their princely possessions, are greatly embarrassed, from the conduct of the last head of their house. Ferdinand himself has, I grieve to say, inherited too much of his grandfather's imprudent spirit; his affairs, I fear, are terribly involved. When I knew him, papa was, as you are aware, a very poor man. This marriage would have cured all: my Digby, I wish it to take place."

"How can we effect it?" asked Lord Montfort.

"Become his friend, dear Digby. I always think you can do any thing. Yes! my only trust is in you. O, my Digby! make us all happy."

Lord Montfort rose, and walked up and down the room, apparently in profound meditation. At length he said, "Rest assured, Henrietta, that to secure your happiness nothing shall be ever wanting on my part. I will see Mr. Glastonbury on this subject. At present, dearest, let us think of lighter things."

CHAPTER VIII.

WHICH IS RATHER STRANGE.

It was on the morning after the assembly at Bellair House that Ferdinand was roused from his welcome slumbers, for he had passed an almost sleepless night, by his servant bringing him a note, and telling him that it had been left by a lady in a carriage. He opened it, and read as follows:—

"Silly, silly Captain Armine! why did you not come to my Vauxhall last night? I wanted to present you to the fairest damsel in the world, who is a great fortune too, but that you don't care about. When are you going to be married! Miss Grandison looked charming, but disconsolate without her knight. Your mother is an angel, and the Dutchess of—— is quite in love with her. Your father, too, is a very worthy man. I love your family very much. Come and call upon poor old dotting bedridden H. B., who is at home every day from two to six to receive her friends. Has charming Lady Armine got a page? I have one that would just suit her. He teases my poor squirrels, that I am obliged to turn him away; but he is a real treasure. That fine lady, Mrs. Montgomery Floyd, would give her cars for him; but I love your mother much more, and so she shall have him. He shall come to her to-night. All the world takes tea with H. B. on Thursday and Saturday."

"One o'clock!" said Ferdinand. "I may as well get up, and call in Brook Street, and save my mother from this threatened infliction. Heigho! Day after day, and each more miserable than the other. How will this end?"

When Ferdinand arrived in Brook Street, he went up stairs without being announced, and found in the drawing-room, besides his mother and Katherine, the dutchess, Lord Montfort, and Henrietta Temple.

The young ladies were in their riding-habits, Henrietta appeared before him, the same Henrietta whom he had met, for the first time, in the plaisance

at Armine. Retreat was impossible. Her grace received Ferdinand very cordially, and reminded him of old days. Henrietta bowed, but she was sitting at some distance with Miss Grandison, looking at some work. Her occupation covered her confusion. Lord Montfort came forward with extended hand.

"I have the pleasure of meeting a very old friend," said his lordship.

Ferdinand just touched his lordship's finger, and bowed rather stiffly; then turning to his mother he gave her Lady Bellair's note. "It concerns you more than myself," he observed.

"You were not at Lady Bellair's last night, Captain Armine," said her grace.

"I never go anywhere," was the answer.

"He has been a great invalid," said Lady Armine.

"Where is Glastonbury, Ferdinand?" said Lady Armine. "He never comes near us."

"He goes every day to the British Museum."

"I wish he would take me," said Katherine.

"I have never been. Have you?" she inquired, turning to Henrietta.

"I am ashamed to say never," replied Henrietta. "It seems to me that London is the only city of which I know nothing."

"Ferdinand," said Katherine, "I wish you would go with us to the Museum some day. Miss Temple would like to go. You know Miss Temple," she added, as if she of course supposed he had not that pleasure.

Ferdinand bowed; Lord Montfort came forward, and turned the conversation to Egyptian antiquities. When a quarter of an hour had passed, Ferdinand thought that he might now withdraw.

"Do you dine at home, Katherine, to-day?" he inquired.

Miss Grandison looked at Miss Temple;—the young ladies whispered.

"Ferdinand," said Katherine, "what are you going to do!"

"Nothing—particular."

"We are going to ride, and Miss Temple wishes you would come with us."

"I should be very happy; but I have some business to attend to."

"O! dear Ferdinand, that is what you always say. You really appear to me to be the most busy person in the world."

"Pray come, Captain Armine," said Lord Montfort.

"Thank you; it is really not in my power." His hat was in his hand; he was begging her grace to bear his compliments to the duke, when Henrietta rose from her seat, and, coming up to him, said—"Do, Captain Armine, come with us; I ask it as a favour."

That voice!—O! it came o'er his ear "like the sweet south"—it unmanned him quite. He scarcely knew where he was. He trembled from head to foot. His colour deserted him, and the unlucky hat fell to the ground; and yet she stood before him awaiting his reply—calm, quite calm—serious—apparently a little anxious. The dutchess was in earnest conversation with his mother. Lord Montfort had walked up to Miss Grandison, and apparently was engaged in arranging a pattern for her. Ferdinand and Henrietta were quite unobserved. He looked up—he caught her eye—and then he whispered—"This is hardly fair."

She stretched forth her hand, took his hat, and laid it on the table; then, turning to Katherine, she said, in a tone which seemed to admit of no doubt, "Captain Armine will ride with us;" and she seated herself by Lady Armine.

The expedition was a little delayed by Ferdinand having to send for his horse; the others had, in the mean time, arrived. Yet this half hour, by some contrivance, did at length disappear. Lord Montfort continued talking to Miss Grandison. Henrietta remained seated by Lady Armine. Ferdinand revolved a great question in his mind—and it was this: Was Lord Montfort aware of the intimate acquaintance between himself and Miss Temple? And what was the moving principle of her present conduct? He conjured up a thousand reasons, but none satisfied him. His curiosity was excited, and, instead of regretting his extracted promise to join the cavalcade, he rejoiced that an opportunity was thus afforded him of perhaps solving a problem in the secret of which he now began to feel extremely interested.

And yet in truth when Ferdinand found himself really mounted, and riding by the side of Henrietta Temple once more, for Lord Montfort was very impartial in his attentions to his fair companions, and Ferdinand continually found himself next to Henrietta, he really began to think the world was bewitched, and was almost skeptical whether he was or was not Ferdinand Armine. The identity of his companion too was so complete: Henrietta Temple in her riding-habit was the very image most keenly impressed upon his memory. He looked at her and stared at her with a face of curious perplexity. She did not, indeed, speak much; the conversation was always general, and chiefly maintained by Lord Montfort, who, though usually silent and reserved, made on this occasion the most successful efforts to be amusing. His attention to Ferdinand too was remarkable; it was impossible to resist such genuine and unaffected kindness. It smote Ferdinand's heart that he had received his lordship's first advances so ungraciously. Compunction rendered him now doubly courteous; he was even once or twice quite gay.

The day was as fine as a clear sky, a warm sun, and a warm western breeze could render it. Tempted by so much enjoyment, their ride was very long. It was late, much later than they expected, when they returned home by the green lanes of pretty Willesden, and the Park was quite empty when they emerged from the Edgware Road into Oxford Street.

"Now the best thing we can all do is to dine in St. James's Square," said Lord Montfort. "It is ten minutes past eight, good people. We shall just be in time, and then we can send messages to Grosvenor Square and Brook Street. What say you, Armine? you will come, of course?"

"Thank you, if you would excuse me."

"No, no; why excuse you?" said Lord Montfort: "I think it shabby to desert us now, after all our adventures."

"Really you are very kind, but I never dine out."

"Dine out! What a phrase! You will not meet a human being; perhaps not even my father. If you will not come it will spoil every thing."

"I cannot dine in a frock," said Ferdinand.

"I shall," said Lord Montfort, "and these ladies must dine in their habits, I suspect."

"O! certainly, certainly," said the ladies.

"Do come, Ferdinand," said Katherine.

"I ask you as a favour," said Henrietta, turning to him and speaking in a low voice.

"Well," said Ferdinand, shrugging his shoulders.

"That is well," said Lord Montfort; "now let us trot through the Park, and the groom can call in Grosvenor Square and Brook Street, and gallop after us. This is amusing, is it not?"

CHAPTER IX.

WHICH IS ON THE WHOLE ALMOST AS PERPLEXING AS THE PRECEDING ONE.

WHEN Ferdinand found himself dining in St. James's Square, in the very same room where he had passed so many gay hours during that boyish month of glee which preceded his first joining his regiment, and then looked opposite to him and saw Henrietta Temple, it seemed to him that, by some magical process or other, his life was acting over again, and the order of the senses and characters had, by some strange mismanagement, got confused. Yet he yielded himself up to the excitement which had so unexpectedly influenced him; he was inflamed by a species of wild delight, which he could not understand, nor stop to analyze; and when the dutchess retired with the young ladies to their secret conclave in the drawing-room, she said, "I like Captain Armine very much, he is so full of spirit and imagination. When we met him this morning, do you know I thought him rather stiff and fine! I regretted the bright boyish flow that I so well recollected, but I see I was mistaken."

"Ferdinand is very much changed," said Miss Grandison. "He was once the most brilliant person I think that ever lived; almost too brilliant; everybody by him seemed so tame! But since his illness he has quite changed. I have scarcely heard him speak or seen him smile these six months. There is not in the whole world a person so wretchedly altered. He is quite a wreck. I do not know what is the matter with him to-day. He seemed once almost himself."

"He indulged his feelings too much, perhaps," said Henrietta; "he lived perhaps too much alone after—after so severe an illness."

"O! no, it is not that," said Miss Grandison. "It is not exactly that. Poor Ferdinand! he is to be pitied. I fear he will never be happy again."

"Miss Grandison should hardly say that," said the dutchess, "if report speaks truly."

Katherine was about to reply, but checked herself.

Henrietta arose from her seat rather suddenly, and asked Katherine to touch the piano. The dutchess took up the Morning Post.

"Poor Ferdinand! he used to sing once so beautifully too!" said Katherine to Miss Temple in a hushed voice: "he never sings now."

"You must make him," said Henrietta.

Miss Grandison shook her head.

"You have influence with him; you should exert it," said Henrietta.

"I neither have, nor desire to have, influence with him," said Miss Grandison. "Dearest Miss Temple, the world is in error with respect to myself and my cousin; and yet I ought not to say to

you what I have not thought proper to confess even to my aunt."

Henrietta leaned over and kissed her forehead. "Say what you like, dearest Miss Grandison: you speak to a friend, who loves you, and will respect your secret."

The gentlemen at this moment entered the room, and interrupted this interesting conversation.

"You must not quit the instrument, Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort, seating himself by her side. Ferdinand fell into conversation with the dutchess; and Miss Temple was the amiable victim of his grace's passion for *écarté*.

"Captain Armine is a most agreeable person," said Lord Montfort.

Miss Grandison rather stared. "We were just speaking of Ferdinand," she replied. "and I was lamenting his sad change."

"Severe illness, illness so severe as his must for the moment change any one; we shall soon see him himself again."

"Never," said Miss Grandison, mournfully.

"You must inspire him," said Lord Montfort. "I perceive you have great influence with him."

"I give Lord Montfort credit for much acuter perception than that," said Miss Grandison.

Their eyes met; even Lord Montfort's dark vision shrank before the searching glance of Miss Grandison. It conveyed to him that his purpose was not undiscovered.

"But you can exert influence, if you please," said Lord Montfort.

"But it may not please me," said Miss Grandison.

At this moment Mr. Glastonbury was announced. He had a general invitation, and was frequently in the habit of paying an evening visit when the family were disengaged. When he found Ferdinand, Henrietta, and Katherine, all assembled together, and in so strange a garb, his perplexity was wondrous. The tone of comparative ease too with which Miss Temple addressed him completed his confusion. He began to suspect that some critical explanation had taken place. He looked around for information.

"We have all been riding," said Lord Montfort.

"So I perceive," said Glastonbury.

"And, as we were too late for dinner, took refuge here," continued his lordship.

"I observe it," said Glastonbury.

"Miss Grandison is an admirable musician, sir."

"She is an admirable lady in every respect," said Glastonbury.

"Perhaps you will join her in some canzonette; I am so stupid as not to be able to sing. I wish I could induce Captain Armine."

"He has left off singing," said Glastonbury, mournfully. "But Miss Temple?" added Glastonbury, bowing to that lady.

"Miss Temple has left off singing too," said Lord Montfort, very quietly.

"Come, Mr. Glastonbury," said the dutchess. "time was when you and I have sung together. Let us try to shame these young folks." So saying her grace seated herself at the piano, and the gratified Glastonbury summoned all his energies to accompany her.

Lord Montfort seated himself by Ferdinand "You have been severely ill, I am sorry to hear."

"Yes: I have been rather shaken."

"This spring will bring you round."

"So every one tells me. I cannot say I feel its beneficial influence."

"You should," said Lord Montfort. "At our age we ought to rally quickly."

"Yes! Time is the great physician. I cannot say I have much more faith in him than in the spring."

"Well, then, there is hope; what think you of that?"

"I have no great faith," said Ferdinand, affecting to smile.

"Believe then in optimism," said Henrietta Temple, without taking her eyes off the cards. "Whatever is, is best."

"That is not my creed, Miss Temple," said Ferdinand, and he rose and was about to retire.

"Must you go? Let us all do something to-morrow!" said Lord Montfort, interchanging a glance with Henrietta. "The British Museum; Miss Grandison wishes to go to the British Museum. Pray come with us."

"You are very good, but—"

"Well! I will write you a little note in the morning and tell you our plans," said Lord Montfort. "I hope you will not desert us."

Ferdinand bowed and retired: he avoided catching the eye of Henrietta.

The carriages of Miss Temple and Miss Grandison were soon announced, and, fatigued with their riding-dresses, these ladies did not long remain.

"I will not go home with you to-night, dear Henrietta," said Lord Montfort; "I wish to speak to Glastonbury."

"To-day has been a day of trial. What do you think of affairs? I saw you speaking to Katherine. What do you think?"

"I think Ferdinand Armine is a very formidable rival. Do you know I am rather jealous?"

"Digby! can you be ungenerous?"

"My sweet Henrietta, pardon my levity. I spoke in the merest playfulness. Nay," he continued, for she seemed really hurt, "say good night very sweetly."

"Is there any hope?" said Henrietta.

"All's well that ends well!" said Lord Montfort, smiling; "God bless you."

Glastonbury was about to retire, when Lord Montfort returned and asked him to come up to his lordship's own apartments, as he wished to show him a curious antique carving.

"You seemed rather surprised at the guests you found here to-night," said Lord Montfort when they were alone.

Glastonbury looked a little confused. "It was certainly a curious meeting, all things considered," continued Lord Montfort: "Henrietta has never concealed anything of the past from me, but I have always wished to spare her details. I told her this morning I should speak to you upon the subject, and that is the reason why I have asked you here."

"It is a painful history," said Glastonbury.

"As painful to me as to any one," said his lordship; "nevertheless it must be told. When did you first meet Miss Temple?"

"I shall never forget it," said Glastonbury, sighing and moving very uneasily in his chair. "I took her for Miss Grandison." And Glastonbury now entered into a complete history of every thing that had occurred.

"It is a strange, a wonderful story," said Lord Montfort, and you communicated every thing to Miss Grandison?"

"Every thing but the name of her rival. To that she would not listen. It was not just, she said, to one so unfortunate and so unhappy."

"She seems an admirable person, that Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort.

"She is indeed as near an angel as any thing earthly can be," said Glastonbury.

"Then it is still a secret to the parents?"

"Thus she would have it," said Glastonbury. "She clings to them, who love her indeed as a daughter; and she shrank from the desolation that was preparing for them."

"Poor girl!" said Lord Montfort, "and poor Armine! By heavens, I pity him from the bottom of my heart."

"If you had seen him as I have," said Glastonbury, "wilder than the wildest bedlamite! It was an awful sight."

"Ah! the heart, the heart," said Lord Montfort: "it is a delicate organ, Mr. Glastonbury. And think you his father and mother suspect nothing?"

"I know not what they think," said Glastonbury, "but they must soon know all." And he seemed to shudder at the thought.

"Why must they?" asked Lord Montfort.

Glastonbury stared.

"Is there no hope of softening and subduing all their sorrows?" said Lord Montfort; "cannot we again bring together these young and parted spirits?"

"It is my only hope," said Glastonbury, "and yet I sometimes deem it a forlorn one."

"It is the sole desire of Henrietta," said Lord Montfort, "cannot you assist us! Will you enter into this conspiracy of affection with us?"

"I want no spur to such a righteous work," said Glastonbury, "but I cannot conceal from myself the extreme difficulty. Ferdinand is the most impetuous of human beings. His passions are a whirlwind; his volition more violent than becomes a suffering mortal."

"You think then there is no difficulty but with him?"

"I know not what to say," said Glastonbury, "calm as appears the temperament of Miss Grandison, she has heroic qualities. O! what have I not seen that admirable young lady endure! Alas! my Digby, my dear lord, few passages of this terrible story are engraven on my memory more deeply than the day when I revealed to her the fatal secret. Yet, and chiefly for her sake, it was my duty."

"It was at Armine?"

"At Armine—I seized an opportunity when we were alone together, and without fear of being disturbed. We had gone to view an old abbey in the neighbourhood. We were seated among its ruins, when I took her hand and endeavoured to prepare her for the fatal intelligence. 'All is not right with Ferdinand,' she immediately said: 'there is some mystery. I have long suspected it.' She listened to my recital, softened as much as I could for her sake, in silence. Yet her paleness I never can forget. She looked like a saint in a niche. When I had finished, she whispered me to leave her for some short time, and I walked away out of sight indeed, but so near that she might easily summon me. I stood alone until it

was twilight, in a state of mournful suspense that I recall even now with anguish. At last I heard my name sounded, in a low, yet distinct voice, and I looked round and she was there. She had been weeping. I took her hand and pressed it, and led her to the carriage. When I approached our unhappy home, she begged me to make her excuses to the family, and for two or three days we saw her no more. At length she sent for me, and told me she had been revolving all these sad circumstances in her mind, and she felt for others more even than for herself; that she forgave Ferdinand, and pitied him, and would act towards him as a sister; that her heart was distracted with the thoughts of the unhappy lady, whose name she would never know, but that if by her assistance I could effect their union, means should not be wanting, though their source must be concealed; that for the sake of her aunt, to whom she is indeed passionately attached, she would keep the secret, until it could no longer be maintained, and that in the mean time it was to be hoped, that health might be restored to her cousin, and Providence in some way interfere in favour of this unhappy family."

"Angelic creature!" said Lord Montfort. "So young too; I think so beautiful! Good God! with such a heart what could Armine desire!"

"Alas!" said Glastonbury, and he shook his head. "You know not the love of Ferdinand Armine for Henrietta Temple. It is a wild and fearful thing; it passeth human comprehension."

Lord Montfort leaned back in his chair, and covered his face with his hands. After some minutes he looked up and said in his usual placid tone, and with an unruffled brow. "Will you take any thing before you go, Mr. Glastonbury?"

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE INCREASES HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE VALUE OF MONEY, AND ALSO BECOMES AWARE OF THE ADVANTAGE OF AN ACQUAINTANCE WHO BURNS COALS.

FERDINAND returned to his hotel in no very good humour, revolving in his mind Miss Temple's advice about optimism. What could she mean? Was there really a conspiracy to make him marry his cousin; and was Miss Temple one of the conspirators? He could, indeed, scarcely believe this, and yet it was the most probable deduction from all that had been said and done. He had lived, indeed, to witness such strange occurrences, that no event ought now to astonish him. Only to think that he had been sitting quietly in a drawing room with Henrietta Temple, and she avowedly engaged to be married to another person, who was present; and that he, Ferdinand Armine, should be the selected companion of their morning drive, and be calmly invited to contribute to their daily amusement by his social presence! What next? If this were not an insult—a gross, flagrant, unendurable outrage—he was totally at a loss to comprehend what was meant by offended pride. Optimism indeed! He felt far more inclined to embrace the faith of the Manichee! And what a fool was he to have submitted to such a despicable, such a degrading situation! What infinite weakness not to be able to resist her influence, the

influence of a woman who had betrayed him! Yes! betrayed him. He had for some period reconciled his mind to entertaining the idea of Henrietta's treachery to him. Softened by time, atoned for by long suffering, extenuated by the constant sincerity of his purpose, his original imprudence, to use his own phrase in describing his misconduct, had gradually ceased to figure as a valid and sufficient cause for her behaviour to him. When he recollected how he had loved this woman, what he had sacrificed for her, and what misery he had in consequence entailed upon himself and all those dear to him; when he contrasted his present perilous situation with her triumphant prosperity, and remembered that while he had devoted himself to a love which proved false, she, who had deserted him, was, by a caprice of fortune, absolutely rewarded for her fickleness; he was enraged, he was disgusted, he despised himself for having been her slave—he began even to hate her. Terrible moment when we first dare to view with feelings of repugnance the being that our soul has long idolized! It is the most awful of revelations. We start back in horror, as if the act of profanation.

Other annoyances, however, of a less ethereal character, awaited our hero on his return to his hotel. There he found a letter from his lawyer, informing him that he could no longer parry the determination of one of Captain Armine's principal creditors to arrest him instantly for a very considerable sum. Unfortunately, too, it was a judgment debt, which there were no means of avoiding, except by payment, bail being inadmissible. Poor Ferdinand, mortified and harassed, with his heart and spirits alike broken, he could scarcely refrain from a groan! However, some steps must be taken. He drove Henrietta from his thoughts, and endeavouring to rally some of his old energy, revolved in his mind what desperate expedient yet remained.

His sleep was broken by dreams of bailiffs, and a vague idea of Henrietta Temple triumphing in his misery; but he rose early, wrote a most diplomatic note to his menacing creditor, which he felt confident must gain him time, and then making a very careful toilet, for when a man is going to try to borrow money, it is wise to look prosperous, he took his way to a quarter of the town where lived a gentleman, with whose brother he had had some previous dealings at Malta, and whose acquaintance he had made in England in reference to them.

It was in that gloomy quarter called Golden Square, the murky repose of which strikes so mysteriously on the senses, after the glittering bustle of the adjoining Regent Street, that Captain Armine stopped before a noble, yet now dingy mansion, that in old and happier days might probably have been inhabited by his grandfather, or some of his gay friends. A brass plate on the door informed the world that here resided Messrs. Morris and Levison, following the not very ambitious calling of coal merchants. But if all the pursuers of that somewhat humble trade could manage to deal in coals with the same dexterity as Messrs. Morris and Levison, what very great coal merchants they would be!

The ponderous portal obeyed the signal of the bell, and apparently opened without any human means; and Captain Armine, proceeding down a dark, yet capacious passage, opened a door, which invited him by an inscription on ground glass that

assured him he was entering the counting-house. Here several clerks, ensconced within lofty walls of the darkest and dullest mahogany, were busily employed; yet one advanced to an aperture in this fortification, and accepted the card which the visitor offered him. The clerk surveyed the ticket with a peculiar glance, and then, begging the visitor to be seated, disappeared. He was not long absent, but soon invited Ferdinand to follow him. Captain Armine was ushered up a noble staircase, and into a saloon that once was splendid. The ceiling was richly carved; and there still might be detected the remains of its once gorgeous embellishment, in the faint forms of faded deities and the traces of murky gilding. The walls of this apartment were crowded with pictures, arranged, however, with little regard to taste, effect, or style. A sprawling copy of Titian's Venus flanked a somewhat prim peccress by Hoppner; a landscape that smacked of Gainsborough was the companion of a dainty moonlight, that must have figured in the last exhibition; and insipid Roman matrons by Hamilton, and stiff English heroes by Northcote, contrasted with a vast quantity of second-rate delineations of the orgies of Dutch boors, and portraits of favourite racers and fancy dogs. The room was crowded with ugly furniture of all kinds, very solid, and chiefly of mahogany; among which were not less than three escritaires, to say nothing of the huge horseshair sofas. A sideboard of Babylonian proportions was crowned by three massy and enormous silver salvers, and immense branch candlesticks of the same precious metal, and a china punch-bowl which might have suited the dwarf in Brobdignag. The floor was covered with a faded Turkey carpet. But, amid all this solid splendour, there were certain intimations of feminine elegance in the veil of finely pink paper which covered the nakedness of the empty but highly polished fireplace, and in the hand-screens, which were profusely ornamented with riband of the same hue, and one of which afforded a most accurate, if not picturesque view of Margate, while the other glowed with a huge wreath of cabbage roses and jonquils.

Ferdinand was not long alone, and Mr. Levison, the proprietor of all this splendour, entered. He was a short, stout man, with a grave but handsome countenance, a little bald, but nevertheless with an elaborateness of raiment which might have become a younger man. He wore a plum-coloured frock coat of the very finest cloth; his green velvet waistcoat was guarded by a gold chain, which would have been the envy of a new town council; an immense opal gleamed on the breast of his embroidered shirt; and his fingers were covered with very fine rings.

"Your sarvant, captin," said Mr. Levison; and he placed a chair for his guest.

"How are you, Levison?" responded our hero in a very easy voice. "Any news?"

Mr. Levison shrugged his shoulders, as he murmured, "Times is very bad, captin."

"O! I dare say, old fellow," said Ferdinand, "I wish they were as well with me as with you. By Jove, Levison, you must be making an infernal fortune."

Mr. Levison shook his head, as he groaned out, "I work hard, captin; but times is terrible."

"Fiddledee! Come! I want you to assist me a little, old fellow, no humbug between us."

"O!" groaned Mr. Levison, "you could not

come at a worse time; I don't know what money is."

"Of course. However, the fact is, money I must have, and so, old fellow, we are old friends; and so, damn it, you must get it."

"What do you want, captin?" slowly spoke Mr. Levison, with an expression of misery.

"O! I want rather a tolerable sum, and that is the truth; but I only want it for a moment."

"It is not the time, 'tis the money," said Mr. Levison. "You know me and my pardner, captin, are always anxious to do what we can to sarve you."

"Well, now you can do me a real service, and, by Jove, you shall never repent it. To the point—I must have 1500/."

"One thousand five hundred pound!" exclaimed Mr. Levison. "Ta'n't in the country."

"Humbug. It must be found. What is the use of all this stuff with me! I want 1500/, and you must give it me."

"I tell you what it is, captin," said Mr. Levison, leaning over the back of a chair, and speaking with callous composure, "I tell you what it is, me and my pardner are very willing always to assist you; but we want to know when this marriage is to come off, and that's the truth."

"Damn the marriage," said Captain Armine, rather staggered.

"There it is, though," said Mr. Levison, very quietly. "You know, captin, there is the arrears on that 'ere annuity, three years next Michaelmas. I think it's Michaelmas—let me see." So saying, Mr. Levison opened an escritoire, and brought forward a most awful-looking volume, and, consulting the terrible index, turned to the name of Armine. "Yes! three years next Michaelmas, captin."

"Well, you will be paid," said Ferdinand.

"We hope so," said Mr. Levison; "but it is a long figure."

"Well, but you get capital interest."

"Pish!" said Mr. Levison; "ten per cent! Why! it is giving away the money. Why! that's the raw, captin. With this here new bill, annuities is nothing. Me and my pardner don't do no annuities now. It's giving money away; and all this here money locked up—and all to sarve you."

"Well; you will not help me?" said Ferdinand, rising.

"Do you raly want fifteen hundred?" asked Mr. Levison.

"By Jove, I do."

"Well now, captin, when is this marriage to come off?"

"Have I not told you a thousand times, and Morris too, that my cousin is not to marry until one year has passed since my grandfather's death. It is barely a year. But of course, at this moment, of all others, I cannot afford to be short."

"Very true, captin; and we are men to sarve you if we could. But we cannot. Never was such times for money; there is no seeing it. However, we will do what we can. Things is going very bad at Malta, and that's the truth. There's that young Catchimwhocan, we are in with him very deep; and now he has left the Fusiliers, and got into parliament, he don't care this for us. If he would only pay us, you should have the money; so help me you should."

"But he won't pay you," said Ferdinand, "What can you do?"

"Why, I have a friend," said Mr. Levison, "who I know has got three hundred pound at his banker's, and he might lend it us; but we shall have to pay for it."

"I suppose so," said Ferdinand. "Well, three hundred."

"I have not got a shilling myself," said Mr. Levison. "Young Touchemup left us in the lurch yesterday for £750, so help me, and never gave us no notice. Now, you are a gentleman, captin; you never pay, but you always give us notice."

Ferdinand could scarcely resist smiling at Mr. Levison's idea of a gentleman.

"Well, what else can you do?"

"Why, there is two hundred coming in to-morrow," said Mr. Levison; "I can depend on that."

"Well, that is five."

"And you want fifteen hundred," said Mr. Levison. "Well, me and my pardner always like to sarve you, and it is very awkward certainly for you to want money at this moment. But if you want to buy jewels, I can get you any credit you like, you know."

"We will talk of that by and by," said Ferdinand.

"Fifteen hundred pound," ejaculated Mr. Levison. "Well, I suppose we must make it £700 somehow or other, and you must take the rest in coals."

"O! by Jove, Levison, that is too bad."

"I don't see no other way," said Mr. Levison, rather doggedly.

"But, damn it, my good fellow, my dear Levison, what the deuse am I to do with £800 worth of coals?"

"Lord! my dear captin, £800 worth of coals is a mere nothing. With your connexion you will get rid of them in a morning. All you have got to do, you know, is to give your friends an order on us, and we will let you have cash at a little discount."

"Then you can let me have the cash now at a little discount, or even a great—I cannot get rid of £800 worth of coals."

"Why it a'n't four hundred chaldron, captin," rejoined Mr. Levison. "Three or four friends would do the thing. Why! Baron Squash takes ten thousand chaldron of us every year. But he has such a knack; he gits the clubs to take them."

"Baron Squash, indeed! Do you know who you are talking to, Mr. Levison? Do you think that I am going to turn into a coal merchant; your working partner, by Jove! No, sir, give me the £700 without the coals, and charge me what intersther you please."

"We could not do it, captin. 'Ta'n't our way."

"I ask you once more, Mr. Levison, will you let me have the money, or will you not?"

"Now, captin, don't be so high and mighty! 'Ta'n't the way to do business. Me and my pardner wish to sarve you, we does indeed. And if a hundred pound will be of any use to you, you shall have it on your acceptance, and we won't be curious about any name that draws, we won't indeed."

"Well, Mr. Levison," said Ferdinand, rising, "I see we can do nothing to-day. The hundred pounds would be of no use to me. I will think over your proposition. Good morning to you."

"Ah, do!" said Mr. Levison, bowing and opening the door. "Do, captin. We wish to sarve

you, we does, indeed. See how we behave about that arrears. Think of the coals, now do. Now for a bargain, come! Come, captin, I dare say now you could get us the business of the Junior Service Club, and then you shall have the seven hundred on your acceptance for three months at two shilling in the pound, come!"

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH CAPTAIN ARMINE UNEXPECTEDLY RE-SUMES HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH LORD CATCHIMWHOCAN, WHO INTRODUCES HIM TO MR. BOND SHARPE.

FERDINAND quitted his kind friend Mr. Levison in no very amiable mood; but just as he was leaving the house, a cabriolet, beautifully painted of a brilliant green colour, picked out with a somewhat cream-coloured white, and drawn by a showy Holstein horse of a tawny tint, with a flowing and milk-white tail and mane, and caparisoned in harness almost as precious as Mr. Levison's sideboard, dashed up to the door.

"Armine, by Jove!" exclaimed the driver, with great cordiality.

"Ah! Catch, is it you?"

"What! have you been here?" said Lord Catchimwhocan. "At the old work, eh? Is 'me and my pardner' troublesome, for your countenance is not very radiant!"

"By Jove, old fellow!" said Ferdinand, in a depressed tone, "I am in an infernal scrape, and also in a cursed rage. Nothing is to be done here."

"Never mind," said his lordship; "keep up your spirits, jump into my cab and we will see how we can carry on the war. I am only going to speak one word to 'me and my pardner.'"

So saying, his lordship skipped into the house as gay as a lark, although he had a bill for a good round sum about to be dishonoured in the course of a few hours.

"Well, my dear Armine," he resumed, when he reappeared and took the reins, "now, as I drive along, tell me all about it. For if there be a man in the world whom I should like to 'sarve,' it is thyself, my noble Ferdinand."

With this encouragement, Captain Armine was not long in pouring his cares into a congenial bosom.

"I know the man to 'sarve' you," said Catchimwhocan. "The fact is, these fellows here are regular old-fashioned humbugs. The only idea they have is money, money. They have no enlightened notions. I will introduce you to a regular trump, and if he does not do our business I am much mistaken. Courage, old fellow. How do you like this start?"

"Densed neat. By-the-by, Catch, my boy, you are going it rather, I see."

"To be sure. I have always told you there is a certain system in affairs which ever prevents men being floored. No fellow is ever dished who has any connexion. What man that ever had his run was really ever fairly put *hors de combat*, unless he was some one who ought never to have entered the arena, blazing away without any set, making himself a damned fool, and everybody his enemy. As long as a man bustles about and is in a good

set, something always turns up. I got into parliament, you see; and you, you are going to be married."

All this time the cabriolet was dashing down Regent Street, twisting through the Quadrant, whirling along Pall Mall, until it finally entered Cleveland Row, and stopped before a newly painted, newly pointed, and exceedingly compact mansion, the long brass knocker of whose green door sounded beneath the practised touch of his lordship's tiger. Even the tawny Holstein horse, with the white flowing mane, seemed conscious of the locality, and stopped before the accustomed resting-place in the most natural manner imaginable. A very tall serving-man, very well powdered, and in a very dark and well appointed livery, immediately appeared.

"At home?" inquired Lord Catchimwhocan, with a peculiarly confidential expression.

"To you, my lord," responded the attendant.

"Jump out, Armine," said his lordship, and they entered the house.

"Alone?" said his lordship.

"Not alone," said the servant, ushering the friends into the dining-room, "but he shall have your lordship's card immediately. There are several gentlemen waiting in the third drawing-room; so I have shown your lordship in here, and shall take care that he sees your lordship before any one."

"That's a devilish good fellow," said Lord Catchimwhocan, putting his hand into his waistcoat pocket to give him a sovereign; but not finding one, he added, "I shall remember you."

The dining-room into which they were shown was at the back of the house, and looked into very agreeable gardens. The apartment, indeed, was in some little confusion at this moment, for their host gave a dinner to-day, and his dinners were famous. The table was arranged for eight guests—its appointments indicated refined taste. A candelabra of Dresden china was the centre piece; there was a whole service of the same material, even to the handles of the knives and forks; and the choice variety of glass attracted Ferdinand's notice. The room was lofty and spacious; it was very simply and soberly furnished; not an object which could distract the taste or disturb the digestion. But the sideboard, which filled a recess at the end of the apartment, presented a crowded group of gold plate that might have become a palace—magnificent shields, tall vases, ancient tankards, goblets of carved ivory set in precious metal, and cups of old ruby glass mounted on pedestals, glittering with gems. This accidental display certainly offered an amusing contrast to the perpetual splendour of Mr. Levison's banquet; and Ferdinand was wondering whether it would turn out that there was as marked a difference between the two owners, when his companion and himself were summoned to the presence of Mr. Bond Sharpe.

They ascended a staircase perfumed with flowers, and on each landing-place was a classic tripod or pedestal crowned with a bust. And then they were ushered into a drawing-room of Parisian elegance; buhl cabinets, marqueterie tables, hangings of the choicest damask suspended from burnished cornices of old carving. The chairs had been rifled from a Venetian palace; the couches were part of the spoils of the French revolution. There were glass screens in golden frames, and a clock that

represented the death of Hector, the chariot wheel of Achilles conveniently telling the hour. A round table of Mosaic, mounted on a golden pedestal, was nearly covered with papers; and from an easy chair supported by air cushions, half rose to welcome them Mr. Bond Sharpe. He was a man not many years the senior of Captain Armine and his friend, of a very elegant appearance, pale, pensive, and prepossessing. Deep thought was impressed upon his clear and protruding brow, and the expression of his gray sunk eyes, which were delicately arched, was singularly searching. His figure was slight, but compact. His dress plain, but a model in its fashion. He was habited entirely in black, and his only ornament were his studs, which were turquoise and of great size; but there never were such boots, so brilliant and so small!

He welcomed Lord Catchimwhocan in a voice scarcely above a whisper, and received Captain Armine in a manner alike elegant and dignified.

"My dear Sharpe," said his lordship, "I am going to introduce to you my most particular friend, and an old brother officer. This is Captain Armine, the only son of Sir Ratcliffe, and the heir of Armine Castle. He is going to be married very soon to his cousin, Miss Grandison, the greatest heiress in England."

"Hush, hush," said Ferdinand, shrinking under this false representation, and Mr. Sharpe, with considerable delicacy, endeavoured to check his lordship.

"Well, never mind, I will say nothing about that," continued Lord Catchimwhocan. "The long and the short of it is this, that my friend Armine is hard up, and we must carry on the war till we get into winter quarters. You are just the man for him, and by Jove, my dear Sharpe, if you wish sensibly to oblige me, who I am sure am one of your warmest friends, you will do every thing for Armine that human energy can possibly effect."

"What is the present difficulty that you have?" inquired Mr. Sharpe of our hero, in a calm whisper.

"Why, the present difficulty that he has," said Lord Catchimwhocan, "is that he wants £1500."

"I suppose you have raised money, Captain Armine?" said Mr. Sharpe.

"In every way," said Captain Armine.

"Of course," said Mr. Sharpe, "at your time of life one naturally does. And I suppose you are bothered for this £1500?"

"I am threatened with immediate arrest, and arrested in execution."

"Who is the party?"

"Why, I fear an unmanageable one, even by you. It is a house at Malta."

"Mr. Bolus, I suppose?"

"Exactly."

"I thought so."

"Well, what can be done?" said Lord Catchimwhocan.

"O! there is no difficulty," said Mr. Sharpe very quietly. "Captain Armine can have any money he likes."

"I shall be happy," said Captain Armine, "to pay any consideration you think fit."

"O! my dear sir, I cannot think of that. Money is a drug now. I shall be happy to accommodate you without giving you any trouble. You can have the £1500 if you please this moment."

"Really you are very generous," said Ferdinand, very much surprised, "but I feel I am not

entitled to such favours. What security can I give you?"

"I lend the money to you. I want no security. You can repay me when you like. Give me your note of hand." So saying, Mr. Sharpe opened a drawer, and taking out his check-book drew a draft for the £1500. "I believe I have a stamp in the house," he continued, looking about. "Yes, here is one. If you fill this up, Captain Armine, the affair may be concluded at once."

"Upon my honour, Mr. Sharpe," said Ferdinand, very confused, "I do not like to appear insensible to this extraordinary kindness, but really I came here by the merest accident, and without any intention of soliciting or receiving favours. And my kind friend here has given you much too glowing an account of my resources. It is very probable I shall occasion you great inconvenience."

"Really, Captain Armine," said Mr. Sharpe, with a slight smile, "if we were talking of a sum of any importance, why, one might be a little more punctilious, but for such a bagatelle as £1500 we have already wasted too much time in its discussion. I am happy to serve you."

Ferdinand stared, remembering Mr. Levison and the coals. Mr. Sharpe himself drew up the note, and presented it to Ferdinand, who signed it and pocketed the draft.

"I have several gentlemen waiting," said Mr. Bond Sharpe, "I am sorry I cannot take this opportunity of cultivating your acquaintance, Captain Armine, but I should esteem it a great honour if you would dine with me to-day. Your friend, Lord Catchimwhocan, favours me with his company, and you might meet a person or two who would amuse you."

"I really shall be very happy," said Ferdinand.

And Mr. Bond Sharpe again slightly rose and bowed them out of the room.

"Well, is not he a trump?" said Lord Catchimwhocan, when they were once more in the cab.

"I am so astonished," said Ferdinand, "that I cannot speak. Who in the name of fortune is this great man?"

"A genius," said Lord Catchimwhocan. "Don't you think he is a devilish good-looking fellow?"

"The best-looking fellow I ever saw," said the grateful Ferdinand.

"And capital manners!"

"Most elegant."

"Neatest dressed man in town!"

"Exquisite taste!"

"What a house!"

"Capital!"

"Did you ever see such furniture? It beats your rooms at Malta."

"I never saw any thing more complete in my life."

"What plate!"

"Miraculous!"

"And believe me, we shall have the best dinner in town."

"Well, he has given me an appetite," said Ferdinand.

"But who is he?"

"Why, by business he is what is called a conveyancer; that is to say, he is a lawyer by inspiration."

"He is a wonderful man," said Ferdinand. "He must be very rich."

"Yes; Sharpe must be worth his quarter of a

million. And he has made it in such a devilish short time!"

"Why, he is not much older than we are?"

"Ten years ago that man was a prizefighter;" said Lord Catchimwhocan.

"A prizefighter!" exclaimed Ferdinand.

"Yes; and licked everybody. But he was too great a genius for the ring, and took to the turf."

"Ah!"

"Then he set up a hell."

"Hum!"

"And then he turned it into a subscription-house."

"Hoh!"

"He keeps his hell still, but it works itself now. In the mean time, he is the first usurer in the world, and will be in the next parliament."

"But if he lends money on the terms he accommodates me, he will hardly increase his fortune."

"O! he can do the thing when he likes. He took a fancy to you. The fact is, my dear fellow, Sharpe is very rich, and wants to get into society. He likes to oblige young men of distinction, and can afford to risk a few thousands now and then. By dining with him to-day, you have quite repaid him for his loan. Besides, the fellow has a great soul; and, though born on a dunghill, nature intended him for a palace, and he has placed himself there."

"Well, this has been a remarkable morning," said Ferdinand Armine, as Lord Catchimwhocan put him down at his club. "I am very much obliged to you, dear Catch!"

"Not a word, my dear fellow. You have helped me before this, and glad am I to be the means of assisting the best fellow in the world, and that we all think you. Au revoir! We dine at eight."

CHAPTER XII.

MISS GRANDISON MAKES A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.

IN the mean time, while the gloomy morning which Ferdinand had anticipated terminated with so agreeable an adventure, Henrietta and Miss Grandison, accompanied by Lord Montfort and Glastonbury, paid their promised visit to the British Museum.

"I am sorry that Captain Armine could not accompany us," said Lord Montfort. "I sent to him this morning very early, but he was already out."

"He has many affairs to attend to," said Glastonbury.

Miss Temple looked grave; she thought of poor Ferdinand and all his cares. She knew well what were those affairs to which Glastonbury alluded. The thought that perhaps at this moment he was struggling with rapacious creditors, made her melancholy. The novelty and strangeness of the objects which awaited her, diverted, however, her mind from those painful reflections. Miss Grandison, who had never quitted England, was delighted with every thing she saw; but the Egyptian gallery principally attracted the attention of Miss Temple. Lord Montfort, regardless of his promise to Henrietta, was very attentive to Miss Grandison.

"I cannot help regretting that your cousin is not here," said his lordship, returning to a key that he

had already touched. But Katherine made no answer.

"He seemed so much better for the exertion he made yesterday," resumed Lord Montfort. "I think it would do him good to be more with us."

"He seems to like to be alone," said Katherine.

"I wonder at that," said Lord Montfort, "I cannot conceive a happier life than we all lead."

"You have cause to be happy, and Ferdinand has not," said Miss Grandison very calmly.

"I should have thought that he had very great cause," said Lord Montfort inquiringly.

"No person in the world is so unhappy as Ferdinand," said Katherine.

"But cannot we cure his unhappiness?" said his lordship. "We are his friends; it seems to me with such friends as Miss Grandison and Miss Temple one ought never to be unhappy."

"Miss Temple can scarcely be called a friend to Ferdinand," said Katherine.

"Indeed a very warm one, I assure you."

"Ah! that is your influence."

"Nay! it is her own impulse."

"But she only met him yesterday for the first time."

"I assure you Miss Temple is an older friend of Captain Armine than I am," said his lordship.

"Indeed!" said Miss Grandison, with an air of considerable astonishment.

"You know they were neighbours in the country."

"In the country!" repeated Miss Grandison.

"Yes; Mr. Temple, you know, resided not far from Armine."

"Not far from Armine!" still repeated Miss Grandison.

"Digby," said Miss Temple, turning to him at this moment, "tell Mr. Glastonbury about your sphinx at Rome. It was granite, was it not?"

"And most delicately carved. I never remember having observed an expression of such beautiful serenity. The discovery, that after all, they are male countenances, is quite a mortification. I loved their mysterious beauty."

What Lord Montfort had mentioned of the previous acquaintance of Henrietta and her cousin, made Miss Grandison muse. Miss Temple's address to Ferdinand yesterday had struck her at the moment as somewhat singular; but the impression had not dwelt upon her mind. But it now occurred to her as very strange that Henrietta should have become so intimate with the Armine family and herself, and never have mentioned that she was previously acquainted with their nearest relative. Lady Armine was not acquainted with Miss Temple until they met at Bellair House. That was certain. Miss Grandison had witnessed their mutual introduction. Nor Sir Ratcliffe. And yet Henrietta and Ferdinand were friends, warm friends, old friends, intimately acquainted; so said Lord Montfort; and Lord Montfort never coloured, never exaggerated. All this was very mysterious. And if they were friends, old friends, warm friends—and Lord Montfort said they were, and, therefore, there could be no doubt of the truth of the statement—their recognition of each other yesterday was singularly frigid. It was not indicative of a very intimate acquaintance. Katherine had ascribed it to the natural disrelish of Ferdinand now to be introduced to any one. And yet they were friends, old friends, warm friends. Henrietta Temple and Ferdinand Ar-

mine! Miss Grandison was so perplexed, that she scarcely looked at another object in the galleries.

The ladies were rather tired when they returned from the Museum. Lord Montfort walked to the Travellers, and Henrietta agreed to remain and dine in Brook Street. Katherine and herself retired to Miss Grandison's boudoir, a pretty chamber, where they were sure of being alone. Henrietta threw herself upon a sofa, and took up the last new novel; Miss Grandison seated herself upon an ottoman by her side, and worked at a purse which she was making for Mr. Temple.

"Do you like that book?" said Katherine.

"I like the lively parts, but not the serious ones," said Miss Temple; "the author has observed, but he has not felt."

"It is satirical," said Miss Grandison. "I wonder why all this class of writers aim now at the sarcastic. I do not find life the constant sneer they make it."

"It is because they do not understand life," said Henrietta, "but have some little experience of society. Therefore their works give a perverted impression of human conduct: for they accept as a principal that which is only an insignificant accessory: and they make existence a succession of frivolities, when even the career of the most frivolous has its profounder moments."

"How vivid is the writer's description of a ball or a dinner!" said Miss Grandison; "every thing lives and moves. And yet when the hero makes love, nothing can be more unnatural. His feelings are neither deep, nor ardent, nor tender. All is stilted, and yet ludicrous."

"I do not despise the talent which describes so vividly a dinner and a ball," said Miss Temple. "As far as it goes, it is very amusing; but it should be combined with higher materials. In a fine novel manners should be observed, and morals should be sustained; we require thought and passion, as well as costume and the lively representation of conventional arrangements; and the thought and passion will be the better for these accessories, for they will be relieved in the novel as they are relieved in life, and the whole will be more true."

"But have you read that love scene, Henrietta! It appeared to me so ridiculous!"

"I never read love scenes," said Henrietta Temple.

"O! I love a love story," said Miss Grandison, smiling, "if it be natural and tender, and touch my heart. When I read such scenes, I weep."

"Ah! my sweet Katherine, you are soft-hearted."

"And you, my Henrietta, what are you?"

"Hard-hearted! The most callous of mortals."

"O! what would Lord Montfort say!"

"Lord Montfort knows it. We never have love scenes."

"And yet you love him?"

"Dear: I love and I esteem him."

"Well," said Miss Grandison. "I may be wrong, but if I were a man I do not think I should like the lady of my love to esteem me."

"And yet esteem is the only genuine basis of happiness, believe me, Kate. Love is a dream."

"And how do you know, dear Henrietta!"

"All writers agree it is."

"The writers you were just ridiculing?"

"A fair retort; and yet, though your words are the most witty, believe me mine are the most wise."

"I wish my cousin would wake from his dream," said Katherine. "To tell you a secret, love is the cause of his unhappiness. Don't move, dear Henrietta," added Miss Grandison, "we are so happy here;" for Miss Temple, in truth, seemed not a little discomposed.

"You should marry your cousin," said Miss Temple.

"You little know Ferdinand or myself, when you give that advice," said Katherine. "We shall never marry, nothing is more certain than that. In the first place, to be frank, Ferdinand would not marry me, nothing would induce him; and in the second place, I would not marry him, nothing would induce me."

"Why not?" said Henrietta, in a low tone, holding her book very near to her face.

"Because I am sure that we should not be happy," said Miss Grandison. "I love Ferdinand, and once could have married him. He is so brilliant that I could not refuse his proposal. And yet I feel it is better for me that we have not married, and I hope it may yet prove better for him; for I love him very dearly. He is indeed my brother."

"But why should you not be happy?" inquired Miss Temple.

"Because we are not suited to each other. Ferdinand must marry some one whom he looks up to, somebody brilliant like himself, some one who can sympathize with all his fancies. I am too calm and quiet for him. You would suit him much better, Henrietta."

"You are his cousin; it is a misfortune; if you were not, he would adore you, and you would sympathize with him."

"I think not: I should like to marry a very clever man," said Katherine. "I could not endure marrying a fool, or a commonplace person; I should like to marry a person very superior in talent to myself, some one whose opinion would guide me on all points, one from whom I could not differ. But not Ferdinand; he is too imaginative; too impetuous; he would neither guide me, nor be guided by me."

Miss Temple did not reply, but turned over a page of her book.

"Did you know Ferdinand before you met him yesterday at our house?" inquired Miss Grandison, very innocently.

"Yes!" said Miss Temple.

"I thought you did," said Miss Grandison. "I thought there was something in your manner that indicated you had met before. I do not think you knew my aunt, before you met her at Bellair House?"

"I did not."

"Nor Sir Ratcliffe?"

"Nor Sir Ratcliffe."

"But you did know Mr. Glastonbury?"

"I did know Mr. Glastonbury."

"How very odd!" said Miss Grandison.

"What is odd?" inquired Henrietta.

"That you should have known Ferdinand before."

"Not at all odd. He came over one day to shoot at papa's. I remember him very well."

"O!" said Miss Grandison. "And did Mr. Glastonbury come over to shoot?"

"I met Mr. Glastonbury one morning that I

went to see the picture gallery at Armine. It is the only time I ever saw him."

"O!" said Miss Grandison again, "Armine is a beautiful place, is it not?"

"Most interesting."

"You know the plaisance?"

"Yes."

"I did not see you when I was at Armine."

"No; we had just gone to Italy."

"How beautiful you look to-day, Henrietta!" said Miss Grandison. "Who could believe that you were ever so ill!"

"I am grateful that I have recovered," said Henrietta. "And yet I never thought that I should return to England."

"You must have been so very ill in Italy, about the same time as poor Ferdinand was at Armine. Only think, how odd you should have been both so ill about the same time, and now that we should be all so intimate!"

Miss Temple looked perplexed and annoyed. "Is it so odd?" she at length said in a low tone.

"Henrietta Temple," said Miss Grandison, with great earnestness, "I have discovered a secret: you are the lady with whom my cousin is in love."

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH FERDINAND HAS THE HONOUR OF DINING WITH MR. BOND SHARPE.

WHEN Ferdinand arrived at Mr. Bond Sharpe's, he was welcomed by his host in a magnificent suite of saloons, and introduced to two of the guests who had previously arrived. The first was a very stout man, past middle age, whose epicurean countenance twinkled with humour. This was Lord Castleysh, an Irish peer of great celebrity in the world of luxury and play—keen at a bet—still keener at a dinner. Nobody exactly knew who the other gentleman, Mr. Blandford, really was, but he had the reputation of being enormously rich, and was proportionately respected. He had been about town for the last twenty years, and did not look a day older than at his first appearance. He never spoke of his family—was unmarried—and apparently had no relations; but he had contrived to identify himself with the first men in London—was a member of every club of great repute—and of late years had even become a sort of authority; which was strange, for he had no pretensions—was very quiet—and but humbly ambitious—seeking, indeed, no happier success than to merge in the brilliant crowd—an accepted atom of the influential aggregate. As he was not remarkable for his talents or his person, and as his establishment, though well appointed, offered no singular splendour, it was rather strange that a gentleman who had apparently dropped from the clouds, or crept out of a kennel, should have succeeded in planting himself so vigorously in a soil which shrinks from anything not indigenous, unless it be recommended by very powerful qualities. But Mr. Blandford was good-tempered, and was now easy and experienced, and there was a vague tradition that he was immensely rich, a rumour which Mr. Blandford always contradicted in a manner which skilfully confirmed its truth.

"Does Mirabel dine with you, Sharpe?" inquired Lord Castlefyshe of his host, who nodded assent.

"You won't wait for him, I hope?" said his lordship. "By-the-by, Blandford, you shirked last night."

"I promised to look in at the poor duke's before he went off," said Mr. Blandford.

"O! he has gone, has he?" said Lord Castlefyshe. "Does he take his cook with him?"

But here the servant ushered in Count Alcibiades de Mirabel, Charles Doricourt, and Mr. Bevil.

"Excellent Sharpe, how do you do?" exclaimed the count. "Castlefyshe, what *bêtises* have you been talking to Crocky about Felix Winchester? Good Blandford, excellent Blandford, how is my good Blandford?"

Mr. Bevil was a very tall and very handsome young man, of a great family and great estate, who passed his life in an imitation of Count Alcibiades de Mirabel. He was always dressed by the same tailor, and it was his pride that his cab or his vis-à-vis was constantly mistaken for the equipage of his model; and really now, as the shade stood beside its substance, quite as tall, almost as good-looking, with the satin lined coat thrown open with the same style of flowing grandeur, and revealing a breastplate of starched cambric scarcely less broad and brilliant, the uninitiated might have held the resemblance as perfect. The wrists were turned up with not less compact precision, and were fastened by jewelled studs, that glittered with not less radiancy. The satin waistcoat, the creaseless hosen were the same; and if the foot was not quite as small, its Parisian polish was not less bright. But here, unfortunately, Mr. Bevil's mimetic powers deserted him.

"We start, for soul is wanting there!"

The Count Mirabel could talk at all times, and at all times well; Mr. Bevil never opened his mouth. Practised in the world, the Count Mirabel was nevertheless the child of impulse, though a native grace, and an intuitive knowledge of mankind, made every word pleasing, and every act appropriate; Mr. Bevil was all art, and he had not the talent to conceal it. The Count Mirabel was gay, careless, generous; Mr. Bevil was solemn, calculating, and rather a screw. It seemed that the Count Mirabel's feelings grew daily more fresh, and his faculty of enjoyment more keen and relishing; it seemed that Mr. Bevil could never have been a child, but that he must have issued into the world ready equipped, like Minerva, with a cane instead of a lance, and a fancy hat instead of a helmet. His essence of high breeding was never to be astonished, and he never permitted himself to smile, except in the society of very intimate friends.

Charles Doricourt was another friend of the Count Mirabel, but not his imitator. His feelings were really worn, but it was a fact he always concealed. He had entered life at an remarkably early age, and had experienced every scrape to which youthful flesh is heir. Any other man but Charles Doricourt must have sunk beneath these accumulated disasters, but Charles Doricourt always swam. Nature had given him an intrepid soul; experience had cased his heart with iron. But he always smiled; and, audacious, cool, and cutting, and very easy, he thoroughly despised mankind, upon whose weaknesses he practised without remorse. But he was polished and amusing, and faithful to his

friends. The world admired him and called him Charley, from which it will be inferred that he was a privileged person, and was applauded for a thousand actions which in any one else would have been met with the most decided reprobation.

"Who is that young man?" inquired the Count Mirabel of Mr. Bond Sharpe, taking his host aside and pretending to look at a picture.

"He is Captain Armine, the only son of Sir Ratcliffe Armine. He has just returned to England after a long absence."

"Hum! I like his appearance very much," said the count. "It is very distinguished."

Dinner and Lord Catchimwhoean were announced at the same moment; Captain Armine found himself seated next to Count Mirabel. The dinners at Mr. Bond Sharpe's were dinners which his guests came to eat. Mr. Bond Sharpe had engaged for his club-house the most celebrated of living artistes—a gentleman who, it was said, received a thousand a-year, whose convenience was studied by a chariot, and amusement secured by a box at the French play. There was, therefore, at first little conversation, save criticism on the performances before them, and that chiefly panegyrical; each dish was delicious, each wine exquisite; and yet, even in these occasional remarks, Ferdinand was pleased with the lively fancy of his neighbour, affording an elegant contrast to the somewhat gross union with which Lord Castlefyshe, whose very soul seemed wrapped up in his occupation, occasionally expressed himself.

"Will you take some wine, Captain Armine?" said the Count Mirabel, with a winning smile. "You have recently returned here?"

"Very recently," said Ferdinand.

"And you are glad?"

"As it may be, I hardly know whether to rejoice or not."

"Then, by all means rejoice," said the count; "for, if you are in doubt, it surely must be best to decide upon being pleased."

"I think this is the most infernal country there ever was," said Lord Catchimwhoean.

"My dear Catch!" said the Count Mirabel, "you think so, do you? You make a mistake, you think no such thing, my dear Catch. Why is it the most infernal? Is it because the women are the handsomest, or because the horses are the best? Is it because it is the only country where you can get a good dinner, or because it is the only country where there are fine wines? Or is it because it is the only place where you can get a coat made, or where you can play without being cheated, or where you can listen to an opera without your ears being destroyed? Now, my dear Catch, you pass your life in dressing and in playing hazard, in eating good dinners, in drinking good wines, in making love, in going to the opera, and in riding fine horses. Of what, then, have you to complain?"

"O! the damned climate!"

"On the contrary, it is the only good climate there is. In England you can go out every day, and at all hours; and then, to those who love variety, like myself, you are not sure of seeing the same sky every morning you rise, which, for my part, I think the greatest of all existing sources of ennui."

"You reconcile me to my country, count," said Ferdinand, smiling.

"Ah! you are a sensible man; but that dear Catch is always repeating nonsense which he hears from somebody else. 'To-morrow,' he added, in a low voice, "he will be for the climate."

The conversation of men when they congregate together is generally dedicated to one of two subjects: politics or women. In the present instance, the party was not political; and it was the fair sex, and particularly the most charming portion of it, in the good metropolis of England, that were subjected to the poignant criticism, or the profound speculation, of these practical philosophers. There was scarcely a celebrated beauty in London, from the proud peeress to the vain opera-dancer, whose charms and conduct were not submitted to their masterly analysis. And yet it would be but fair to admit, that their critical ability was more eminent and satisfactory than their abstract reasoning upon this interesting topic; for it was curious to observe that, though every one present piqued himself upon his profound knowledge of the sex, not two of the sages agreed in the constituent principles of female character. One declared that women were governed by their feelings; another maintained that they had no heart; a third pronounced that it was all imagination; a fourth that it was all vanity. Lord Castleyfshe muttered something about their passions, and Charley Doricourt declared that they had no passions whatever. But they all agreed in one thing, to wit, that the man who permitted himself a moment's uneasiness about a woman was a fool.

All this time, Captain Armine spoke little, but ever to the purpose and chiefly to the Count Mirabel, who pleased him. Being very handsome, and moreover of a very distinguished appearance, this silence on the part of Ferdinand made him a general favourite, and even Mr. Bevil whispered his approbation to Lord-Catchimwhocan.

"The fact is," said Charles Doricourt, "it is only boys and old men who are plagued by women. They take advantage of either state of childhood. Eh! Castleyfshe!"

"In that respect, then, somewhat resembling you, Charley," replied his lordship, who did not admire the appeal. "For no one can doubt you plagued your father; I was out of my teens, fortunately, before you played écarté."

"Come, good old Fyshe," said Count Mirabel, "take a glass of claret, and do not look so fierce. You know very well Charley learned every thing of you."

"He never learned of me to spend a fortune upon an actress," said his lordship; "I have spent a fortune, but, thank Heaven, it was on myself."

"Well, as for that," said the count, "I think there is something great in being ruined for one's friends. If I were as rich as I might have been, I would not spend much on myself. My wants are few;—a fine house, fine carriages, fine horses, a complete wardrobe, the best opera box, the first cook, and pocket money—that is all I require. I have these, and I get on pretty well; but if I had a princely fortune, I would make every good fellow I know quite happy."

"Well," said Charles Doricourt, "you are a lucky fellow, Mirabel. I have had horses, houses, carriages, opera boxes, and cooks, and I have had a great estate; but pocket money I never could get. Pocket money was the thing which always cost me the most to buy of all."

The conversation now fell upon the theatre. Mr. Bond Sharpe was determined to have a theatre. He believed it was reserved for him to revive the drama. Mr. Bond Sharpe piqued himself upon his patronage of the stage. He certainly had a great admiration of actresses. There was something in the management of a great theatre which pleased the somewhat imperial fancy of Mr. Bond Sharpe. The manager of a great theatre is a kind of monarch. Mr. Bond Sharpe longed to seat himself on the throne, with the prettiest women in London for his court, and all his fashionable friends rallying round their sovereign. He had an impression that great results might be obtained with his organizing energy and illimitable capital. Mr. Bond Sharpe had unbounded confidence in the power of capital. Capital was his deity. He was confident that it could always produce alike genius and triumph. Mr. Bond Sharpe was right: capital is a wonderful thing, but we are scarcely aware of this fact until we are past thirty; and then, by some singular process which we will not now stop to analyze, one's capital is in general sensibly diminished. As men advance in life, all passions resolve themselves into money. Love; ambition, even poetry, end in this.

"Are you going to Shropshire's this autumn, Charley?" said Lord Catchimwhocan.

"Yes, I shall go."

"I don't think I shall," said his lordship, "it is such a bore."

"It is rather a bore, but he is a good fellow."

"I shall go," said Count Mirabel.

"You are not afraid of being bored?" said Ferdinand, smiling.

"Between ourselves, I do not understand what this being bored is," said the count. "He who is bored appears to me a bore. To be bored supposes the inability of being amused; you must be a dull fellow. Wherever I may be, I thank Heaven that I am always diverted."

"But you have such nerves, Mirabel;" said Lord Catchimwhocan. "By Jove! I envy you, you are never floored."

"Floored! what an idea! What should floor me? I live to amuse myself, and I do nothing that does not amuse me. Why should I be floored?"

"Why, I do not know, but every other man is floored now and then. As for me, my spirits are sometimes something dreadful."

"When you have been losing."

"Well, we cannot always win. Can we, Sharpe? That would not do. But, by Jove! you are always in a good humour, Mirabel, when you lose."

"Fancy a man ever being in low spirits," said the Count Mirabel. "Life is too short for such bêtises. The most unfortunate wretch alive calculates unconsciously that it is better to live than to die. Well, then, he has something in his favour. Existence is a pleasure, and the greatest. The world cannot rob us of that, and if it be better to live than to die, it is better to live in a good humour than a bad one. If a man be convinced that existence is the greatest pleasure, his happiness may be increased by good fortune, but it will be essentially independent of it. He who feels that the greatest source of pleasure always remains to him, ought never to be miserable. The sun shines on all; every man can go to sleep; if you cannot ride a fine horse, it is something to look upon one

if you have not a fine dinner, there is some amusement in a crust of bread and Gruyère. Feel slightly, think little, never plan, never brood. Every thing depends upon the circulation; take care of it. Take the world as you find it, enjoy every thing. *Vive la bagatelle!*"

Here the gentlemen arose, took their coffee, and ordered their carriages.

"Come with us," said Count Mirabel to Ferdinand.

Our hero accepted the offer of his agreeable acquaintance. There was a great prancing and rushing of horses and cabs and vis-à-vis, at Mr. Bond Sharpe's door, and in a few minutes the whole party were dashing up St. James's Street, where they stopped before a splendid building, resplendent with lights and illuminated curtains.

"Come, we will make you an honorary member, mon cher Captain Armine," said the Count; "and do not say, *Oh! lasciate ogni speranza*, when you enter here."

They ascended a magnificent staircase, and entered a sumptuous and crowded saloon, in which the entrance of the Count Mirabel and his friends made no little sensation. Mr. Bond Sharpe glided along, dropping oracular sentences, without condescending to stop to speak to those whom he addressed. Charley Doricourt and Mr. Blandford walked away together towards a further apartment. Lord Castleyshie and Lord Catchimwhocan were soon busied with *écarté*.

"Well, Faneville, good general, how do you do?" said the Count Mirabel. "Where have you dined to-day?—at the Balcombés? You are a very brave man, mon general! Ah! Stock, good Stock, excellent Stock," he continued, addressing Mr. Million de Stockville, "that Burgundy you sent me is capital. How are you, my dear fellow? Quite well? Fitzwarrene, I did that for you: your business is all right. Ah! my good Masscy, mon cher, mon brave, Anderson will let you have that horse. And what is doing here? Is there any fun? Fitzwarrene, let me introduce you to my friend Captain Armine:" (in a lower tone) "excellent gargon! You will like him very much. We have been all dining at Bond's."

"A good dinner?"

"Of course a good dinner. I should like to see a man who would give me a bad dinner; that would be a *bêtise*, to ask me to dine, and then give me a bad dinner!"

"I say, Mirabel," exclaimed a young man, "have you seen Horace Poppington about the match?"

"It is arranged; 'tis the day after to-morrow, at nine o'clock."

"Well, I bet on you, you know."

"Of course you bet on me. Would you think of betting on that good Pop, with that gun? Pah! Eh bien! I shall go in the next room." And the Count walked away, followed by Mr. Bevil.

Ferdinand remained talking for some time with Lord Fitzwarrene. By degrees the great saloon had become somewhat thinner; some had stolen away to the House, where a division was expected; quiet men, who just looked in after dinner, had retired; and the play-men were engaged in the contiguous apartments. Mr. Bond Sharpe approached Ferdinand, and Lord Fitzwarrene took this opportunity of withdrawing.

"I believe you never play, Captain Armine," said Mr. Bond Sharpe.

"Never," said Ferdinand.

"You are quite right."

"I am rather surprised at your being of that opinion," said Ferdinand, with a smile.

Mr. Bond Sharpe shrugged his shoulders "There will always be votaries enough," said Mr. Bond Sharpe, "whatever may be my opinion."

"This is a magnificent establishment of yours," said Ferdinand.

"Yes; it is a very magnificent establishment. I have spared no expense to produce the most perfect thing of the kind in Europe; and it is the most perfect thing of the kind. I am confident that no noble in any country has an establishment better appointed. I despatched an agent to the Continent to procure this furniture: his commission had no limit, and he was absent two years. My cook was with Charles X.; the cellar is the most choice and considerable that was ever collected. I take a pride in the thing; but I lose money by it."

"Indeed!"

"I have made a fortune; there is no doubt of that; but I did not make it here."

"It is a great thing to make a fortune," said Ferdinand.

"Very great," said Mr. Bond Sharpe. "There is only one thing greater, and that is, to keep it when made."

Ferdinand smiled.

"Many men can make fortunes; few can keep them," said Mr. Bond Sharpe. "Money is power, and rare are the heads that can withstand the possession of great power."

"At any rate, it is to be hoped that you have discovered this more important secret," said Ferdinand; "though, I confess, to judge from my own experience, I should fear that you are too generous."

"I had forgotten that to which you allude," said his companion, very quietly. "But with regard to myself, whatever may be my end, I have not yet reached my acme."

"You have at least my good wishes," said Ferdinand.

"I may some day claim them," said Mr. Bond Sharpe. "My position," he continued, "is difficult. I have risen by pursuits which the world does not consider reputable, yet if I had not had recourse to them, I should be less than nothing. My mind, I think, is equal to my fortune. I am still young, and I would now avail myself of my power and establish myself in the land, a recognised member of society. But this cannot be. Society shrinks from an obscure founding, a prize fighter, a leg, a hell-keeper, and a usurer. Debarred therefore from a fair theatre for my energy and capital, I am forced to occupy, perhaps exhaust, myself in multiplied speculations. Hitherto they have flourished, and perhaps my theatre, or my newspaper, may be as profitable as my stud. But—I would gladly emancipate myself. These efforts seem to me, as it were, unnecessary and unnatural. The great object has been gained. It is a tempting of fate. I have sometimes thought myself the Napoleon of the sporting world; I may yet find my St. Helena."

"Forewarned, forearmed, Mr. Sharpe."

"I move in a magic circle: it is difficult to extricate myself from it. Now, for instance, there is not a man in that room who is not my slave. You see how they treat me. They place me upon an equality with them. They know my weakness, they fool me up to the top of my bent. And yet there is not

a man in that room, who, if I were to break to-morrow, would walk down St. James's Street to serve me. Yes! there is one—there is the count. He has a great and generous soul. I believe Count Mirabel sympathizes with my situation. I believe he does not think, because a man has risen from an origin the most ignoble and obscure, to a very powerful position, by great courage and dexterity, and let me add also, by some profound thought; by struggling too, be it remembered, with a class of society as little scrupulous though not as skillful as himself, that he is necessarily an infamous character. What if, at eighteen years of age, without a friend in the world, trusting to the powerful frame and intrepid spirit with which nature had endowed me, I flung myself into the ring? Who should be a gladiator if I were not? Is that a crime? What if, at a later period, with a brain for calculation which none can rival, I invariably succeeded in that in which the greatest men in the country fail? Am I to be branded, because I have made half a million by a good book? What if I have kept a gambling house? From the back parlour of an oyster shop, my hazard table has been removed to this palace. Had the play been foul, this metamorphosis would never have occurred. It is true I am a usurer. My dear sir, if all the usurers in this great metropolis could only pass in procession before you at this moment, how you would start! You might find some Right Honourables among them; many a great functionary, many a grave magistrate; fathers of families, the very models of respectable characters, patrons and presidents of charitable institutions, and subscribers for the suppression of those very gaming houses, whose victims in nine cases out of ten are their principal customers. I speak not in bitterness. On the whole I must not complain of the world, but I have seen a great deal of mankind, and more than most of what is considered its worst portion. The world, Captain Armine, believe me, is neither as bad nor as good as some are apt to suppose. And, after all," said Mr. Sharpe, shrugging up his shoulders, "perhaps we ought to say with our friend the count, 'Vive la bagatelle!' Will you take some supper?"

CHAPTER XIV.

MISS GRANDISON PIQUES THE CURIOSITY OF LORD MONTFORT, AND COUNT MIRABEL DRIVES FERDINAND DOWN TO RICHMOND, WHICH DRIVE ENDS IN AN AGREEABLE ADVENTURE AND AN UNEXPECTED CONFIDENCE.

THE discovery that Henrietta Temple was the secret object of Ferdinand's unhappy passion, was a secret which Miss Grandison prized like a true woman. Not only had she made this discovery, but from her previous knowledge and her observation during her late interview with Miss Temple, Katherine was persuaded that Henrietta must still love her cousin as before. Miss Grandison was extremely attached to Henrietta; she was interested in her cousin's welfare, and devoted to the Armine family. All her thoughts and all her energies were now engaged in counteracting, if possible, the consequences of those unhappy misconceptions which had placed them all in this painful situation.

It was on the next day that she had promised to accompany the dutchess and Henrietta on a water excursion. Lord Montfort was to be their cavalier.

In the morning she found herself alone with his lordship in St. James's Square.

"What a charming day!" said Miss Grandison. "I anticipate so much pleasure! Who is our party?"

"Ourselves alone," said Lord Montfort. "Lady Armine cannot come, and Captain Armine is engaged. I fear you will find it very dull, Miss Grandison."

"O! not at all. By-the-by, do you know I was very much surprised yesterday at finding that Ferdinand and Henrietta were such old acquaintances."

"Were you?" said Lord Montfort, in a very peculiar tone.

"It is very odd that Ferdinand never will go with us anywhere. I think it is very bad taste."

"I think so too," said Lord Montfort.

"I should have thought that Henrietta was the very person he would have admired; that he would have been quite glad to be with us. I can easily understand his being wearied to death with a cousin," said Miss Grandison; "but Henrietta, it is so very strange that he should not avail himself of the delight of being with her."

"Do you really think that such a cousin as Miss Grandison can drive him away?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, my dear Lord Montfort, Ferdinand is placed in a very awkward position with me. You are our friend, and so I speak to you in confidence. Sir Rateliff and Lady Armine both expect that Ferdinand and myself are going to be married. Now neither of us have the slightest intention of any thing of the sort."

"Very strange, indeed," said Lord Montfort. "The world will be very much astonished, more so than myself, for I confess to a latent suspicion on the subject."

"Yes, I was aware of that," said Miss Grandison, "or I should not have spoken with so much frankness. For my own part, I think we are very wise to insist upon having our own way, for an ill-assorted marriage must be a most melancholy business." Miss Grandison spoke with an air almost of levity, which was rather unusual with her.

"An ill-assorted marriage," said Lord Montfort. "And what do you call an ill-assorted marriage, Miss Grandison?"

"Why, many circumstances might constitute such a union," said Katherine; "but I think if one of the parties were in love with another person, that would be quite sufficient to insure a tolerable portion of wretchedness."

"I think so, too," said Lord Montfort; "a union, under such circumstances, would be very ill-assorted. But Miss Grandison is not in that situation?" he added with a faint smile.

"That is scarcely a fair question," said Katherine, with great gaiety, "but there is no doubt Ferdinand Armine is."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; he is in love, desperately in love; that I have long discovered. I wonder with whom it can be?"

"I wonder!" said Lord Montfort.

"Do you?" said Miss Grandison. "Well, I have sometimes thought that you might have a latent suspicion of that subject, too. I thought you were his confidant."

"I!" said Lord Montfort; "I, of all men in the world!"

"And why not you of all men in the world?" said Miss Grandison.

"Our intimacy is so slight," said Lord Montfort.

"Hum!" said Miss Grandison. "And now I think of it, it does appear to me very strange how we have all become suddenly such intimate friends. The Arnines and your family not previously acquainted; Miss Temple, too, unknown to my aunt and uncle. And yet we never live now out of each other's sight. I am sure I am very grateful for it; I am sure it is very agreeable, but still it does appear to me to be very odd. I wonder what the reason can be!"

"It is that you are so charming, Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort.

"A compliment from you!"

"Indeed, no compliment, dearest Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort, drawing near her. "Favoured as Miss Temple is in so many respects, in none, in my opinion, is she more fortunate than in the possession of so admirable a friend."

"Not even in the possession of so admirable a lover, my lord!"

"All must love Miss Temple who are acquainted with her," said Lord Montfort, very seriously.

"Indeed, I think so," said Katherine, in a more subdued voice, "I love her; her career fills me with a strange and singular interest. May she be happy: for happiness she indeed deserves!"

"I have no fonder wish than to secure that happiness, Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort;—"by any means," he added.

"She is so interesting!" said Katherine. "When you first knew her she was very ill?"

"Very."

"She seems quite recovered."

"I hope so."

"Mr. Temple says her spirits are not what they used to be. I wonder what was the matter with her?"

Lord Montfort was silent.

"I cannot bear to see a fine spirit broken," continued Miss Grandison. "There was Ferdinand. O! if you had but known my cousin before he was unhappy. O! that was a spirit! O! he was the most brilliant being that ever lived. And then I was with him during all his illness. It was so terrible. I almost wish that we could have loved each other. It is very strange, he must have been ill at Armine, at the very time Henrietta was ill in Italy. And I was with him in England, while you were solacing her. And now we are all friends. There seems a sort of strange destiny in our lots, does there not?"

"A happy lot that can in any way be connected with Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort.

At this moment her grace and Henrietta entered; the carriage was ready; and in a few minutes they were driving to Whitehall Stairs, where a beautiful boat awaited them.

In the mean time Ferdinand Armine was revolving the strange occurrences of yesterday. Altogether it was an exciting and satisfactory day. In the first place, he had extricated himself from his most pressing difficulties; in the next, he had been greatly amused; and, thirdly, he had made a very interesting acquaintance, for such he esteemed Count Mirabel. Just at the very moment when, lounging over a very late breakfast, he was thinking of Bond Sharpe and his great career, and then turning in his mind whether it were possible to

follow the gay counsels of his friends of yesterday and never plague himself about a woman again, the Count Mirabel was announced.

"Mon cher Armine," said the count, "you see I kept my promise, and would find you at home."

The count stood before him, the best dressed man in London, fresh and gay as a bird, with not a care on his sparkling visage, and his eye bright with bonhomie. And yet Count Mirabel had been the very last to desert the recent mysteries of Mr. Bond Sharpe's; and, as usual, the dappled light of dawn had guided him to his luxurious bed—that bed that always afforded him serene slumbers, whatever might be the adventures of the day, or the result of the night's campaign. How the Count Mirabel did laugh at these poor devils, who wake only to moralize over their own folly with broken spirits and aching heads! Care—he knew nothing about; time he defied; indisposition he could not comprehend. He had never been ill in his life, even for five minutes.

Ferdinand was really very glad to see him; there was something in the Count Mirabel's very presence which put everybody in good spirits. His light-heartedness was caught by all. Melancholy was a farce in the presence of his smile; and there was no possible combination of scrapes that could withstand his kind and brilliant raillery. At the present moment Ferdinand was in a sufficiently good humour with his destiny, and he kept up the ball with effect; so that nearly an hour passed in very amusing conversation.

"You were a stranger among us yesterday," said Count Mirabel, "I think you were rather diverted. I saw you did justice to that excellent Bond Sharpe. That shows that you have a mind above prejudice. Do you know he was by far the best man at table except ourselves?"

Ferdinand smiled.

"It is true, he has a heart and a brain. Old Castlefyshe has neither. As for the rest of our friends, some have hearts without brains, and the rest brains without hearts. Which do you prefer?"

"'Tis a fine question," said Ferdinand; "and yet I confess I should like to be callous."

"Ah! but you cannot be," said the count, "you have a soul of great sensibility—I see that in a moment."

"You see very far, and very quickly, Count Mirabel," said Ferdinand, with a little reserve.

"Yes; in a minute," said the count, "in a minute I read a person's character. I know you are very much in love, because you changed countenance yesterday when we were talking of women."

Ferdinand changed countenance again. "You are a very extraordinary man, count," he at length observed.

"Of course; but, mon cher Armine, what a fine day this is! What are you going to do with yourself!"

"Nothing; I never do any thing," said Ferdinand in an almost mournful tone.

"A melancholy man! Quelle bêtise! I will cure you; I will be your friend, and put you all right. Now, we will just drive down to Richmond; we will have a light dinner—a flounder, a cutlet, and a bottle of Champagne, and then we will go to the French play. I will introduce you to Jenny Vertpré. She is full of wit; perhaps she

will ask us to supper. Allons, mon ami, mon cher Armine; allons, mon brave!"

Ceremony was a farce with Alcibiades de Mirabel. Ferdinand had nothing to do; he was attracted to his companion. The effervescence produced by yesterday's fortunate adventure had not quite subsided; he was determined to forget his sorrows, and, if only for a day, join in the lively chorus of *Vive la bagatelle!* So, in a few moments he was safely ensconced in the most perfect cabriolet in London, whirled along by a horse that stepped out with a proud consciousness of its master.

The Count Mirabel enjoyed the drive to Richmond as if he had never been to Richmond in his life. The warm sun, the western breeze, every object he passed and that passed him, called for his praise or observation. He inoculated Ferdinand with his gaiety, as Ferdinand listened to his light lively tales, and his flying remarks, so full of merriment, and poignant truth, and daring fancy. When they had arrived at the Star and Garter, and ordered their dinner, they strolled into the Park, along the Terrace walk; and they had not proceeded fifty paces, when they came up with the dutchess and her party, who were resting on a bench and looking over the valley.

Ferdinand would gladly have bowed and passed on; but that was impossible. He was obliged to stop and speak to them, and it was difficult to disembarass himself of friends who greeted him so kindly. Ferdinand presented his companion. The ladies were very charmed to know so celebrated a gentleman, of whom they had heard so much. Count Mirabel, who had the finest tact in the world, but whose secret spell, after all, was perhaps only that he was always natural, adapted himself in a moment to the characters, the scene, and the occasion. He was quite delighted at these unexpected sources of amusement, that so unexpectedly revealed themselves; and in a few minutes they had all agreed to walk together, and in due time the dutchess was begging Ferdinand and his friend to dine with them. Before Ferdinand could frame an excuse, Count Mirabel had accepted the proposition. After passing the morning together so agreeably, to go and dine in separate rooms, it would be a *bêtise*. This word *bêtise* settled every thing with Count Mirabel; when once he declared that any thing was a *bêtise*, he would hear no more.

It was a most charming stroll. Never was Count Mirabel more playful, more engaging, more completely winning. Henrietta and Katherine alike smiled upon him, and the dutchess was quite enchanted. Even Lord Montfort, who might rather have entertained a prejudice against the count before he knew him—and none can after—and who was prepared for something rather brilliant, but pretending, presumptuous, fantastic, and affected, quite yielded to his amiable gaiety, and his racy and thoroughly genuine and simple manner. So they walked, and talked, and laughed, and all agreed that it was the most fortunately fine day and the most felicitous rencontre that had ever occurred, until the dinner hour was at hand. The count was at her grace's side, and she was leaning on Miss Temple's arm. Lord Montfort and Miss Grandison had fallen back apace, as their party had increased. Ferdinand fluttered between Miss Temple and his

cousin; but would have attached himself to the latter, had not Miss Temple occasionally addressed him. He was glad, however, when they returned to dinner.

"We have only availed ourselves of your grace's permission to join our dinners," said Count Mirabel, offering the dutchess his arm. He placed himself at the head of the table, Lord Montfort took the other end. To the surprise of Ferdinand, Miss Grandison, with a heedlessness that was quite remarkable, seated herself next to the dutchess, so that Ferdinand was obliged to sit by Henrietta Temple, who was thus separated from Lord Montfort.

The dinner was as gay as the stroll. Ferdinand was the only person who was rather silent.

"How amusing he is!" said Miss Temple, turning to Ferdinand, and speaking in an under tone.

"Yes; I envy him his gayety."

"Be gay."

"I thank you, I dare say I shall in time. I have not yet quite embraced all Count Mirabel's philosophy. He says that the man who plagues himself for five minutes about a woman, is an idiot. Where I think the same, which I hope I may soon, I dare say I shall be as gay."

Miss Temple addressed herself no more to Ferdinand.

They returned by water. To Ferdinand's great annoyance, the count did not hesitate for a moment to avail himself of the dutchess's proposal that he and his companion should form part of the crew. He gave immediate orders that his cabriolet should meet him at Whitehall Stairs, and Ferdinand found there was no chance of escape.

It was a delicious summer evening. The setting sun bathed the bowers of Fulham with refulgent light, just as they were off delicate Rosebank; but the air long continued warm, and always soft, and the last few miles of their pleasant voyage were tinted by the young and glittering moon.

"I wish we had brought a guitar," said Miss Grandison; "Count Mirabel, I am sure, would sing to us?"

"And you, you will sing to us without a guitar, will you not?" said the count, smiling.

"Henrietta, will you sing?" said Miss Grandison.

"With you."

"Of course; now you must," said the count, so they did.

This gliding home to the metropolis on a summer eve so soft and still, with beautiful faces, as should always be the case, and with sweet sounds, as was the present,—there is something very ravishing in the combination. The heart opens; it is a dangerous moment. As Ferdinand listened once more to the voice of Henrietta, even though it was blended with the sweet tones of Miss Grandison, the passionate past vividly recurred to him. Fortunately he did not sit near her; he had taken care to be the last in the boat. He turned away his face, but its stern expression did not escape the observation of the Count Mirabel.

"And now, Count Mirabel, you must really favour us," said the dutchess.

"Without a guitar," said the count, and he began thrumming on his arm, for an accompaniment. "Well, when I was with the Duc d'Angouleme in Spain, we sometimes indulged in a serenade at Seville. I will try to remember one."

A SERENADE OF SEVILLE.

I.

Come forth, come forth, the star we love
Is high o'er Guadalquivir's grove,
And tins each tree with golden light;
Ah! Rosalie, one smile from thee were far more bright!

II.

Come forth, come forth, the flowers that fear
To blossom in the sun's career,
The moonlight with their odours greet;
Ah! Rosalie, one sigh from thee were far more sweet!

III.

Come forth, come forth, one hour of night,
When flowers are fresh, and stars are bright,
Were worth an age of gaudy day;
Then, Rosalie, fly, fly to me; nor longer stay!

"I hope the lady came," said Miss Temple, "after such a pretty song."

"Of course," said the count, "they always come."

"Ferdinand, will you sing?" said Miss Grandison.

"I cannot, Katherine."

"Henrietta, ask Ferdinand to sing," said Miss Grandison; "he makes it a rule never to do any thing I ask him, but I am sure you have more influence."

Lord Montfort came to the rescue of Miss Temple. "Miss Temple has spoken so often to us of your singing, Captain Armine!" said his lordship, and yet Lord Montfort, in this allegation, a little departed from the habitual exactitude of his statements.

"How very strange!" thought Ferdinand; "her callousness or her candour baffles me. 'I will try to sing,'" he continued aloud, "but it is a year really since I ever did."

In a voice of singular power and melody—and with an expression which increased as he proceeded, until the singer seemed scarcely able to control his emotions—Captain Armine thus proceeded—

CAPTAIN ARMINE'S SONG.

I.

My heart is like a silent lute
Some faithless hand has thrown aside,
Those chords are dumb, those tones are mute,
That once sent forth a voice of pride!
Yet even o'er the lute neglected
The wind of heaven will sometimes fly,
And even thus the heart dejected,
Will sometimes answer to a sigh!

II.

And yet to feel another's power
May grasp the prize for which I pine,
And others now may pluck the flower
I cherish'd for this heart of mine—
No more, no more! The hand forsaking,
The lute must fall, and shiver'd lie
In silence: and my heart, thus breaking
Responds not even to a sigh!

Miss Temple seemed busied with her shawl; perhaps she felt the cold; Count Mirabel, next whom she sat, was about to assist her. Her face was turned to the water; it was streaming with tears. Without appearing to notice, Count Mirabel leant forward, and engaged everybody's attention; so that she was unobserved and had time to recover. And yet she was aware that the Count Mirabel had remarked her emotion, and was grateful for his quick and delicate consideration. It was very fortunate that Westminster Bridge was now in sight, for after this song of Captain Armine, every one became very dull or very pensive; even Count Mirabel was silent.

The ladies and Lord Montfort entered their britchska. They bid a cordial adieu to Count Mirabel, and begged him to call upon them in St. James's Square, and the count and Ferdinand were alone.

"Cher Armine," said the count, as he was driving up Charing Cross, "Catch told me you were going to marry your cousin. Which of those two young ladies is your cousin?"

"The fair girl, Miss Grandison."

"So I understood. She is very pretty, but you are not going to marry her, are you?"

"No; I am not."

"And who is Miss Temple?"

"She is going to be married to Lord Montfort."

"Diable! But what a fortunate man! What do you think of that Miss Temple?"

"I think of her as all, I suppose, must."

"She is beautiful, she is the most beautiful woman I ever saw. She marries for money, I suppose?"

"She is the richest heiress in England; she is much richer than my cousin."

"C'est drôle. But she does not want to marry Lord Montfort."

"Why?"

"Because, my dear fellow, she is in love with you."

"By Jove! Mirabel, what a fellow you are! What do you mean?"

"Mon cher Armine, I like you more than anybody. I wish to be, I am your friend. Here is some cursed contretemps. There is a mystery, and both of you are victims of it. Tell me every thing. I will put you right."

"Ah! my dear Mirabel, it is past even your skill. I thought I could never speak on these things to a human being, but I am attracted to you by the same sympathy which you flatter me by expressing for myself. I want a confidant, I need a friend—I am most wretched."

"Eh bien! we will not go to the French play. As for Jenny Vertpré, we can sup with her any night. Come to my house, and we will talk over every thing. But trust me, if you wish to marry Henrietta Temple, you are an idiot if you do not have her."

So saying, the count touched his bright horse, and in a few minutes the cabriolet stopped before a small but admirably appointed house in Berkeley Square.

"Now, mon cher," said the count, "coffee and confidence!"

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THE COUNT MIRABEL COMMENCES HIS OPERATIONS WITH GREAT SUCCESS.

Is there a more gay and graceful spectacle in the world than Hyde Park, at the end of a long sunny morning in the merry month of May or June! Where can we see such beautiful women, such gallant cavaliers, such fine horses, and such brilliant equipages? The scene, too, is worthy of such agreeable accessories: the groves, the gleaming waters, and the triumphal arches. In the distance, the misty heights of Surrey, and the bowery glades of Kensington.

It was the day after the memorable voyage from Richmond. Eminent among the glittering throng,

Count Mirabel cantered along on his Arabian, scattering gay recognitions and bright words. He reined in his steed beneath a tree, under whose shade were assembled a knot of listless cavaliers. The count received their congratulations, for this morning he had won his pigeon match.

"Only think of that old fool, Castlefyshe, betting on Poppington," said the count. "I want to see him—old idiot! Who knows where Charley is?"

"I do, Mirabel," said Lord Catchimwhocan. "He has gone to Richmond with Blandford and the two little Fuzzlers."

"That good Blandford! Whenever he is in love, he always gives a dinner. It is a droll way to succeed."

"Apropos, will you dine with me to-day, Mirabel?" said Mr. de Stockville.

"Impossible, my dear fellow; I dine with Fitzwarrene."

"I say, Mirabel," drawled out a young man, "I saw you yesterday driving a man down to Richmond yourself. Who is your friend?"

"No one you know, or will know. 'Tis the best fellow that ever lived; but he is under my guidance, and I shall be very particular to whom he is introduced."

"Lord! I wonder who he can be?" said the young man.

"I say, Mirabel, you will be done on Goshawk, if you don't take care. I can tell you that."

"Thank you, good Coventry; if you like to bet the odds, I will take them."

"No, my dear fellow, I do not want to bet; but at the same time——"

"You have an opinion that you will not back. That is a luxury, for certainly it is of no use. I would advise you to enjoy it."

"Well, I must say, Mirabel," said Lord Catchimwhocan, "I think the same about Goshawk."

"O! no, Catch, you do not think so;—you think you think. Go and take all the odds you can get upon Goshawk. Come, now, to-morrow you will tell me you have a very pretty book. Eh! mon cher Catch?"

"But do you really think Goshawk will win?" asked Lord Catchimwhocan, very earnestly.

"Certain!"

"Well, damned if I don't go and take the odds," said his lordship.

"Mirabel," said a young noble, moving his horse close to the count, and speaking in a low voice, "shall you be at home to-morrow morning?"

"Certainly. But what do you want?"

"I am in a devil of a scrape; I do not know what to do. I want you to advise me."

The count moved aside with this cavalier. "And what is it?" said he. "Have you been losing?"

"No, no," said the young man, shaking his head. "Much worse. It is the most infernal business; I do not know what I shall do. I think I shall cut my throat."

"Bêtise! It cannot be very bad, if it be not money."

"O! my dear Mirabel, you do not know what trouble I am in."

"Mon cher Henri, soyez tranquille," said the count, in a kind voice. "I am your friend. Rest assured I will arrange it. Think no more of it until to-morrow at one o'clock, and then call on

me. If you like, I am at your service at present."

"No, no—not here: there are letters.

"Ha! ha! Well, to-morrow—at one. In the mean time, do not write any nonsense."

At this moment the dutchess, with a party of equestrians, passed and bowed to the Count Mirabel.

"I say, Mirabel," exclaimed a young man, "who is that girl? I want to know. I have seen her several times lately. By Jove, she is a fine creature!"

"Do you not know Miss Temple?" said the count. "Fancy a man not knowing Miss Temple! She is the only woman in London to be looked at."

Now there was a great flutter in the band, and nothing but the name of Miss Temple was heard. All vowed they knew her very well—at least by sight—and never thought of anybody else. Some asked the count to present them—others meditated plans by which that great result might be obtained; but, in the midst of all this agitation, Count Mirabel cantered away, and was soon by the very lady's side.

"What a charming voyage yesterday," said the count to Miss Temple. "You were amused?"

"Very."

"And to think you should all know my friend Armine so well! I was astonished, for he will never go anywhere, or speak to any one."

"You know him very intimately?" said Miss Temple.

"He is my brother! There is not a human being in the world I love so much! If you only knew him as I know him. Ah! chere Miss Temple, there is not a man in London to be compared with him, so clever and so good! What a heart! so tender! and what talent! There is no one so spirituel!"

"You have known him long, count?"

"Always: but of late I find a great change in him. I cannot discover what is the matter with him. He has grown melancholy. I think he will not live."

"Indeed!"

"No: I am never wrong. That cher Armine will not live."

"You are his friend, surely——"

"Ah! yes; but—I do not know what it is. Even he cares not for. I contrive sometimes to get him about a little; yesterday, for instance; but to-day, you see, he will not move. There he is, sitting alone, in a dull hotel, with his eyes fixed on the ground, dark as night. Never was a man so changed. I suppose something has happened to him abroad. When you first knew him, I dare say now, he was the gayest of the gay!"

"He was indeed very different," said Miss Temple, turning away her face.

"You have known that dear Armine a long time?"

"It seems a very long time," said Miss Temple. "If he dies, and die he must, I do not think I shall ever be in very good spirits again," said the count. "It is the only thing that would quite upset me. Now do you think Miss Temple, that our cher Armine is the most interesting person you ever met?"

"I believe Captain Armine is admired by all those who know him."

"He is so good, so tender, and so clever. Lord Montfort, he knows him very well?"

"They were companions in boyhood, I believe; but they have resumed their acquaintance only recently."

"We must interest Lord Montfort in his case. Lord Montfort must assist in our endeavours to bring him out a little."

"Lord Montfort needs no prompting, count. We are all alike interested in Captain Armine's welfare."

"I wish you would try to find out what is on his mind," said Count Mirabel. "After all, men cannot do much. It requires a more delicate sympathy than we can offer. And yet I would do any thing for the cher Armine, because I really love him the same as if he were my brother."

"He is fortunate in such a friend."

"Ah! he does not think so any longer," said the count, "he avoids me, he will not tell me any thing. Chere Miss Temple, this business haunts me; it will end badly. I know that dear Armine so well; no one knows him like me; his feelings are too strong; no one has such strong feelings. Now, of all my friends, he is the only man I know who is capable of committing suicide."

"God forbid!" said Henrietta Temple with emphasis.

"I rise every morning with apprehension," said the count. "When I call upon him, every day, I tremble as I approach his hotel."

"Are you indeed serious?"

"Most serious. I knew a man once in the same state. It was the Duc de Crillon. He was my brother friend, like this dear Armine. We were at college together; we were in the same regiment. He was exactly like this dear Armine—young, beautiful, and clever, but with a heart all tenderness, terrible passions. He loved Mademoiselle de Guise, my cousin; the most beautiful girl in France. Pardon me, but I told Armine yesterday, that you reminded me of her. They were going to be married; but there was a contretemps. He sent for me; I was in Spain; she married the Viscount de Marsagnac. Until that dreadful morning he remained exactly in the same state as our dear Armine. Never was a melancholy so profound. After the ceremony he shot himself."

"No, no!" exclaimed Miss Temple, in the greatest agitation.

"Perfectly true. It is the terrible recollection of that dreadful adventure that overcomes me when I see our dear friend here. Because I feel it must be love. I was in hopes it was his cousin. But it is not so; it must be something that has happened abroad. Love alone can account for it. It is not his debts that would so overpower him. What are his debts! I would pay them myself. It is a heart-rending business. I am now going to him. How I tremble!"

"How good you are!" exclaimed Miss Temple, with streaming eyes. "I never shall be grateful; I mean, we all must. O! do go to him; go to him directly; tell him to be happy."

"It is the song I ever sing," said the count; "I wish some of you would come and see him, or send him a message. It is wise to show him that there are some who take interest in his existence. Now, give me that flower, for instance, and let me give it to him from you."

"He will not care for it," said Miss Temple.

"Try. It is a fancy I have. Let me bear it."

Miss Temple gave the flower to the count, who cantered off with his pizze.

It was about eight o'clock; Ferdinand was sitting alone in his room, having just parted with Glastonbury, who was going to dine in Brook Street. The sun had set, and yet it was scarcely dark enough for artificial light, particularly for a person without a pursuit. It was just that dreary, dismal moment, when even the most gay grow pensive, if they be alone. And Ferdinand was particularly dull; a reaction had followed the excitement of the last eight-and-forty hours, and he was at this moment feeling singularly disconsolate, and upbraiding himself for being so weak as to permit himself to be influenced by Mirabel's fantastic promises and projects, when his door flew open, and the count, full dressed and graceful as a Versailles Apollo, stood before him.

"Cher ami! I cannot stop one minute. I dine with Fitzwarrene, and I am late. I have done your business capitally. Here is a pretty flower! Who do you think gave it me? She did, pardy. On condition, however, that I should bear it to you, with a message—and what a message!—that you should be happy."

"Nonsense, my dear count."

"It is true; but I romanced at a fine rate for it. It is the only way with women. She thinks we have known each other since the Deluge. Do not betray me. But, my dear fellow, I cannot stop now. Only, mind, all is changed. Instead of being gay, and seeking her society, and amusing her, and thus attempting to regain your influence, as we talked of last night; mind, suicide is the system. To-morrow I will tell you all. She has a firm mind and a high spirit, which she thinks is principle. If we go upon the tack of last night, she will marry Montfort, and fall in love with you afterwards. That will never do. So we must work upon her fears, her generosity, pity, remorse, and so on. It is all planned in my head, but I cannot stop. Call upon me to-morrow morning, at half-past two; not before, because I have an excellent boy coming to me at one who is in a scrape. At half-past two, cher Armine, we will talk more. In the mean time, enjoy your flower; and rest assured, that it is your own fault if you do not fling the good Montfort in a very fine ditch."

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH MR. TEMPLE SURPRISES HIS DAUGHTER WEeping.

THE Count Mirabel proceeded with his projects with all the ardour, address, and audacity of one habituated to success. By some means or other he contrived to see Miss Temple almost daily. He paid assiduous court to the dutchess, on whom he had made a very favourable impression from the first; in St. James's Square he met Mr. Temple, who was partial to the society of an accomplished foreigner. He was delighted with Count Mirabel. As for Miss Grandison, the count absolutely made her his confidant, though he concealed this bold step from Ferdinand. He established his intimacy in the three families, and even mystified Sir Ratcliffe and Lady Armine so completely, that they imagined he must be some acquaintance that Ferdinand had made abroad; and they received him accordingly as one of their son's oldest and most cherished friends. But the most amusing circumstance of all, was,

h the count, who even in business never lost sight of what might divert or interest him, became great friends even with Mr. Glastonbury. Count Mirabel quite comprehended and appreciated that good man's character.

All Count Mirabel's efforts were directed to restore the influence of Ferdinand Armine over Henrietta Temple; and with this view he omitted no opportunity of impressing the idea of his absent friend on that lady's susceptible brain. His virtues, his talents, his accomplishments, his sacrifices; but, above all, his mysterious sufferings, and the fatal end which the count was convinced awaited him; were placed before her in a light so vivid, that they wholly engrossed her thought and imagination. She could not resist the fascination of talking about Ferdinand Armine to Count Mirabel. He, was, indeed, the constant subject of their discourse. All her feelings, indeed, now clustered round his image. She had quite abandoned her old plan of marrying him to his cousin. That was desperate. Did she regret it? She scarcely dared urge to herself this secret question; and yet it seemed that her heart, too, would break, were Ferdinand another's. But, then, what was to become of him? Was he to be left desolate? Was he indeed to die? And Digby, the amiable, generous Digby—ah! why did she ever meet him! Unfortunate, unhappy woman! And yet she was resolved to be firm; she would not falter; she would be the victim of her duty, even if she died at the altar. Almost she wished that she had ceased to live—and then the recollection of Armine came back to her so vividly! And those long days of passionate delight! All his tenderness and all his truth; for he had been true to her, always had he been true to her. She was not the person who ought to complain of his conduct. He said so, and he said rightly. And yet she was the person who alone punished him. How different was the generous conduct of his cousin! She had pardoned all; she sympathized with him, she sorrowed for him, she tried to soothe him. She laboured to unite him to her rival. What must he think of herself? How hard-hearted, how selfish, must the contrast prove her! Could he indeed believe now that she ever loved him! O! no, he must despise her. He must believe that she was sacrificing her heart to the splendour of rank. O! could he believe this! Her Ferdinand, her romantic Ferdinand, who had thrown fortune and power to the winds, but to gain that very heart! What a return had she made him! And for all his fidelity he was punished; lone, disconsolate, forlorn, overpowered by vulgar cares, heart-broken, meditating even death—. The picture was too terrible, too harrowing. She hid her face in the pillow of the sofa on which she was seated, and wept most bitterly.

She felt an arm softly twined round her waist; she looked up, it was her father.

"My child," he said, "you are agitated."

"Yes: yes; I am agitated," she said, in a low voice.

"You are unwell."

"Worse than unwell."

"Tell me what ails you, Henrietta."

"Grief for which there is no cure."

"Indeed! I am greatly astonished."

His daughter only sighed.

"Speak to me, Henrietta. Tell me what has happened."

"I cannot speak; nothing has happened; I have nothing to say."

"To see you thus makes me most unhappy," said Mr. Temple; "if only for my sake, let me know the cause of this overwhelming emotion."

"It is a cause that will not please you. Forget, sir, what you have seen."

"A father cannot. I entreat you, tell me. If you love me, Henrietta, speak."

"Sir, sir, I was thinking of the past."

"Is it so bitter?"

"O! God! that I should live," said Miss Temple.

"Henrietta, my own Henrietta, my child, I beseech you tell me all. Something has occurred, something must have occurred, to revive such strong feelings. Has, has—I know not what to say, but so much happens that surprises me—I know, I have heard, that you have seen one who once influenced your feelings, that you have been thrown in unexpected contact with him—he has not, he has not dared—"

"Say nothing harshly of him," exclaimed Miss Temple, wildly, "I will not bear it even from you."

"My daughter!"

"Ay! your daughter, but still a woman. Do I murmur, do I complain? Have I urged you to compromise your honour? I am ready for the sacrifice. My conduct is yours, but my feelings are my own."

"Sacrifice, Henrietta! What sacrifice? I have heard only of your happiness; I have thought only of your happiness. This is a strange return."

"Father, forget what you have seen; forgive what I have said. But let this subject drop forever."

"It cannot drop here. Captain Armine prefers his suit?" continued Mr. Temple, in a tone of stern inquiry.

"What if he did? He has a right to do so."

"As good a right as he had before. You are rich now, Henrietta, and he perhaps would be faithful."

"O! Ferdinand," exclaimed Miss Temple, lifting up her hands and eyes to heaven, "and you must endure even this!"

"Henrietta," said Mr. Temple, in a voice of affected calmness, as he seated himself by her side. "Listen to me: I am not a harsh parent; you cannot upbraid me with insensibility to your feelings. They have ever engrossed my thought and care, and how to gratify, and when necessary how to soothe them, has long been the principal occupation of my life. If you have known misery, girl, you made that misery yourself. It was not I that involved you in secret engagements, and clandestine correspondence; it was not I that made you—you, my daughter, on whom I have lavished all the solitudes of long years—the dupe of the first calculating libertine who dared to trifle with your affections, and betray your heart."

"'Tis false!" exclaimed Miss Temple, interrupting him; "he is as true and pure as I am; more, much more," she added, in a voice of anguish.

"No doubt he has convinced you of it," said Mr. Temple, with a laughing sneer. "Now mark me," he continued, resuming his calm tone, "you interrupted me; listen to me. You are the betrothed bride of Lord Montfort—Lord Montfort, my friend, the man I love most in the world; the most generous, the most noble, the most virtuous, the most gifted of human beings. You gave him your hand freely, under circumstances which, even if he did not possess every quality that ought to secure the affection of a woman, should bind you to him with an unswerving faith. Falter one joint, and I

whistle you off forever. You are no more daughter of mine. I am as firm as I am fond; nor would I do this, but that I know well I am doing rightly. Yes! take this Armine once more to your heart, and you receive my curse, the deepest—the sternest—the deadliest that ever descended on a daughter's head."

"My father, my dear, dear father, my beloved father!" exclaimed Miss Temple, throwing herself at his feet. "O! do not say so; O! recall those words, those wild—those terrible words. Indeed, indeed, my heart is breaking. Pity me, pity me; for God's sake pity me."

"I would do more than pity you; I would save you."

"It is not as you think," she continued with streaming eyes; "indeed it is not. He has not preferred his suit, he has urged no claim. He has believed in the most delicate, the most honourable, the most considerate manner. He has thought only of my situation. He met me by accident. My friends are his friends. They know not what has taken place between us. He has not breathed it to human being. He has absented himself from his home, that we might not meet."

"You must marry Lord Montfort at once."

"O! my father—even as you like. But do not curse me—dream not of such terrible things—recall those fearful words—love me—say I am your child. And Digby—I am true to Digby—who says I am false to Digby?—But, indeed, can I recall the past, can I alter it? Its memory overcame me. Digby knows all; Digby knows we met; he did not curse me—he was kind and gentle. O! my father!"

"My Henrietta, my beloved Henrietta!" said Mr. Temple, very much moved: "my child, my darling child!"

"O! my father! I will do all you wish; but speak not again as you have done of Ferdinand. We have done him great injustice; I have done him great injury. He is good and pure; indeed he is: if you knew all, you would not doubt it. He was ever faithful: indeed, indeed he was. Once you liked him. Speak kindly of him, father. He is the victim. If you meet him, be gentle to him, sir; for, indeed, if you knew all, you would pity him."

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH FERDINAND HAS A VERY STORMY INTERVIEW WITH HIS FATHER.

If we pause now to take a calm and comprehensive review of the state and prospects of the three families, in whose feelings and fortunes we have attempted to interest the reader, it must be confessed that, however brilliant and satisfactory they might appear on the surface, the elements of discord, gloom, and unhappiness might be more profoundly discovered, and indeed might even be held as rapidly stirring into movement. Miss Temple was the affianced bride of Lord Montfort, but her heart was Captain Armine's; Captain Armine, in the estimation of his parents, was the pledged husband of Miss Grandison, while he and his cousin had, in fact, dissolved their engagement. Mr. Temple more than suspected his daughter's partiality for Ferdinand. Sir Ratcliffe, very much surprised at seeing so little of his son, and resolved that the marriage should be no further delayed, was

about to precipitate confessions, of which he did not dream, and which were to shipwreck all the hopes of his life. The Count Mirabel and Miss Grandison were both engaged in an active conspiracy. Lord Montfort alone was calm, and, if he had a purpose to conceal, inscrutable. All things, however, foreboded a crisis.

Sir Ratcliffe, astonished at the marked manner in which his son absented himself from Brook Street, resolved upon bringing him to an explanation. At first he thought there might be some lovers' quarrel; but the demeanour of Katherine, and the easy tone in which she ever spoke of her cousin, soon disabused him of this fond hope. He consulted his wife. Now, to tell the truth, Lady Armine, who was a very shrewd woman, was not without her doubts and perplexities, but she would not confess them to her husband. Many circumstances had been observed by her which filled her with disquietude, but she had staked all her hopes upon his cast, and she was of a very sanguine temper. She was leading an agreeable life. Katherine appeared daily more attached to her, and her ladyship was quite of opinion that is always very injudicious to interfere. She endeavoured to persuade Sir Ratcliffe that every thing was quite right, and she assured him that the season would terminate, as all seasons ought to terminate, by the marriage.

And, perhaps, Sir Ratcliffe would have followed her example, only it so happened that as he was returning home one morning, he met his son in Grosvenor Square.

"Why, Ferdinand, we never see you now?" said Sir Ratcliffe.

"O! you are all so gay," said Ferdinand. "How is my mother?"

"She is very well. Katherine and herself have gone to see the balloon, with Lord Montfort and Count Mirabel. Come in," said Sir Ratcliffe, for he was now almost at his door.

The father and son entered. Sir Ratcliffe walked into a little library on the ground floor, which was his morning room.

"We dine at home to-day, Ferdinand," said Sir Ratcliffe. "Perhaps you will come."

"Thank you, sir, I am engaged."

"It seems to me you are always engaged. For a person who does not like gayety, it is very odd."

"Heigho!" said Ferdinand. "How do you like your new horse, sir?"

"Ferdinand, I wish to speak a word to you," said Sir Ratcliffe. "I do not like ever to interfere unnecessarily with your conduct; but the anxiety of a parent will, I think, excuse the question I am about to ask. When do you propose being married?"

"O! I do not know exactly."

"Your grandfather has been dead now, you know, much more than a year. I cannot help thinking your conduct very singular. There is nothing wrong between you and Katherine, is there?"

"Wrong, sir!"

"Yes, wrong. I mean, is there any misunderstanding? Have you quarrelled?"

"No, sir, we have not quarrelled; we perfectly understand each other."

"I am glad to hear it, for I must say I think your conduct is very unlike that of a lover. All I can say is, I did not win your mother's heart by such proceedings."

"Katherine has made no complaint of me, sir!"

"Certainly not, and that surprises me still more."

Ferdinand seemed plunged in thought. The silence lasted some minutes. Sir Ratcliffe took up the newspaper; his son leant over the mantelpiece, and gazed upon the empty fireplace. At length he turned round and said, "father, I can bear this no longer; the engagement between Katherine and myself is dissolved."

"Good God! when and why?" exclaimed Sir Ratcliffe, the newspaper falling from his hand.

"Long since, sir: and ever since I loved another woman, and she knew it."

"Ferdinand! Ferdinand!" exclaimed the unhappy father: but he was so overpowered that he could not give utterance to his thoughts. He threw himself in a chair, and wrung his hands. Ferdinand stood still and silent, like a statue of destiny, gloomy and inflexible.

"Speak again," at length said Sir Ratcliffe. "Let me hear you speak again. I cannot believe what I have heard. Is it, indeed, true that your engagement with your cousin has been long terminated?"

Ferdinand nodded assent.

"Your poor mother!" exclaimed Sir Ratcliffe. "This will kill her." He rose from his seat, and walked up and down the room in the greatest agitation.

"I knew all was not right," he muttered to himself. "She will sink under it; we must all sink under it. Madman! you know not what you have done!"

"It is in vain to regret, sir; my sufferings have been greater than yours."

"She will pardon you, my boy," said Sir Ratcliffe, in a quicker and kinder tone. "You have lived to repent your impetuous folly; Katherine is kind and generous; she loves us all; she must love you; she will pardon you. Yes! entreat her to forget it; your mother, your mother has great influence with her; she will exercise it, she will interfere, you are very young, all will yet be well."

"It is as impossible for me to marry Katherine Grandison, as for yourself to do it, sir," said Ferdinand, in a tone of great calmness.

"You are not married to another?"

"In faith; I am bound by a tie which I can never break."

"And who is this person?"

"She must be nameless for many reasons."

"Ferdinand," said Sir Ratcliffe, "you know not what you are doing. My life, your mother's, the existence of our family, hang upon your conduct. Yet, there is time to prevent this desolation. I am controlling my emotions; I wish to save us—you—all! Throw yourself at your cousin's feet. She is soft-hearted; she may yet be yours!"

"Dear father, it cannot be."

"Then—then welcome ruin," exclaimed Sir Ratcliffe in a hoarse voice. "And," he continued, pausing between every word, from the difficulty of utterance, "if the conviction that you have destroyed all our hopes, rewarded us for all our affection, our long devotion, by blasting every fond idea that has ever illumined our sad lives, that I and Constance, poor fools, have clung and clung to, if this conviction can console you, sir, enjoy it—"

"Ferdinand! my son, my child, that I never have spoken an unkind word to, that never gave me cause to blame or check him, your mother will be home soon, your poor, poor mother. Do not let me welcome her with all this misery. Tell me it is not true; recall what you have said; let us forget these

harsh words; reconcile yourself to your cousin; let us be happy."

"Father, if my heart's blood could secure your happiness, my life were ready; but this I cannot do."

"Do you know what is at stake? Everything! All, all, all! We can see Armine no more; our home is gone. Your mother and myself must be exiles. O! you have not thought of this; say you have not thought of this."

Ferdinand hid his face—his father, emboldened, urged the strong plea. "You will save us, Ferdinand, you will be our preserver! It is all forgotten, is it not? It is a lover's quarrel, after all?"

"Father, why should I trifle with your feelings? why should I feign what can never be? This sharp interview, so long postponed, ought not now to be adjourned. Indulge no hopes; for there are none."

"Then, by every sacred power, I revoke every blessing that since your birth I have poured upon your head. I recall the prayers that every night I have invoked upon your being. Great God! I can feel them. You have betrayed your cousin; you have deserted your mother and myself; you have first sullied the honour of our house, and now you have destroyed it. Why were you born? What have we done that your mother's womb should produce such a curse? Sins of my father—they are visited upon me! And Glastonbury, what will Glastonbury say? Glastonbury, who sacrificed his fortune for you?"

"Mr. Glastonbury knows all, sir, and has always been my confidant."

"Is he a traitor? For when a son deserts me, I know not whom to trust."

"He has no thoughts, but for our welfare, sir. He will convince you, sir, I cannot marry my cousin."

"Boy, boy! you know not what you say. Not marry your cousin! Then let us die. It were better for us all to die."

"My father! Be calm, I beseech you; you have spoken harsh words—I have not deserted you nor my mother; I never will. If I have wronged my cousin, I have severely suffered, and she has most freely forgiven me. She is my dear friend. As for our house; tell me, would you have that house preserved at the cost of my happiness? You are not the father I supposed, if such indeed be your wish."

"Happiness! Fortune, family, beauty, youth, a sweet and charming spirit—if these will not secure a man's happiness, I know not what might. And these I wished you to possess."

"Sir, it is vain for us to converse upon this subject. See Glastonbury, if you will. He can at least assure you that neither my feelings are light, nor my conduct hasty. I will leave you now."

Ferdinand quitted the room; Sir Ratcliffe did not notice his departure, although he was not unaware of it. He heaved a deep sigh, and was apparently plunged in profound thought.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FERDINAND IS ARRESTED BY MESSRS. MORRIS AND LEVISON, AND TAKEN TO A SPUNGING HOUSE.

It must be confessed that the affairs of our friends were in a critical state; every one interested felt that something decisive in their respective for-

tunes was at hand. And yet, so vain are all human plans and calculations, that the unavoidable crisis was brought about by an incident which no one anticipated. It so happened that the stormy interview between Sir Ratcliffe and his son was overheard by a servant. This servant, who had been engaged by Miss Grandison in London, was a member of a club to which a confidential clerk of Messrs. Morris and Levison belonged. In the ensuing evening, when this worthy knight of the shoulder-knot just dropped out for an hour to look in at this choice society, smoke a pipe, and talk over the affairs of his mistress and the nation, he announced the important fact that the match between Miss Grandison and Captain Armine was "no go," which, for his part, he did not regret, as he thought his mistress ought to look higher. The confidential clerk of Messrs. Morris and Levison listened in silence to this important intelligence, and communicated it the next morning to his employers. And so it happened that, a very few days afterwards, as Ferdinand was lying in bed at his hotel, the door of his chamber suddenly opened, and an individual, not of the most prepossessing appearance, being very much marked with small-pox, reeking with gin, and wearing top boots and a belcher handkerchief, rushed into his room and inquired whether he were Captain Armine.

"The same," said Ferdinand. "And pray, sir, who are you?"

"Don't wish to be unpleasant," was the answer, "but, sir, you are my prisoner."

There is something exceedingly ignoble in an arrest: Ferdinand felt that sickness come over him, which the uninitiated in such ceremonies must experience. However, he rallied and inquired at whose suit these proceedings were taken.

"Messrs. Morris and Levison, sir."

"Cannot I send for my lawyer and give bail?"

The bailiff shook his head. "You see, sir, you are taken in execution, so it is impossible."

"And the amount of the debt?"

"Is £2300, sir."

"Well, what am I to do?"

"Why, sir, you must go along with us. We will do it very quietly. My follower is in a hackney coach at the door, sir. You can just step in as pleasant as possible. I suppose you would like to go to a spunging house, and then you can send for your friends, you know."

"Well, if you will go down stairs, I will come to you."

The bailiff grinned. "Can't let you out of my sight, sir."

"Why—I cannot dress, if you are here."

The bailiff examined the room to see if there were any mode of escape; there was no door but the entrance; the window offered no chance. "Well, sir," he said, "I likes to do things pleasant. I can stand outside, sir, but you must be quick."

Ferdinand rang for his servant. When Louis clearly understood the state of affairs, he was exceedingly anxious to throw the bailiff out of the window, but his master prevented him. Mr. Glastonbury had gone out some two hours; Ferdinand sent Louis with a message to his family, to say he was about leaving town for a few days, and impressing upon him to be most careful not to let them know in Brook Street what had occurred, he completed his rapid toilette, and accompanied the sheriff's officer to the hackney coach that was prepared for him.

As they jogged on in silence, Ferdinand re- volved in his mind how it would be most advisable for him to act. Any application to his own lawyer was out of the question. That had been tried before, and he felt assured that there was not the slightest chance of that gentleman discharging so large a sum, especially when he was aware that it was only a portion of his client's liabilities; he thought of applying for advice to Count Mirabel or Lord Catlimwhocan, but with what view? He would not borrow the money of them, even if they would lend it; and as it was, he bitterly reproached himself, for having availed himself so easily of Mr. Bond Sharpe's kind offices. At this moment, he could not persuade himself that his conduct had been strictly honourable to that gentleman. He had not been frank in the exposition of his situation. The money had been advanced under a false impression, if not absolutely borrowed under a false pretence. He cursed Catlimwhocan and his levity. The honour of the Armines was gone, like every thing else that once belonged to them. The result of Ferdinand's reflections was that he was utterly done up; that no hope, or chance of succour remained for him; that his career was closed; and not daring to contemplate what the consequences might be to his miserable parents, he made a desperate effort to command his feelings.

Here the coach turned up a dingy street, leading out of the lower end of Oxford Street, and stopped before a large but gloomy dwelling, which Ferdinand's companion informed him was a spunging house. "I suppose you would like to have a private room, sir; you can have every accommodation here, sir, and feel quite at home, I assure you."

In pursuance of this suggestion, Captain Armine was ushered into the best drawing-room with barred windows, and treated in the most aristocratic manner. It was evidently the chamber reserved only for unfortunate gentlemen of the utmost distinction. It was amply furnished with a mirror, a loo-table, and a very hard sofa. The walls were hung with old-fashioned caricatures by Bunbury, the fire-irons were of polished brass, over the mantel-piece was the portrait of the master of the house, which was evidently a speaking likeness, and in which Captain Armine fancied he traced no slight resemblance to his friend Mr. Levison, and there were also some sources of literary amusement in the room, in the shape of a Hebrew Bible and the Racing Calendar.

After walking up and down the room for an hour, meditating over the past—for it seemed hopeless to trouble himself any further with the future—Ferdinand began to feel very faint, for it may be recollected that he had not even breakfasted. So pulling the bell rope with such force that it fell to the ground, a funny little waiter immediately appeared, awed by the sovereign ring, and having, indeed, received private intelligence from the bailiff that the gentleman in the drawing-room was a regular nob.

And here, perhaps, I should remind the reader, that of all the great distinctions in life, none perhaps is more important than that which divides mankind into the two great sections of *NOBS* and *SNOWS*. It might seem at the first glance, that if there were a place in the world which should level all distinctions, it would be a debtor's prison. But this would be quite an error. Almost at the very

moment that Captain Armine arrived at his sorrowful hotel, a poor devil of a tradesman, who had been arrested for fifty pounds, and torn from his wife and family, had been forced to repair to the same asylum. He was introduced into what is styled the Coffee-room, being a long, low, unfurnished, sanded chamber, with a table and benches; and being very anxious to communicate with some friend, in order, if possible, to effect his release, and prevent himself from being a bankrupt, he had continued meekly to ring at intervals for the last half hour, in order that he might write and forward his letter. The waiter heard the coffee-room bell ring, but never dreamed of noticing it, though the moment the signal of the private room sounded, and sounded with so much emphasis, he rushed up stairs, three steps at a time, and instantly appeared before our hero: and all this difference was occasioned by the simple circumstance, that Captain Armine was a *NOB*, and the poor tradesman a *SNOB*.

"I am hungry," said Ferdinand. "Can I get any thing to eat at this damned place?"

"What would you like, sir? Any thing you choose, sir. Mutton chop, rump steak, veal cutlet? Do you a fowl in a quarter of an hour; roast or boiled, sir?"

"I have not breakfasted yet, bring me some breakfast."

"Yes, sir," said the little waiter. "Tea, sir? Coffee, eggs, toast, buttered toast, sir? Like any meat, sir? Ham, sir? Tongue, sir? Like a devil, sir?"

"Any thing, every thing, only be quick."

"Yes, sir," responded the waiter. "Beg pardon, sir. No offence, I hope, but custom to pay here, sir. Shall be happy to accommodate you, sir. Know what a gentleman is."

"Thank you, I will not trouble you," said Ferdinand; "get me that note exchanged."

"Yes, sir," replied the little waiter, bowing very low as he disappeared.

"Gentleman in best drawing-room wants breakfast. Gentleman in best drawing-room wants change for a ten pound note. Breakfast immediately for gentleman in best drawing-room. Tea, coffee, toast, ham, tongue, and a devil. A regular nob!"

Ferdinand was so exhausted that he had postponed all deliberation as to his situation until he had breakfasted, and when he had breakfasted, he felt very dull. It is the consequence of all meals. In whatever light he viewed his affairs, they seemed inextricable. He was now in a sponging house, he could not long remain here, he must be soon in a jail. A jail! What a bitter termination of all his great plans and hopes! What a situation for one who had been betrothed to Henrietta Temple! He thought of his cousin, he thought of her great fortune, which might have been his. Perhaps at this moment they were all riding together in the Park. In a few days all must be known to his father. He did not doubt of the result. Armine would immediately be sold, and his father and mother, with the wretched wreck of their fortune, would retire to the Continent. What a sad vicissitude! And he had done it all—he, their only child, their only hope, on whose image they had lived, who was to restore the house. He looked at the bars of his windows, it was a dreadful sight. His poor father, his fond mother—he was quite sure their hearts would break. They never could survive all this misery, this bitter disappointment of

all their hopes. Little less than a year ago and he was at Bath, and they were all joy and triumph. What a wild scene had his life been since! O! Henrietta! why did we ever meet? That fatal, fatal morning! The cedar tree rose before him, he recalled, he remembered every thing. And poor Glastonbury—it was a miserable end. He could not disguise it from himself, he had been most imprudent, he had been mad. And yet so near happiness, perfect, perfect, happiness! Henrietta might have been his, and they might have been so happy! This confinement was dreadful; it began to press upon his nerves. No occupation, not the slightest resource. He took up the Racing Calendar, he threw it down again. He knew all the caricatures by heart, they infinitely disgusted him. He walked up and down the room till he was so tired that he flung himself upon the hard sofa. It was intolerable. A jail must be preferable to this. There must be some kind of wretched amusement in a jail; but this ignoble, this humiliating solitude—he was confident he should go mad if he remained here. He rang the bell again.

"Yes! sir," said the little waiter.

"This place is intolerable to me," said Captain Armine. "I really am quite sick of it. What can I do?"

The waiter looked a little perplexed.

"I should like to go to jail at once," said Ferdinand.

"Lord! sir!" said the little waiter.

"Yes! I cannot bear this," he continued; "I shall go mad."

"Don't you think your friends will call soon, sir?"

"I have no friends," said Ferdinand. "I hope nobody will call."

"No friends!" said the little waiter, who began to think Ferdinand was not such a nob as he had imagined. "Why, if you have no friends, sir, it would be best to go to the Fleet, I think."

"By Jove, I think it would be better."

"Master thinks your friends will call, I am sure."

"Nobody knows I am here," said Ferdinand.

"O!" said the little waiter, "you want to let them know, do you, sir?"

"Any thing sooner; I wish to conceal my disgrace."

"O! sir, you are not used to it—I dare say you never were nabbed before?"

"Certainly not."

"There it is; if you will be patient, you will see every thing go well."

"Never, my good fellow; nothing can go well."

"O! sir, you are not used to it. A regular nob like you, nabbed for the first time, and for such a long figure, sir, sure not to be diddled. Never knowed such a thing yet. Friends sure to stump down, sir."

"The greater the claim, the more difficulty in satisfying it, I should think," said Ferdinand.

"Lord! no, sir; you are not used to it. It is only poor devils nabbed for their fifties and hundreds that are ever done up. A nob was never nabbed for the sum you are, sir, and ever went to the wall. Trust my experience, I never knowed such a thing."

Ferdinand could scarcely refrain from a smile. Even the conversation of the little waiter was a relief to him.

"You see, sir," continued that worthy, "Morris and Levison would never have given you such a — of a tick unless they knowed your resources."

Trust Morris and Levison for that. You done up, sir! a nob like you, that Morris and Levison have trusted for such a tick! Lord, sir, you don't know nothing about it. I could afford to give them fifteen shillings in the pound for their debt myself, and a good day's business too. Friends will stamp down, sir, trust me."

"Well, it is some satisfaction for me to know that they will not, and that Morris and Levison will not get a farthing."

"Well, sir," said the incredulous little functionary, "when I find Morris and Levison lose two or three thousand pounds by a nob who is nabbed for the first time, I will pay the money myself, that is all I know."

Here the waiter was obliged to leave Ferdinand, but he proved his confidence in that gentleman's fortunes by his continual civility, and in the course of the day brought him a stale newspaper. It seemed to Ferdinand that the day would never close. The waiter pestered him about dinner, eulogizing the cook, and assuring him that his master was famous for Champagne. Although he had no appetite, Ferdinand ordered dinner in order to ensure the occurrence of one incident. The Champagne made him drowsy; he was shown to his room; and for a while he forgot his cares in sleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CRISIS RAPIDLY ADVANCES.

HENRIETTA TEMPLE began once more to droop. This change was not unnoticed by her constant companion, Lord Montfort—and yet he never permitted her to be aware of his observation. All that he did was still more to study her amusement; if possible to be still more considerate and tender. Miss Grandison, however, was far less delicate; she omitted no opportunity of letting Miss Temple know that she thought that Henrietta was very unwell, and that she was quite convinced Henrietta was thinking of Ferdinand. Nay! she was not satisfied to confine these intimations to Miss Temple—she impressed her conviction of Henrietta's indisposition on Lord Montfort, and teased him with asking his opinion of the cause.

"What do you think is the cause, Miss Grandison?" said his lordship, very quietly.

"Perhaps London does not agree with her: but then, when she was ill before, she was in the country; and it seems to me to be the same illness. I wonder you do not notice it, Lord Montfort. A lover to be so insensible—I am surprised!"

"It is useless to notice that which you cannot remedy."

"Why do you not call in those who can offer remedies!" said Miss Grandison. "Why not send for Sir Henry?"

"I think it is best to leave Henrietta alone," said Lord Montfort.

"Do you think it is the mind, then?" said Miss Grandison.

"It may be," said Lord Montfort.

"It may be! Upon my word, you are very easy."

"I am not indifferent, Miss Grandison. There is nothing that I would not do for Henrietta's welfare."

"O! yes, there is; there is something," said Miss Grandison, rather maliciously.

"You are really a very extraordinary person, Miss Grandison," said Lord Montfort. "What can you mean by so strange an observation!"

"I have my meaning; but I suppose I may have a mystery as well as anybody else."

"A mystery, Miss Grandison?"

"Yes! a mystery, Lord Montfort. There is not a single individual in the three families who has not a mystery, except myself; but I have found out something. I feel quite easy now—we are upon an equality."

"You are a very strange person."

"It may be so; but I am very happy, for I have nothing on my mind. Now that poor Ferdinand has told Sir Ratcliffe we are not going to marry, I have no part to play. I hate deception; it is almost as bitter as marrying one who is in love with another person."

"That must indeed be bitter. And is that the reason that you do not marry your cousin?" inquired Montfort.

"I may be in love with another person, or I may not," said Miss Grandison. "But however that may be, the moment Ferdinand very candidly told me he was, we decided not to marry. I think we were wise—do not you, Lord Montfort?"

"If you are happy, you were wise," said Montfort.

"Yes, I am pretty happy—as happy as I can well be, when all my best friends are miserable."

"Are they?"

"I think so: my aunt is in tears; my uncle in despair; Ferdinand meditates suicide; Henrietta is pining away; and you—you, who are the philosopher of the society—you look grave. I fancy, I think we are a most miserable set."

"I wish we could all be very happy," said Montfort.

"And so we might, I think," said Miss Grandison, "at least some of us."

"Make us, then," said Lord Montfort.

"I cannot make you."

"I think you could, Miss Grandison."

At this moment Henrietta entered, and the conversation assumed a different turn.

"Will you go with us to Lady Bellair's, Kate?" said Miss Temple. "The dutchess has asked me to call there this morning."

Miss Grandison expressed her willingness; the carriage was waiting, and Lord Montfort offered to attend them. At this moment, the servant entered with a note for Miss Grandison.

"From Glastonbury," she said; "dear Henrietta, he wishes to see me immediately. What can it be? Go to Lady Bellair's and call for me on your return. You must, indeed. And then we can all go out together."

And so it was arranged. Miss Temple, accompanied by Lord Montfort, proceeded to Bellair House.

"Don't come near me," said the old lady, when she saw them, "don't come near me; I am in despair; I do not know what I shall do; I think I shall sell all my china. Do you know anybody who wants to buy old china? They shall have it a bargain. But I must have ready money; ready money I must have. Do not sit down in that chair; it is only made to look at.—O! if I were rich like you!—I wonder if my china is worth three hundred pounds. I could cry my eyes out, that I could. The wicked men I should like to tear them to pieces. Why is he not in Parliament; and then

they could not take him up? They never could arrest Charles Fox. I have known him in as much trouble as any one. Once he sent all his furniture to my house from his lodgings. He lodged in Bury street. I always look at the house when I pass by. Don't fiddle the pens; I hate people who fiddle. Where is Gregory!—where is my bell? Where is the page!—naughty boy!—why do not you come? There, I do not want any thing—I do not know what to do. The wicked men! The greatest favourite I had—he was so charming! Charming people are never rich—he always looked melancholy—I think I will send to the rich man I dine with—but I forget his name. Why do you not tell me his name!”

“My dear Lady Bellair, what is the matter?”

“Don't ask me; don't speak to me. I tell you I am in despair. O! if I were rich! how I would punish those wicked men!”

“Can I do any thing?” said Lord Montfort.

“I do not know what you can do. I have got the tic. I always have the tic when my friends are in trouble.”

“Who is in trouble, Lady Bellair?”

“My dearest friend; the only friend I care about. How can you be so hard-hearted? I called upon him this morning, and his servant was crying. I must get him a place. He is such a good man, and loves his master. Now do you want a servant? You never want any thing. Ask everybody you know whether they want a servant, an honest man, who loves his master. There he is crying down stairs in Gregory's room. Poor good creature! I could cry myself, only it is of no use.”

“Who is his master?” said Lord Montfort.

“Nobody you know—yes! you know him very well. It is my dear, dear friend—you know him very well. The bailiffs went to his hotel yesterday, and dragged him out of bed, and took him to prison. O! I shall go quite distracted. I want to sell my china to pay his debts. Where is Miss Twoshoes?” continued her ladyship, “why don't you answer? You do every thing to plague me.”

“Miss Grandison, Lady Bellair?”

“To be sure; it is her lover.”

“Captain Armine?”

“Have I not been telling you all this time. They have taken him to prison.”

Miss Temple rose and left the room.

“Poor creature, she is quite shocked. She knows him, too,” said her ladyship. “I am afraid he is quite ruined. There is a knock. I will make a subscription for him. I dare say it is my grandson. He is very rich, and very good-natured.”

“My dear Lady Bellair,” said Lord Montfort, rising, “favour me by not saying a word to anybody at present. I will just go into the next room to Henrietta. She is very intimate with the family, and very much affected. Now, my dear lady, I entreat you,” continued his lordship, “do not say a word. Captain Armine has very good friends, but do not speak to strangers. It will do harm, it will indeed.”

“You are a good creature, you are a good creature. go away.”

“Lady Frederick Berrington, my lady,” announced the page.

“She is very witty, but very poor. It is no use speaking to her. I won't say a word. Go to Miss Thingabob—go, go.” And Lord Montfort escaped into the saloon as Lady Frederick entered.

Henrietta was lying on the sofa, her countenance was hid, she was sobbing convulsively.

“Henrietta,” said Lord Montfort, but she did not answer. “Henrietta,” he again said, “dear Henrietta! I will do whatever you wish.”

“Save him, save him!” she exclaimed. “O! you cannot save him! And I have brought him to this! Ferdinand! dearest Ferdinand! O! I shall die!”

“For God's sake, be calm,” said Lord Montfort, there is nothing I will not do for you, for him.”

“Ferdinand, Ferdinand, my own, own Ferdinand, O! why did we ever part? Why was I so unjust, so wicked? And he was true! I cannot survive his disgrace and misery. I wish to die!”

“There shall be no disgrace, no misery,” said Lord Montfort, “only, for God's sake, be calm. There is a chattering woman in the next room. Hush! hush! I tell you I will do every thing.”

“You cannot; you must not; you ought not! O! Digby, kind, generous Digby! Pardon what I have said; forget it; but indeed I am so wretched, I can bear this life no longer.”

“But, you shall not be wretched, Henrietta; you shall be happy. Everybody shall be happy. I am Armine's friend, I am indeed. I will prove it. On my honour I will prove that I am his best friend.”

“O! Digby, will you, though! And yet you must not. You are the last person, you are indeed. He is so proud! Any thing from us will be death to him. Yes! I know him, he will die sooner than be under an obligation to either of us.”

“You shall place him under still greater obligations than this,” said Lord Montfort. “Yes! Henrietta, if he have been true to you, you shall not be false to him.”

“Digby, Digby, speak not such strange words. I am myself again. I left you that I might be alone. Best and most generous of men, I have never deceived you; pardon the emotions that even you were not to witness.”

“Take my arm, dearest, let us walk into the garden. I wish to speak to you. Do not tremble. I have nothing to say that is not for your happiness; at all times, and under all circumstances, the great object of my thoughts.”

He raised Miss Temple gently from the sofa, and they walked away far from the observation of Lady Bellair, or the auricular powers, though they were not inconsiderable, of her lively guest.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH FERDINAND RECEIVES MORE THAN ONE VISIT, AND FINDS THAT ADVERSITY HAS NOT QUITE DEPRIVED HIM OF HIS FRIENDS.

IN the mean time morning broke upon the unfortunate Ferdinand. He had forgotten his cares in sleep, and, when he woke, it was with some difficulty that he recalled the unlucky incident of yesterday, and could satisfy himself that he was indeed a prisoner. But the bars of his bed-room window left him not very long in pleasing doubt.

His friend, the little waiter, soon made his appearance. “Slept pretty well, sir? Same breakfast as yesterday, sir? Tongue and ham, sir? Perhaps you would like a kidney instead of a devil it will be a little change.”

“O! I have no appetite.”

"It will come, sir. You a'n't used to it. Nothing else to do here but to eat. Better try the kidney, sir! Is there any thing you fancy?"

"I have made up my mind to go to jail to-day."

"Lord! sir, don't think of it. Something will turn up, sir, take my word."

And, sooth to say, the experienced waiter was not wrong. For bringing in the breakfast, followed by an underling with a great pomp of plated covers, he informed Ferdinand with a chuckle, that a gentleman was inquiring for him. "Told you your friends would come, sir."

The gentleman was introduced, and Ferdinand beheld Mr. Glastonbury.

"My dear Glastonbury," said Ferdinand, scarcely daring to meet his glance, "this is very kind, and yet I wished to have saved you this."

"My poor child," said Glastonbury.

"O! my dear friend, it is all over. This is a more bitter moment for you even than for me, kind friend. This is a terrible termination of all your zeal and labours."

"Nay!" said the old gentleman; "let us not think of any thing but the present. For what are you held in durance?"

"My dear Glastonbury, if it were only ten pounds, I could not permit you to pay it. So let us not talk of that. This must have happened sooner or later. It has come, and come unexpectedly; but it must be borne, like all other calamities."

"But you have friends, my Ferdinand."

"Would that I had not! All that I wish now is, that I were alone in the world. If I could hope that my parents would leave me to myself, I should be comparatively easy. But when I think of them, and the injury I must do them, it is hell, it is hell."

"I wish you would tell me your exact situation," said Mr. Glastonbury.

"Do not let us talk of it; does my father know of this?"

"Not yet."

"'Tis well; he may yet have a happy day. He will sell Armine."

Glastonbury shook his head and sighed. "Is it so bad?" he said.

"My dearest friend, if you will know the worst, take it. I am here for nearly three thousand pounds, and I owe at least ten more."

"And they will not take bail?"

"Not for this debt; they cannot. It is a judgment debt, the only one."

"And they gave you no notice?"

"None: they must have heard somehow or other that my infernal marriage was off. They have all waited for that. And now that you see that affairs are past remedy, let us talk of other topics, if you will be so kind as to remain half an hour in this dungeon. I shall quit it directly: I shall go to jail at once."

Poor Glastonbury, he did not like to go, and yet it was a most melancholy visit. What could they converse about? Conversation, except on the interdictioned subject of Ferdinand's affairs, seemed quite a mockery. At last Ferdinand said, "Dear Glastonbury, do not stay here; it only makes us both unhappy. Send Louis with some clothes for me, and some books. I will let you know before I leave this place. Upon reflection, I shall not do so for two or three days, if I can stay as long. See my lawyer, not that he will do any thing, nor can I expect him, but he may as well call and see me. Adieu, dear friend."

Glastonbury was about to retire, when Ferdinand called him back. "This affair should be kept quiet," he said. "I told Louis to say I was out of town in Brook Street. I should be sorry were Miss Temple to hear of it, at least until after her marriage."

Ferdinand was once more alone with the mirror, the loo-table, the hard sofa, the caricatures, which he hated even worse than his host's portrait, the Hebrew Bible, and the Racing Calendar. It seemed a year that he had been shut in this apartment, instead of a day, he had grown so familiar with every object. And yet the visit of Glastonbury had been an event, and he could not refrain from pondering over it. A spunging house seemed such a strange, such an unnatural scene, for such a character. Ferdinand recalled to his memory the tower at Armine, and all its glades and groves, shining in the summer sun, and freshened in the summer breeze. What a contrast to this dingy, confined, close dungeon! And was it possible, that he had wandered at will in that fair scene with a companion fairer? Such thoughts might well drive a man mad. With all his errors, and all his disposition at present not to extenuate them, Ferdinand Armine could not refrain from esteeming himself unlucky. Perhaps it is more distressing to believe ourselves unfortunate, than to recognise ourselves as imprudent.

A fond mistress or a faithful friend—either of these are great blessings; and whatever may be one's scrapes in life, either of these may well be sources of consolation. Ferdinand had a fond mistress once, and had Henrietta Temple loved him, why, he might struggle with all these calamities; but that sweet dream was past. As for friends, he had none, at least he thought not. Not that he had to complain of human nature. He had experienced much kindness from mankind, and many were the services he had received from kind acquaintance. With the recollection of Catch, to say nothing of Bond Sharpe, and above all Count Mirabel, fresh in his mind, he could not complain of his companions. Glastonbury was indeed a friend, but Ferdinand sighed for a friend of his own age, knit to him by the same tastes and sympathies, and capable of comprehending all his secret feelings; a friend who could even whisper hope, and smile in a spunging house.

The day wore away, the twilight shades were descending, Ferdinand became every moment more melancholy, when suddenly his constant ally, the waiter, rushed into the room. "My eye, sir, here is a regular nob inquiring for you. I told you it would be all right."

"Who is it?"

"Here he is coming up."

Ferdinand caught the triumphant tones of Mirabel on the staircase.

"Which is the room? Show me directly. Ah! Armine! mon ami! mon cher! Is this your friendship? To be in this cursed hole, and not send for me! C'est une mauvaïse plaisanterie to pretend we are friends! How are you, good fellow, fine fellow, excellent Armine! If you were not here I would quarrel with you. There, go away, man." The waiter disappeared, and Count Mirabel seated himself on the hard sofa.

"My dear fellow," continued the count, twirling the prettiest cane in the world, "this is a bêtise of you to be here and not send for me. Who has put you here?"

"My dear Mirabel, it is all up."

"Bêtise! How much is it?"

"I tell you I am done up. It has got about that the marriage is off, and Morris and Levison have nabbed me for all the arrears of my cursed annuities."

"But how much?"

"Between two and three thousand."

The Count Mirabel gave a whistle.

"I brought five hundred, which I have. We must get the rest somehow or the other."

"My dear Mirabel, you are the most generous fellow in the world; but I have troubled my friends too much. Nothing will induce me to take a sous from you. Besides, between ourselves, not my least mortification at this moment is some £1500, which Bond Sharpe let me have the other day for nothing through Catch."

"Pah! I am sorry about that, though, because he would have lent us this money. I will ask Bevil."

"I would sooner die."

"I will ask him for myself."

"It is impossible."

"We will arrange it; I will tell you who will do it for us. He is a good fellow and immensely rich—it is Fitzwarrene; he owes me great favours."

"Dear Mirabel, I am delighted to see you. This is good and kind. I am so damned dull here. It quite gladdens me to see you; but do not talk about money."

"Here is £500; four other fellows at £500, we can manage it."

"No more, no more! I beseech you."

"But you cannot stop here. Quel drôle appartement! Before Charley Doricourt was in Parliament he was always in these sort of houses, but I got him out somehow or other; I managed it. Once I bought of the fellow five hundred dozen of Champagne."

"A new way to pay old debts, certainly," said Ferdinand, smiling.

"I tell you, have you dined?"

"I was going to; merely to have something to do."

"I will stop and dine with you," said the count, ringing the bell, "and we will talk over affairs. Laugh, my friend; laugh, my Armine; this is only a scene. This is life. What can we have for dinner, man? I shall dine here."

"Gentleman's dinner is ordered, my lord; quite ready," said the waiter. "Champagne in ice, my lord?"

"To be sure; every thing that is good. Mon cher Armine, we shall have some fun."

"Yes, my lord," said the waiter, running down stairs. "Dinner for the best drawing-room directly, green pea soup, turbot, beefsteak, roast duck, and boiled chicken, every thing that is good, Champagne in ice, two regular nobs!"

The dinner soon appeared, and the two friends seated themselves.

"Potage admirable!" said Count Mirabel. "The best Champagne I ever drank in my life! Mon brave, your health. This must be Charley's man, by the wine. I think we shall have him up; he will lend us some money. Finest turbot I ever ate! I will give you some of the fins. Ah! you are glad to see me, my Armine, you are glad to see your friend? Encore Champagne! Good Armine! excellent Armine! Keep up your spirits, I will manage these fellows. You must take some

bifeak. The most tender bifeak I ever tast i! This is a fine dinner. Encore un verre! Man, you may go—don't wait."

"By Jove, Mirabel, I never was so glad to see anybody in my life. Now you are my friend, I feel quite in spirits!"

"To be sure! always be in spirits. C'est un bêtise not be in spirits. Every thing is sure to go well. You will see how I will manage these fellows, and I will come and dine with you every day, until you are out—you shall not be here eight and forty hours. As I go home, I will stop at Mitchell's, and get you a novel by Paul de Kock. Have you ever read Paul de Kock's books?"

"Never!" said Ferdinand.

"What a fortunate man to be arrested! Now you can read Paul de Kock. You must absolutely read Paul de Kock. C'est un bêtise, not to read Paul de Kock. By Jove, you are the most lucky fellow I know. You see you thought yourself very miserable in being arrested. 'Tis the finest thing in the world, for now you will read *Mon Voisin Raymond*. There are always two sides to a case."

"I am content to believe myself very lucky in having such a friend as you," said Ferdinand; "but now, as these things are cleared away, let us talk over affairs. Have you seen Henrietta?"

"Of course, I see her every day."

"I hope she will not hear of my crash, until she has married!"

"She will not, unless you tell her."

"And when do you think she will be married?"

"When you please."

"Cher ami! point de moquerie!"

"By Jove, I am quite serious," exclaimed the count. "I am as certain that you will marry her as that we are in this damned spunging house."

"Nonsense."

"The very finest sense in the world. If you will not marry her, I will myself, for I am resolved that good Montfort shall not. It shall never be said that I interfered without a result. Why, if she were to marry Montfort now, it would ruin my character. To marry Montfort, after all my trouble—dining with that good Temple, and opening the mind of that little Grandison, and talking fine things to that good dutchess—it would be a bêtise."

"What an odd fellow you are, Mirabel!"

"Of course! Would you have me like other people and not odd? We will drink la belle Henrietta! Fill up! You will be my friend, when you are married, eh? Mon Armine, excellent garçon! How we shall laugh some day; and then, this dinner, this dinner will be the best dinner we ever had!"

"But why do you think there is the slightest hope of Henrietta not marrying Montfort?"

"Because my knowledge of human nature assures me that a young woman, very beautiful, very rich, with a very high spirit, and an only daughter, will never go and marry one man when she is in love with another, and that other one, my dear fellow, like you. You are more sure of getting her because she is engaged."

What a wonderful thing is a knowledge of human nature! thought Ferdinand to himself. The count's knowledge of human nature is like my friend the waiter's experience. One assures me that I am certain to marry a woman because she is engaged to another person, and the other, that it is quite clear my debts will be paid because they are so very large.

The count remained with his friend until ele oc

o'clock, when everybody was locked up. He invited himself to dine with him to-morrow, and promised that he should have a whole collection of French novels before he awoke. And assuring him over and over again that he looked upon him as the most fortunate of all his friends, and that if he broke the bank at Crocky's to-night, which he fancied he should, he would send him two or three thousand pounds, at the same time he shook him heartily by the hand, and descended the staircase of the spunging house, humming *Five la bagatelle!*

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CRISIS.

ALTHOUGH, when Ferdinand was once more left alone to his reflections, it did not appear to him that any thing had, indeed, occurred which should change his opinion of his forlorn lot,—there was something, nevertheless, very inspiring in the visit of his friend Count Mirabel. It did not seem to him, indeed, that he was one whit nearer extrication from his difficulties than before; and as for the wild hopes as to Henrietta, he dismissed them from his mind as the mere fantastic schemes of a sanguine spirit, and yet his gloom, by some process difficult to analyze, had in great measure departed. It could not be the Champagne, for that was a remedy he had previously tried; it was in some degree doubtless the magic sympathy of a joyous temperament; but chiefly it might, perhaps, be ascribed to the flattering conviction that he possessed the hearty friendship of a man, whose good-will was, in every view of the case, a very enviable possession. With such a friend as Mirabel, he could not deem himself quite so unlucky as in the morning. If he were fortunate, and fortunate so unexpectedly, in this instance, he might be so in others. A vague presentiment that he had seen the worst of life, came over him. It was equally in vain to justify the consoling conviction, or to resist it; and Ferdinand Armine, although in a spunging house, fell asleep in better humour with his destiny than he had been for the last eight months.

His dreams were charming: he fancied that he was at Armine, standing by the Barbary rose tree. It was moonlight; it was, perhaps, a slight recollection of the night he had looked upon the garden from the window of his chamber, the night after he had first seen Henrietta. Suddenly Henrietta Temple appeared at his window, and waved her hand to him with a smiling face. He immediately plucked for her a flower, and stood with his offering beneath a window. She was in a riding habit, and told him that she had just returned from Italy. He invited her to descend, and she disappeared; but instead of Henrietta, there came forward from the old Place—the dutchess, who immediately inquired whether he had seen his cousin; and then her grace, by some confused process common in dreams, turned into Glastonbury, and pointed to the rose tree, where, to his surprise, Katherine was walking with Lord Montfort. Ferdinand called out for Henrietta, but, as she did not appear, he entered the Place, where he found Count Mirabel dining by himself, and just drinking a glass of Champagne. He complained to Mirabel that Henrietta had disappeared, but his friend laughed at him, and said that, after such a long ride, leaving Italy only yesterday, he could scarcely expect to

see her. Satisfied with this explanation, Ferdinand joined the count at his banquet, and was woken from his sleep and his dream apparently by Mirabel drawing a cork.

Ah! why did he ever wake! It was so real; he had seen her so plainly; it was life; it was the very smile she wore at Ducie; that sunny glance, so full of joy, beauty, and love, which he could live to gaze on! And now he was in prison, and she was going to be married to another. O! there are things in this world that may well break hearts!

The cork of Count Mirabel was, however, a substantial sound—a gentle tap at his door: he answered it, and the waiter entered his chamber.

"Beg pardon, sir, for disturbing you; only eight o'clock."

"Then why the deuce do you disturb me?"

"There has been another nob, sir. I said as how you were not up, and he sent his compliments, and said as how he would call in an hour, as he wished to see you particular."

"Was it the count?"

"No, sir; but it was a regular nob, sir, for he had a coronet on his cab. But he would not leave his name."

"Catch, of course," thought Ferdinand to himself. "And sent by Mirabel. I should not wonder if, after all, they have broken the bank at Crocky's. Nothing shall induce me to take a ducat."

However, Ferdinand thought fit to rise, and contrived to descend to the best drawing-room about a quarter of an hour after the appointed time. To his extreme surprise he found Lord Montfort.

"My dear friend," said Lord Montfort, looking a little confused, "I am afraid I have sadly disturbed you. But I could not contrive to find you yesterday until it was so late, that I was ashamed to knock them up here, and I thought, therefore, you would excuse this early call, as—as—I wished to see you very much indeed."

"You are extremely kind," said Captain Armine. "But really I very much regret that your lordship should have had all this trouble."

"O! what is trouble under such circumstances!" replied his lordship. "I cannot pardon myself for being so stupid as not reaching you yesterday. I never can excuse myself for the inconvenience you have experienced."

Ferdinand bowed, but was so perplexed that he could not say a word.

"I hope, my dear Armine," said his lordship, advancing rather slowly, putting his arm within that of Ferdinand, and then walking up and down the room together—"I hope you will act at this moment towards me as I would towards you, were our respective situations changed!"

Ferdinand bowed, but said nothing.

"Money, you know, my good fellow," continued Lord Montfort, "is a disagreeable thing to talk about, but there are circumstances which should deprive such conversation between us of any awkwardness which otherwise might arise."

"I am not aware of them, my lord," said Ferdinand, "though your good feelings command my gratitude."

"I think, upon reflection, we shall find that there are some," said Lord Montfort. "For the moment I will only hope that you will esteem those good feelings—and which, on my part, I am anxious should ripen into the most sincere and intimate friendship—as sufficient authority for my placing

your affairs in general, in that state, that they may in future never deprive your family and friends of society necessary to their happiness."

"My lord, I am sure that adversity has assumed a very graceful hue with me; for it has confirmed my most amiable views of human nature. I shall not attempt to express what I feel towards your lordship for this generous goodness, but I will say I am profoundly impressed with it; not the less, because I cannot avail myself in the slightest degree of your offer."

"You are too much a man of the world, I am sure, my dear Armine, to be offended with my frankness. I shall therefore speak without fear of misconception. It does appear to me that the offer which I have made you is worthy of a little more consideration. You see, my dear friend, that you have placed yourself in such a situation that, however you may act, the result cannot be one completely satisfactory. The course you should pursue, therefore—as, indeed, all conduct in this world should be—is a matter of nice calculation. Have you well considered the consequences of your rushing upon ruin? In the first place, your family will receive a blow from which even future prosperity may not recover them. Your family estate, already in a delicate position, may be irrecoverably lost; the worldly consequences of such a vicissitude are very considerable; whatever career you pursue, as long as you visibly possess Armine, you rank always among the aristocracy of the land, and a family that maintains such a position, however decayed, will ultimately recover. I hardly know an exception to this rule; I do not think, of all men, that you are most calculated to afford one."

"What you say has long pressed itself upon us," said Captain Armine.

"Then again," resumed Lord Montfort, "the feelings and even interests of your friends are to be considered. Poor Glastonbury! I love that old man myself. The fall of Armine might break his heart; he would not like to leave his tower. You see I know your place."

"Poor Glastonbury!" said Ferdinand.

"But above all," continued Lord Montfort, "the happiness, nay, the very health and life of your parents, from whom all is now concealed, would perhaps be the last and costliest sacrifices of your rashness."

Ferdinand threw himself on the sofa, and covered his face.

"Yet all this misery, all these misfortunes, may be avoided, and you yourself become a calm and happy man, by—for I wish not to understate your view of the subject, Armine—putting yourself under a pecuniary obligation to me. A circumstance to be avoided in the common course of life, no doubt; but is it better to owe me a favour and save your family estate, preserve your position, maintain your friend, and prevent the misery and probable death, of your parents, or be able to pass me in the street, in hangly silence if you please, with the consciousness that the luxury of your pride has been satisfied at the cost of every circumstance which makes existence desirable?"

"You put the case strongly," said Ferdinand; "but no reasoning can ever persuade me that I am justified in borrowing £13,000, which I can never repay."

"Accept it, then."

"'Tis the same thing," said Ferdinand.

"I think not," said Lord Montfort; "but why do you say 'never'?"

"Because it is utterly impossible that I ever can."

"How do you know you may not marry a woman of immense fortune?" said Lord Montfort. "Now, you seem to me exactly the sort of man who would marry an heiress."

"You are thinking of my cousin," said Ferdinand. "I thought that you had discovered, or that you might have learned, that there was no real intention of our union."

"No, I was not thinking of your cousin," said Lord Montfort, "though, to tell you the truth, I was once in hopes that you would marry her. However, that I well know is entirely out of the question, for I believe Miss Grandison will marry some one else."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ferdinand, a little agitated. "Well! may she be happy! She deserves happiness. I love Kate from the bottom of my heart. But who is the fortunate fellow?"

"'Tis a lady's secret," said Lord Montfort. "But let us return to our argument. To be brief; either, my dear Armine, you must be convinced by my reasoning, or I must remain here, a prisoner like yourself; for, to tell you the truth, there is a fair lady, before whom I cannot present myself, except in your company."

Ferdinand changed countenance. There wanted but this to confirm his resolution, which had scarcely wavered. To owe his release to Henrietta's influence with Lord Montfort, it was too degrading.

"My lord," he said, "you have touched upon a string that I had hoped might have spared me. This conversation must indeed cease. My mouth is sealed from giving you the reasons, which nevertheless render it imperative on me to decline your generous offer."

"Well, then," said Lord Montfort, "I must see if another can be more successful," and he held forth a note to the astonished Ferdinand, in Henrietta's writing. It dropped from Ferdinand's hand as he took it. Lord Montfort picked it up, gave it him again, and walked to the other end of the room. It was with extreme difficulty that Ferdinand prevailed on himself to break the seal. The note was very short; the hand that had traced the letters must have trembled. Thus it ran.

"Dearest Ferdinand,

*Do every thing that Digby wishes.
He is our best friend. God bless you!*

Your faithful Henrietta.

Digby is going to marry Katherine—are not you glad?"

Lord Montfort looked round; Ferdinand Armine was lying senseless on the sofa.

Our friend was not of a swooning mood, but we think the circumstances may excuse the weakness.

As for the young nobleman, he immediately rang the bell for the little waiter, who, the moment he saw what had occurred, hurried away and rushed up stairs again with cold water, a bottle of brandy, and a blazing sheet of brown paper, which he declared was an infallible specific. By some means or other, Ferdinand was in time recovered, and the little waiter was fairly expelled.

"My dear friend," said Ferdinand, in a faint voice, "I am the happiest man that ever lived; I

hope you will be, I am sure you will be—Katherine is an angel. But I cannot speak. It is so strange.”

“My dear fellow, you really must take a glass of brandy,” said Lord Montfort, “it is very strange certainly. But we are all very happy.”

“I hardly know where I am,” said Ferdinand, after a few minutes, “am I really alive?”

“Let us think how we are to get out of this place. I suppose they will take my cheque. If not I must be off.”

“O! do not go,” said Ferdinand. “If you go I shall not believe it is true. My dear Montfort, is it really true?”

“You see, my dear Armine,” said Lord Montfort, smiling, “it was fated that I should marry a lady you rejected. And to tell you the truth, the reason why I did not get to you yesterday, as I ought to have done, was an unexpected conversation I had with Miss Grandison. I really think this arrest was a most fortunate incident. It brought affairs to a crisis. We should have gone on playing at cross-purposes forever.”

Here the little waiter entered again with a note and a packet.

“The same messenger brought them?” asked Ferdinand.

“No, sir; the count’s servant brought the note, and waits for an answer; the packet came by another person.”

Ferdinand opened the note and read as follows;—

Berkeley Square, half-past 7 morning.

MON AMI!

Best joke in the world! I broke Crocky’s bank three times. Of course; I told you so! Then went out and broke three or four small hells. I win £15,000. Directly I am awake I will send you the three thousand, and I will lend you the rest till your marriage. It will not be very long. I write this before I go to bed, that you may have it early. Adieu, cher ami!

Votre affection,

DE MIRABEL.

“My arrest was certainly the luckiest incident in the world,” said Ferdinand, handing the note to Lord Montfort. “Mirabel dined here yesterday, and went and played on purpose to save me. I treated it as a joke. But what is this?” Ferdinand opened the packet. The handwriting was unknown to him. Ten bank notes of £300 each fell to the ground.

“Do I live in fairy land!” he exclaimed. “Now who can this be? It cannot be you; it cannot be Mirabel! It is wondrous strange.”

“I think I can throw some light upon it,” said Lord Montfort. “Katherine was mysteriously engaged with Glastonbury yesterday morning. They were out together, and I know they went to her lawyer’s. There is no doubt it is Katherine. I think, under the circumstance of the case, we need have no delicacy in availing ourselves of this fortunate remittance. It will at least save us time,” said Lord Montfort, ringing the bell. “Send your master here directly,” he continued to the waiter.

The sheriff’s officer appeared; the debt, the fees, all were paid, and the discharge duly taken. Ferdinand in the mean time went up stairs to lock up his dressing-case, the little waiter rushed after him to pack his portmanteau. Ferdinand did not forget his zealous friend, who whispered hope when all was black. The little waiter chuckled as he put his ten guineas in his pocket. “You see, sir,” he

said, “I was quite right. Knewed your friends would stomp down. Fanny a nob like you being sent to quod! Fiddlededee! You see, sir, you weren’t used to it.”

And so Ferdinand Armine bade adieu to the spunging house, where, in the course of less than eight-and-forty hours, he had known alike despair and rapture. Lord Montfort drove along with a gayety unusual to him.

“Now, my dear Armine,” he said, “I am not a jot the less in love with Henrietta than before. I love her as you love Katherine. What folly to marry a woman who was in love with another person! I should have made her miserable, when the great object of all my conduct was to make her happy. Now Katherine really loves me as much as Henrietta loves you. I have had this plan in my head for a long time. I calculated finely; I was convinced it was the only way to make us all happy. And now we shall all be related; we shall be constantly together; and we will be brother friends.”

“Ah! my dear Montfort,” said Ferdinand, “what will Mr. Temple say?”

“Leave him to me,” said Lord Montfort.

“I tremble,” said Ferdinand, “if it were possible to anticipate difficulties to-day.”

“I shall go to him at once,” said Lord Montfort; “I am not fond of suspense myself, and now it is of no use. All will be right.”

“I trust only to you,” said Ferdinand, “for I am as proud as Temple. He dislikes me, and he is too rich for me to bow down to him.”

“I take it upon myself,” said Lord Montfort. “Mr. Temple is a calm, sensible man. You will laugh at me, but the truth is, with him it must be a matter of calculation: on the one hand, his daughter’s happiness, a union with a family second to none in blood, alliances, and territorial position, and only wanting his wealth to revive all its splendour; on the other, his daughter broken-hearted, and a duke for his son-in-law. Mr. Temple is too sensible a man to hesitate, particularly when I remove the greatest difficulty he must experience. Where shall I put you down?—Berkeley Square?”

CHAPTER XXII.

FERDINAND MEDITATES OVER HIS GOOD FORTUNE.

In moments of deep feeling, alike in sudden bursts of prosperity as in darker hours, man must be alone. It requires some self-communion to prepare ourselves for good fortune, as well as to encounter difficulty, and danger, and disgrace. This violent and triumphant revolution in his prospects and his fortunes, was hardly yet completely comprehended by our friend, Ferdinand Armine: and when he had left a note for the generous Mirabel, whose slumbers he would not disturb at this early hour, even with good news, he strolled along up Charles Street, and to the park, in one of those wild and joyous reveries in which we brooded over coming bliss, and create a thousand glorious consequences.

It was one of those soft summer mornings, which are so delightful in a great city. The sky was clear, the air was bland, the water sparkled in the sun, and the trees seemed doubly green and fresh to one who so recently had gazed only on iron bars. Ferdinand felt his freedom as well as his happiness. He seated himself on a bench and thought of Hen

rietta Temple! he took out her note, and read it over and over again. It was indeed her handwriting! Restless with impending joy, he sauntered to the bridge, and leaned over the balustrade, gazing on the waters in charmed and charming vacancy. How many incidents, how many characters, how many feelings flitted over his memory! Of what sweet and bitter experience did he not chew the cud! Four-and-twenty hours ago, and he deemed himself the most miserable and forlorn of human beings, and now all the blessings of the world seemed showered at his feet! A beautiful bride awaited him, whom he had loved with intense passion, and who, he had thought, but an hour ago, was another's. A noble fortune, which would permit him to redeem his inheritance, and rank him among the richest commoners of the realm, was to be controlled by one, a few hours back a prisoner for desperate debts. The most gifted individuals in the land emulated each other in proving which entertained for him the most sincere affection. What man in the world had friends like Ferdinand Armine? Ferdinand Armine, who, two days back, deemed himself alone in the world! The unswerving devotion of Glastonbury, the delicate affection of his sweet cousin, all the magnanimity of his high-souled Montfort, and the generosity of the accomplished Mirabel, passed before him, and wonderfully affected him. He could not flatter himself that he indeed merited such singular blessings; and yet, with all his faults, which with him indeed were but the consequences of his fiery youth, Ferdinand had been faithful to Henrietta. His constancy to her was now rewarded. As for his friends, the future must prove his gratitude to them. Ferdinand Armine had great tenderness of disposition, and somewhat of a meditative mind; schooled by adversity, there was little doubt that his coming career would justify his favourable destiny.

It was barely a year since he had returned from Malta—but what an eventful twelvemonth! Every thing that had occurred previously seemed of another life; all his experience was concentrated in that wonderful drama that had commenced at Bath, and the last scene of which was now approaching,—the characters, his parents, Glastonbury, Katherine, Henrietta, Lord Montfort, Count Mirabel, himself—and Mr. Temple.

Ah! that was a name that a little disturbed him; and yet he felt confidence now in Mirabel's prescience; he could not but believe that with time even Mr. Temple might be reconciled! It was at this moment that the sound of military music fell upon his ear; it recalled old days; parades and guards at Malta—times when he did not know Henrietta Temple—times when, as it seemed to him now, he had never paused to think or moralize. That was a mad life. What a Neapolitan ball was his career then! It was indeed dancing on a volcano. And now all had ended so happily! O! could it indeed be true? Was it not all a dream of his own creation, while his eye had been fixed in abstraction on that bright and flowing river? But then there was Henrietta's letter. He might be enchanted, but that was the talisman.

In the present unsettled, though hopeful state of affairs, Ferdinand would not go home. He was resolved to avoid any explanations until he heard from Lord Montfort. He shrank from seeing Glastonbury or his cousin. As for Henrietta, it seemed to him that he could never have the heart to meet her again, unless they were alone. Count

Mirabel was the only person to whom he could abandon his soul, and Count Mirabel was still in his first sleep.

So Ferdinand entered Kensington Gardens, and walked in those rich glades and stately avenues. It seems to the writer of this history, that the inhabitants of London are scarcely sufficiently sensible of the beauty of its environs. On every side the most charming retreats open to them, nor is there a metropolis in the world surrounded by so many rural villages, picturesque parks, and elegant casinos. With the exception of Constantinople, there is no city in the world that can for a moment enter into competition with it. For himself, though in his time something of a rambler, he is not ashamed in this respect to confess to a legitimate cockney taste; and for his part he does not know where life can flow on more pleasantly than in sight of Kensington Gardens, viewing the silver Thames winding by the bowers of Rosebank, or inhaling from its terraces the refined air of graceful Richmond.

In exactly ten minutes, it is in the power of every man to free himself from all the tumult of the world; the pangs of love, the throbs of ambition, the wear and tear of play, the recriminating boudoir, the conspiring club, the rattling hell; and find himself in a sublime sylvan solitude superior to the cedars of Lebanon, and inferior only in extent to the chestnut forests of Anatolia. It is Kensington Gardens that is almost the only place that has realized his idea of the forests of Spenser and Ariosto. What a pity, that instead of a princess in distress we meet only a nursery maid! But here is the fitting and convenient locality to brood over our thoughts, to project the great and to achieve the happy. It is here that we should get our speeches by heart, invent our impromptus, muse over the caprices of our mistresses, destroy a cabinet, and save a nation.

About the time that Ferdinand directed his steps from these green retreats towards Berkeley Square, a servant summoned Miss Temple to her father.

"Is papa alone?" inquired Miss Temple.

"Only my lord with him," was the reply.

"Is Lord Montfort here?" said Miss Temple, a little surprised.

"My lord has been with master these three hours," said the servant.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FERDINAND RECEIVES THE MOST INTERESTING INVITATION TO DINNER EVER OFFERED TO HIM.

"Is it not wonderful?" said Ferdinand, when he had finished his history to Count Mirabel.

"Not the least," said the count: "I never knew any thing less surprising. 'Tis exactly what I said; 'tis the most natural termination in the world."

"Ah! my dear Mirabel, you are a prophet! What a lucky fellow I am to have such a friend as you!"

"To be sure you are. Take some more coffee. What are you going to do with yourself?"

"I do not know what to do with myself. I really do not like to go anywhere until I have heard from Montfort. I think I shall go to my hotel."

"I will drive you. It is now three o'clock."

But, just at this moment, Mr. Bevil called on

the count, and another hour disappeared. When they were fairly in the cabriolet, there were so many places to call at, and so many persons to see, that it was nearly six o'clock when they reached the hotel. Ferdinand ran up stairs to see if there was any letter from Lord Montfort. He found his lordship's card, and also Mr. Temple's. They had called about half an hour ago. There was also a note. These were its contents.

Grosvenor Square, Thursday.

MY DEAR CAPTAIN ARMINE:—I have prepared myself with this note, as I fear I shall hardly be so fortunate as to find you at home. It is only very recently that I have learned from Henrietta that you were in London, and I much regret to hear that you have been so great an invalid. It is so long since we met, that I hope you will dine with us to-day; and indeed I am so very anxious to see you, that I trust, if you have unfortunately made any other engagement, that you may yet contrive to gratify my request. It is merely a family party: you will only meet our friends from St. James's Square, and your own circle in Brook Street. I have asked no one else, save old Lady Bellair, and your friend Count Mirabel; and Henrietta is so anxious to secure his presence, that I shall be greatly obliged by your exerting your influence to induce him to accompany you, as I fear there is little hope of finding him free.

Henrietta joins with me in kindest regards; and I beg you to believe me,

My dear Captain Armine,

Most cordially yours,

PELHAM TEMPLE.

"Well, what is the matter?" said the count, when Ferdinand returned to the cabriolet, with the note in his hand, and looking very agitated.

"The strangest note!" said Ferdinand.

"Give it me," said the count. "Do you call that strange? 'Tis the most regular epistle I ever read. I expected it. 'Tis an excellent fellow, that Mr. Temple: I will certainly dine with him, and send an excuse to that old Castlefyshe. A family party—all right; and he asks me—that is very proper. I should not wonder if it ended by my being your trustee, or your executor, or your first child's godfather. Ah! that good Temple is a very sensible man. I told you I would settle this business for you. You should hear me talk to that good Temple. I open his mind. A family party—it will be amusing! I would not miss it for a thousand pounds. Besides, I must go to take care of you, for you will be committing all sorts of *bêtises*. I will give you one turn in the Park. Jump in! You see I was right—I am always right. But I will confess to you a secret—I never was so right as I have been in the present case. 'Tis the best business that ever was!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE PARTY, AND ITS RESULT.

IN spite of the Count Mirabel's inspiring companionship, it must be confessed that Ferdinand's heart failed him when he entered Mr. Temple's house. Indeed, had it not been for the encouragement and jolly raillery of his light-hearted friend, it is not quite clear that he would have succeeded in ascending the staircase. A mist came

over his vision as he entered the room; various forms, indeed, glanced before him, but he could distinguish none. He felt so embarrassed, that he was absolutely miserable. It was Mr. Temple's hand that he found he had hold of—the calm demeanour and bland tones of that gentleman somewhat reassured him. Mr. Temple was very cordial, and Count Mirabel hovered about Ferdinand and covered his confusion. Then he recognised the dutchess and his mother—they were sitting together, and he went up and saluted them. He dared not look round for the lady of the house. Lady Bellair was talking to his father. At last he heard his name called by the count.

"Armine, *mon cher*, see this beautiful work!" said Ferdinand advanced, or rather staggered, to a window, where stood the count before a group, and in a minute he clasped the hand of Henrietta Temple. He could not speak. Katherine was sitting by her, and Lord Montfort standing behind her chair. But Count Mirabel never ceased talking, and with so much art and tact, that in a few moments he had succeeded in producing comparative ease on all sides.

"I am so glad that you have come to-day," said Henrietta. Her eyes sparkled with a strange meaning, and then she suddenly withdrew her gaze. The rose of her cheek alternately glowed and faded. It was, indeed, a moment of great embarrassment, and afterwards they often talked of it.

Dinner, however, was soon announced and served, for Mirabel and Ferdinand had purposely arrived at the last moment. As the duke advanced to offer his arm to Miss Temple, Henrietta presented Ferdinand with a flower, as if to console him for the separation. It was a round table—the dutchess and Lady Bellair sat on each side of Mr. Temple, the duke on the right hand of Miss Temple. Where there were so many members of the same family, it was difficult to arrange the guests. Ferdinand held back, when Count Mirabel, who had secured a seat by Henrietta, beckoned to Ferdinand, and saying that Lady Bellair wished him to sit next to her, pushed Ferdinand, as he himself walked away, into the vacated seat. Henrietta caught the count's eye as he moved off—it was a very laughing eye.

"I am glad you sit next to me," said Lady Bellair to the count, "because you are famous. I love famous people, and you are very famous. Why don't you come and see me? Now I have caught you at last, and you shall come and dine with me the 7th, 8th, or 9th of next month. I have dinner parties every day. You shall dine with me on the 8th, for then Lady Frederick dines with me, and she will taste you. You shall sit next to Lady Frederick, and mind you flirt with her. I wonder if you are as amusing as your grandfather. I remember dancing a minuet with him at Versailles seventy years ago."

"It is well recollected in the family," said the count.

"Ah! you rogue!" said the little lady, chuckling, "you lie! I like a lie sometimes," she resumed, "but then it must be a good one. Do you know, I only say it to you, but I am half afraid lies are more amusing than truth."

"Naturally," said the count, "because truth must in general be commonplace, or it would not be true."

In the mean time Ferdinand was seated next to Henrietta Temple. He might be excused for feel

ing a little bewildered. Indeed, the wonderful events of the last four-and-twenty hours were enough to deprive any one of a complete command over his senses. What marvel then that he nearly carved his soup, almost ate his fish with a spoon, and drank water instead of wine! In fact, he was labouring under a degree of nervous excitement, which rendered it quite impossible for him to observe the proprieties of life. The presence of all these persons was insupportable to him. Five minutes alone with her in the woods of Ducie, and he would have felt quite reassured. Miss Temple rather avoided his glance! She was, in truth, as agitated as himself, and talked almost entirely to the duke; yet sometimes she tried to address him and say kind things. She called him Ferdinand; that was quite sufficient to make him very happy, although he felt very awkward. He had been seated some minutes before he observed that Glastonbury was next to him.

"I am so nervous, dear Glastonbury," said Ferdinand, "that I do not think I shall be able to remain in the room."

"I have heard something," said Glastonbury, with a smile, "that makes me quite bold."

"I cannot help fancying that it is all enchantment," said Ferdinand.

"There is no wonder, my dear boy, that you are enchanted," said Glastonbury.

"Ferdinand," said Miss Temple, in a low voice, "papa is taking wine with you." Ferdinand looked up and caught Mr. Temple's kind salute.

"That was a very fine horse you were riding to-day," said Count Mirabel across the table to Miss Grandison.

"Is it not very pretty? It is Lord Montfort's."

"Lord Montfort's!" thought Ferdinand. "How strange all this seems!"

"You were not of the riding party this morning," said his grace to Henrietta.

"I have not been very well this day or two," said Miss Temple.

"Well, I think you are looking particularly well to-day," replied the duke. "What say you, Captain Armine?"

Ferdinand blushed, and looked very confused at this appeal, and muttered some contradictory compliments.

"O! I am very well now," said Miss Temple.

"You must come and dine with me," said Lady Bellair, to Count Mirabel, "because you talk well across a table. I want a man who talks well across a table. So few can do it without bellowing. I think you do it very well."

"Naturally," replied the count. "If I did not do it well, I should not do it at all."

"Ah! you are very audacious," said the old lady. "I like a little impudence. It is better to be impudent than to be servile."

"Mankind are generally both," said the count.

"I think they are," said the old lady. "Pray, is the old Duke of Thingabob alive? You know whom I mean: he was an emigré, and a relation of yours."

"De Crillon. He is dead, and his son too."

"He was a great talker," said Lady Bellair; "but, then, he was the tyrant of conversation. Now, men were made to listen, as well as to talk."

"Without doubt," said the count; "for nature has given us two ears, but only one mouth."

"You said that we might all be very happy,"

whispered Lord Montfort to Miss Grandison. "What think you—have we succeeded?"

"I think we all look very confused," said Miss Grandison. "What a fortunate idea it was, inviting Lady Bellair and the count! They never could look confused."

"Watch Henrietta," said Lord Montfort.

"It is not fair; how silent Ferdinand is!"

"Yes, he is not quite sure whether he is Christopher Sly or not," said Lord Montfort. "What a fine embarrassment you have contrived, Miss Grandison!"

"Nay, Digby, you were the author of it. I cannot help thinking of your interview with Mr. Temple. You were prompt!"

"Why, I can be patient, fair Katherine," said Lord Montfort; "but in the present instance I shrank from suspense, more, however, for others than myself. It certainly was a very singular interview."

"And were you not very nervous?"

"Why, no: I felt convinced that the interview could only have one result. I thought of your memorable words; I felt I was doing what you wished, and that I was making all of us happy. However, all honour be to Mr. Temple! He has proved himself a man of sense."

As the dinner proceeded, there was an attempt on all sides to be gay. Count Mirabel talked a great deal, and Lady Bellair laughed at what he said, and maintained her reputation for a repartee. Her ladyship had been for a long time anxious to seize hold of her gay neighbour, and it was very evident that he was quite a "favourite." Even Ferdinand grew a little more at his ease. He ventured to relieve the duke from some of his labours, and carve for Miss Temple.

"What do you think of our family party?" said Henrietta to Ferdinand, in a low voice.

"I can think only of one thing," said Ferdinand.

"I am so nervous," she continued, "that it seems to me I shall every minute give a scream and leave the room."

"I feel exactly the same; I am stupified."

"Talk to Mr. Glastonbury; drink wine, and talk. Look, look at your mother; she is watching us. She is dying to speak to you, and so is some one else."

At length the ladies withdrew, Ferdinand attended them to the door of the dining-room. Lady Bellair shook her fan at him, but said nothing. He pressed his mother's hand. "Good-by, cousin Ferdinand," said Miss Grandison in a laughing tone. Henrietta smiled upon him as she passed by. It was, indeed, a speaking glance, and touched his heart. The gentlemen remained behind much longer than was the custom in Mr. Temple's establishment. Everybody seemed resolved to drink a great deal of wine, and Mr. Temple always addressed himself to Ferdinand, if any thing were required, in a manner which seemed to recognise his responsible position in the family.

Anxious as Ferdinand was to escape to the drawing-room, he could not venture on the step. He longed to speak to Glastonbury on the subject which engrossed his thoughts, but he had not courage. Never did a man, who really believed himself the happiest and most fortunate person in the world, ever feel more awkward and more embarrassed. Was his father aware of what had occurred? He could not decide. Apparently Henrietta imagined that his mother was, by the observation which

she had made at dinner. Then his father must be conscious of every thing. Katherine must have told all. Were Lord Montfort's family in the secret? But what use were these perplexing inquiries! It was certain that Henrietta was to be his bride, and that Mr. Temple had sanctioned their alliance. There could be no doubt of that, or why was he there!

At length the gentlemen rose, and Ferdinand once more beheld Henrietta Temple. As he entered, she was crossing the room with some music in her hand, she was a moment alone. He stopped, he would have spoken, but his lips would not move.

"Well," she said, "are you happy?"

"My head wanders. Assure me that it is all true," he murmured, in an agitated voice.

"It is all true;—there, go and speak to Lady Armine. I am as nervous as you are."

Ferdinand seated himself by his mother.

"Well, Ferdinand," she said, "I have heard very wonderful things."

"And I hope they have made you very happy, mother?"

"I should, indeed, be both unreasonable and ungrateful if they did not; but I confess to you, my dear child, I am even as much astonished as gratified."

"And my father, he knows every thing?"

"Every thing. But we have heard it only from Lord Montfort and Katherine. We have had no communication from any one else. And we meet here to-day in this extraordinary manner, and but for them we should be completely in the dark."

"And the dutchess, do they know all?"

"I conclude so."

"'Tis very strange, is it not?"

"I am quite bewildered."

"O mother! is she not beautiful? Do you not love her? Shall we not all be the happiest family in the world?"

"I think we ought to be, dear Ferdinand. But I have not recovered from my astonishment. Ah! my child, why did you not tell me when you were ill?"

"Is it not for the best that affairs should have taken the course they have done? But you must blame Kate as well as me; dear, dear Kate."

"I think of her," said Lady Armine, "I hope Kate will be happy."

"She must be, dear mother; only think what an excellent person is Lord Montfort."

"He is indeed an excellent person," said Lady Armine, "but if I had been engaged to you, Ferdinand, and it ended by my marrying Lord Montfort, I should be very disappointed."

"The dutchess would be of a different opinion," said Ferdinand, smiling.

Lady Bellair, who was sitting on a sofa opposite, and had hitherto been conversing with her grace, who had now quitted her and joined the musicians, began shaking her fan at Ferdinand in a manner which signified her extreme desire that he should approach her.

"Well, lady Bellair," said Ferdinand, seating himself by her side.

"I am in the secret, you know," said her ladyship.

"What secret, Lady Bellair?"

"Ah! you will not commit yourself. Well, I like discretion. I have always seen it from the first. No one has worked for you as I have. I like true love, and I have left her all my china in my will."

"I am sure the legatee is very fortunate, whoever she may be."

"Ah! you rogue, you know very well whom I mean. You are saucy: you never had a warmer friend than myself. I always admired you; you have a great many good qualities and a great many bad ones. You always were a little saucy. But I like a little spice of sauciness; I think it takes. I hear you are great friends with Count Thingabob—the count, whose grandfather I danced with seventy years ago. That is right; always have distinguished friends. Never have fools for friends; they are no use. I suppose he is in the secret too?"

"Really, Lady Bellair, I am in no secret. You quite excite my curiosity."

"Well, I can't get any thing out of you. I see that. However, it all happened at my house, that can't be denied. I tell you what I will do; I will give you all a dinner, and then the world will be quite certain that I made the match."

Lady Armine joined them, and Ferdinand seized the opportunity of effecting his escape to the piano.

"I suppose Henrietta has found her voice again, now," whispered Katherine to her cousin.

"Dear Katherine, really if you are so malicious, I shall punish you," said Ferdinand.

"Well, the comedy is nearly concluded. We shall soon join hands, and the curtain will drop."

"And I hope in your opinion, not an unsuccessful performance."

"Why, I certainly cannot quarrel with the catastrophe," said Miss Grandison.

In the mean time the Count Mirabel had obtained possession of Mr. Temple, and lost no opportunity of confirming every favourable view which that gentleman had been influenced by Lord Montfort to take of Ferdinand and his conduct. Mr. Temple was quite convinced that his daughter must be very happy, and that the alliance, on the whole, would be productive of every satisfaction that he had ever anticipated.

The evening drew on; carriages were announced; guests retired; Ferdinand lingered; Mr. Temple was ushering Lady Bellair, the last guest, to her carriage; Ferdinand and Henrietta were alone. They looked at each other, their eyes met at the same moment, there was but one mode of satisfactorily terminating their mutual embarrassments—they sprang into each others' arms. Ah! that was a moment of rapture, sweet, thrilling, rapid! There was no need of words, their souls vaulted over all petty explanations; upon her lips, her choice and trembling lips, he sealed his gratitude and his devotion.

The sound of footsteps was heard, the agitated Henrietta made her escape by an opposite entrance. Mr. Temple returned, he met Captain Armine with his hat, and inquired whether Henrietta had retired; and when Ferdinand answered in the affirmative, wished him good night, and begged him to breakfast with them to-morrow.

CHAPTER XXV.

WHICH, THOUGH FINAL, IT IS HOPED WILL PROVE SATISFACTORY.

OUR kind reader will easily comprehend that from the happy day we have just noticed, Ferdinand Armine was seldom absent from Grosvenor

Square, or from the society of Henrietta Temple. They both of them were so happy that they soon overcame any little embarrassment which their novel situation might first occasion them. In this effort, however, they were greatly encouraged by the very calm demeanour of Lord Montfort, and the very complacent carriage of his intended bride. The world wondered and whispered, marvelled and hinted, but nothing disturbed Lord Montfort, and Katherine had the skill to silence raillery. Although it was settled that the respective marriages should take place as soon as possible, the settlements necessarily occasioned considerable delay. By the application of his funded property, and by a considerable charge upon his Yorkshire estates, Mr. Temple paid off all the mortgages on Armine, which, with a certain life-charge in his own favour, was settled in strict entail upon the issue of his daughter. A certain portion of the income was to be set aside annually to complete the Castle, and until that edifice was ready to receive them, Ferdinand and Henrietta were to live with Mr. Temple, principally at Ducie, which Mr. Temple had now purchased.

In spite, however, of the lawyers, the eventful day at length arrived. Both happy couples were married at the same time and in the same place, and Glastonbury performed the ceremony. Lord and Lady Montfort immediately departed for a seat in Sussex, belonging to his father; Ferdinand and Henrietta repaired to Armine: while Sir Ratcliffe and his lady paid a visit to Mr. Temple in Yorkshire, and Glastonbury found himself once more in his old quarters in Lancashire with the duke and dutchess.

Once more at Armine; wandering once more together in the old plaisance—it was so strange and sweet, that both Ferdinand and Henrietta almost began to believe that it was well that the course of their true love had for a moment not run so smoothly as at present, and they felt that their adversity had rendered them even more sensible of their illimitable bliss. And the woods of Ducie, they were not forgotten; nor least of all, the old farmhouse that had been their shelter. Certainly they were the happiest people that ever lived, and though some years have now passed since these events took place, custom has not sullied the brightness of their love. They have no cares now, and yet both have known enough of sorrow to make them rightly appreciate their unbroken and unbounded blessings.

When the honeymoon was fairly over, for they would neither of them bate a jot of this good old-fashioned privilege, Sir Ratcliffe and Lady Armine returned to the Place, and Glastonbury to his tower; while Mr. Temple joined them at Ducie, accompanied by Lord and Lady Montfort. The autumn also brought the Count Mirabel to slaughter the pheasants, gay, brilliant, careless, kind-hearted as ever. He has ever remained one of Ferdinand's most cherished friends—indeed I hardly think that there is any individual to whom Ferdinand is more attached. And after all, as the count often observes, if it had not been for Ferdinand's scrapes they would not have known each other. Nor was Lord Catchimwhocan passed over. Ferdinand Armine was not the man to neglect a friend or to forget a good service; and he has conferred on that good-natured, though somewhat improvident young nobleman, more substantial kindness than the hospitality which is always cheerfully extended to him. When Ferdinand repaid Mr. Bond Sharpe his fifteen

hundred pounds, he took care that the interest should appear in the shape of a golden vase, which is now not the least gorgeous ornament of that worthy's splendid sideboard. The deer have appeared too again in the park of Armine, and many a haunch smokes on the epicurean table of Cleaveland Row.

Lady Bellair is as lively as ever, and bids fair to amuse society as long as the famous Countess of Desmond,

“Who lived to the age of a hundred and ten,
And died by a fall from a cherry-tree then;
What a frisky old girl!”

In her annual progresses through the kingdom she never omits laying every establishment of the three families, in whose fortunes she was so unexpectedly mixed up, under contribution. As her ladyship persists in asserting, and perhaps now really believes, that both matches were the result of her matrimonial craft, it would be the height of ingratitude if she ever could complain of the want of a hearty welcome.

In the daily increasing happiness of his beloved daughter, Mr. Temple has quite forgotten any little disappointment which he might once have felt at not having a duke for his son-in-law, and such a duke as his valued friend, Lord Montfort. But Ferdinand Armine is blessed with so sweet a temper, that it is impossible to live with him and not love him; and the most cordial intimacy and confidence subsist between the father of Henrietta Temple, and his son-in-law. From the aspect of public affairs also, Mr. Temple, though he keeps this thought to himself, is inclined to believe that a coronet may yet grace the brow of his daughter, and that the barony of Armine may be revived. Soon after the passing of the memorable act of 1828, Lord Montfort became the representative of his native county, and a very active and influential member of the House of Commons. After the reform, Mr. Armine was also returned for a borough situated near the duke's principal seat, and although Lord Montfort and Mr. Armine both adhere to the whip politics of their families, they have both also, in the most marked manner, abstained from voting on the appropriation clause; and there is little doubt that they will ultimately support that British and national administration which Providence has doubtless in store for these outraged and distracted realms. At least this is Mr. Temple's more than hope, who is also in the House, and acts entirely with Lord Stanley.

The Montforts and the younger Armines contrive, through mutual visits and a town residence during the session, to pass the greater part of their lives together; they both honestly confess that they are a little in love with each other's wives, but this only makes their society more agreeable. The family circle at Armine has been considerably increased of late; there is a very handsome young Armine who has been christened Glastonbury, a circumstance which repays the tenant of the tower for all his devotion, and this blending of his name and memory with the illustrious race that has so long occupied his thoughts and hopes is to him a source of constant self-congratulation. The future Sir Glastonbury has also two younger brothers, quite worthy of the blood, Temple and Digby; and the most charming sister in the world, with large violet eyes and long dark lashes, who is still in arms, and who bears the hallowed name of Henrietta. And thus ends our LOVE STORY.

VENETIA.

VENETIA.

"Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child?"

"The child of love, though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in convulsion."

TO LORD LYNDHURST.

IN happier hours, when I first mentioned to you the idea of this work, it was my intention, while inscribing it with your name, to have entered into some details as to the principles which had guided me in its composition, and the feelings with which I had attempted to shadow forth, though as "in a glass darkly," two of the most renowned and refined spirits that have adorned these our latter days. But now, I will only express a hope that the time may come when in these pages you may find some relaxation from the cares, and some distraction from the sorrows, of existence, and that you will then receive this dedication as a record of my respect and my affection.

May, 1837.

CHAPTER I.

SOME ten years before the revolt of our American colonies, there was situate in one of our midland counties, on the borders of an extensive forest, an ancient hall that belonged to the Herberts, but which, though ever well preserved, had not until that period been visited by any member of the family, since the exile of the Stuarts. It was an edifice of considerable size, built of gray stone, much covered with ivy, and placed upon the last gentle elevation of a long ridge of hills, in the centre of a crescent of woods that far overtopped its clusters of tall chimneys and turreted gables. Although the principal chambers were on the first story, you could nevertheless step forth from their windows on a very broad terrace, whence you descended into the gardens by a double flight of broad stone steps, exactly in the middle of its length. These gardens were of some extent, and filled with evergreen shrubberies of remarkable overgrowth, while occasionally turfey vistas, cut in the distant woods, came sloping down to the south, as if they opened to receive the sunbeam that greeted the genial aspect of the mansion. The ground-floor was principally occupied by the hall itself, which of course was of great dimensions, hung round with many a family portrait and rural picture, furnished with long oaken seats, covered with scarlet cushions, and ornamented with a parti-coloured floor of alternate diamonds of

black and white marble. From the centre of the roof of the mansion, which was always covered with pigeons, rose the clock-tower of the chapel, surmounted by a vane; and, before the mansion itself, was a large plot of grass, with a fountain in its middle, surrounded by a hedge of honeysuckle.

This plot of grass was separated from an extensive park, that opened in front of the hall, by very tall iron gates, on each of the pillars of which was a lion rampant, supporting the escutcheon of the family. The deer wandered in this enclosed and well-wooded demesne, and about a mile from the mansion, in a direct line with the iron gates, was an old-fashioned lodge, which marked the limit of the park, and from which you emerged into a very fine avenue of limes, bounded on both sides by fields. At the termination of this avenue was a strong but simple gate, and a woodman's cottage; and then spread before you a vast landscape of open, wild lands, which seemed on one side interminable, while on the other the eye rested on the dark heights of the neighbouring forest.

This picturesque, and very secluded abode, was the residence of Lady Annabel Herbert and her daughter, the young and beautiful Venetia, a child, at the time when our history commences, of very tender age. It was nearly seven years, since Lady Annabel and her infant daughter had sought the retired shades of Cherbury, which they had never since quitted. They lived alone and for each other; the mother educated her child, and the child interested her mother by her affectionate disposition, the development of a mind of no ordinary promise, and a sort of captivating grace and charming playfulness of temper, which were extremely delightful. Lady Annabel was still young and very lovely. That she was wealthy her establishment clearly denoted, and she was a daughter of one of the haughtiest houses in the kingdom. It was strange then that with all the brilliant accidents of birth, and beauty, and fortune, she should still, as it were in the morning of her life, have withdrawn to this secluded mansion, in a county where she was personally unknown, distant from the metropolis, estranged from all her own relatives and connexions, and without the resource of even a single neighbour, for the only place of importance in her vicinity was uninhabited. The general impression of the villagers was that Lady Annabel was a widow; and yet there were some speculators who would shrewdly remark, that her

ladyship had never worn weeds, although, if Venetia were her only child, her husband could not have been long dead when she first arrived at Cherbury. On the whole, however, these good people were not very inquisitive, and it was fortunate for them; for there was little chance and slight means of gratifying their curiosity. The whole of the establishment had been formed at Cherbury, with the exception of her ladyship's waiting-woman, Mistress Pauncefort, and she was by far too great a personage to condescend to reply to any question which was not made to her by Lady Annabel herself.

The beauty of the young Venetia was not the hereditary gift of her beautiful mother. It was not from Lady Annabel that Venetia Herbert had derived those seraphic locks that fell over her shoulders and down her neck in golden streams, nor that clear gray eye even whose childish glance might perplex the gaze of manhood, nor that little aquiline nose, that gave a haughty expression to a countenance that had never yet dreamed of pride, nor that radiant complexion, that dazzled with its brilliancy, like some winged minister of Raphael or Murillo. The peasants that passed the lady and her daughter in their walks, and who blessed her as they passed, for all her grace and goodness, often marvelled why so fair a mother and so fair a child should be so dissimilar, that one indeed might be compared to a starry night, and the other to a sunny day.

CHAPTER II.

It was a bright and soft spring morning: the dewy vistas of Cherbury sparkled in the sun, the cooing of the pigeons sounded around, the peacocks strutted about the terrace and spread their tails with infinite enjoyment and conscious pride, and Lady Annabel came forth with her little daughter, to breathe the renovating odours of the season. The air was scented with the violet, tufts of daffodils were scattered all about, and, though the snowdrop had vanished, and the primroses were fast disappearing, their wild and shaggy leaves still looked picturesque and glad.

"Mamma," said the little Venetia, "is this spring?"

"This is spring, my child," replied Lady Annabel, "beautiful spring! The year is young and happy, like my little girl."

"If Venetia be like the spring, mamma is like the summer!" replied the child; and the mother smiled. "And is not the summer young and happy?" resumed Venetia.

"It is not quite as young as the spring," said Lady Annabel, looking down with fondness on her little companion, "and I fear, not quite as happy."

"But it is as beautiful" said Venetia.

"It is not beauty that makes us happy," said Lady Annabel; "to be happy, my love, we must be good."

"Am I good?" said Venetia.

"Very good," said Lady Annabel.

"I am very happy," said Venetia; "I wonder whether, if I be always good, I shall always be happy."

"You cannot be happy without being good, my love; but happiness depends upon the will of God. If you be good he will guard over you."

"What can make me unhappy, mamma?" inquired Venetia.

"An evil conscience, my love."

"Conscience!" said Venetia; "what is conscience?"

"You are not yet quite old enough to understand," said Lady Annabel, "but some day I will teach you. Mamma is now going to take a long walk, and Venetia shall walk with her."

So saying, the Lady Annabel summoned Mistress Pauncefort, a gentlewoman of not more discreet years than might have been expected in the attendant of so young a mistress; but one well qualified for her office, very zealous and devoted, somewhat consequential, full of energy and decision, capable of directing, fond of giving advice, and habituated to command. The Lady Annabel, leading her daughter, and accompanied by her faithful blood-hound, Marmion, ascended one of those sloping vistas that we have noticed, Mistress Pauncefort following them about a pace behind, and after her a groom, at a very respectful distance, leading Miss Herbert's donkey.

They soon entered a winding path through the wood, which was the background of their dwelling. Lady Annabel was silent, and lost in her reflections; Venetia plucked the beautiful wild hyacinths that then abounded in the wood, in such profusion that their beds spread like patches of blue enamel, and gave them to Mistress Pauncefort, who, as the collection increased, handed them over to the groom; who, in turn, deposited them in the wicker seat prepared for his young mistress. The bright sun bursting through the tender foliage of the year, the clear and genial air, the singing of the birds, and the wild and joyous exclamations of Venetia, as she gathered her flowers, made it a cheerful party, notwithstanding the silence of its mistress.

When they emerged from the wood, they found themselves on the brow of the hill, a small down over which Venetia ran, exulting in the healthy breeze which, at this exposed height, was strong and fresh. As they advanced to the opposite declivity to that which they had ascended, a wide and peculiar landscape opened before them. The extreme distance was formed by an undulating ridge of lofty and savage hills; nearer than these were gentler elevations, partially wooded; and at their base was a rich valley, its green meads fed by a clear and rapid stream, which glittered in the sun as it coursed on, losing itself at length in a wild and sedgy lake that formed the furthest limit of a widely spreading park. In the centre of this park, and not very remote from the banks of the rivulet, was an ancient gothic building, that had once been an abbey of great repute and wealth, and had not much suffered in its external character, by having served for nearly two centuries and a half as the principal dwelling of an old baronial family.

Descending the downy hill, that here and there was studded with fine old trees, enriching by their presence the view from the abbey, Lady Annabel and her party entered the meads, and, skirting the lake, approached the venerable walls without crossing the stream.

It was difficult to conceive a scene more silent and more desolate. There was no sign of life, and not a sound save the occasional cawing of a rook. Advancing towards the abbey, they passed a pile of buildings that, in the summer, might be screened from sight by the foliage of a group of elms, too

scanty at present to veil their desolation. Wide gaps in the roofs proved that the vast and dreary stables were no longer used; there were empty granaries, whose doors had fallen from their hinges; the gate of the court-yard was prostrate on the ground; and the silent clock that once adorned the cupola over the noble entrance arch, had long lost its index. Even the litter of the yard appeared dusty and gray with age. You felt sure no human foot could have disturbed it for years. At the back of these buildings were nailed the trophies of the gamekeeper; hundreds of wild cats, dried to blackness, stretched their downward heads and legs from the mouldering wall; hawks, magpies, and jays hung in tattered remnants; but all gray, and even green, with age; and the heads of birds in plentiful rows, nailed beak upward, and so dried and shrivelled by the suns and winds and frosts of many seasons, that their distinctive characters were lost.

"Do you know, my good Pauncefort," said Lady Annabel, "that I have an odd fancy to-day to force an entrance into the old abbey. It is strange, fond as I am of this walk, that we have never yet entered it. Do you recollect our last vain efforts? Shall we be more fortunate this time, think you?"

Mistress Pauncefort smiled and smirked, and advancing to the old gloomy porch, gave a very determined ring at the bell. Its sound might be heard echoing through the old cloisters, but a considerable time elapsed without any other effect being produced. Perhaps Lady Annabel would have now given up the attempt, but the little Venetia expressed so much regret at the disappointment, that her mother directed the groom to reconnoitre in the neighbourhood, and see if it were possible to discover any person connected with the mansion.

"I doubt our luck, my lady," said Mistress Pauncefort, "for they do say that the abbey is quite uninhabited."

"'Tis a pity," said Lady Annabel, "for with all its desolation, there is something about the spot which ever greatly interests me."

"Mamma, why does no one live here?" said Venetia.

"The master of the abbey lives abroad, my child."

"Why does he, mamma?"

"Never ask questions, Miss Venetia," said Mistress Pauncefort, in a hushed and solemn tone; "it is not pretty." Lady Annabel had moved away.

The groom returned, and said he had met a very old man, picking water-cresses, and he was the only person who lived in the abbey, except his wife, and she was bed-ridden. The old man had promised to admit them when he had completed his task, but not before, and the groom feared it would be some time before he arrived.

"Come Pauncefort, rest yourself on this bench," said Lady Annabel, seating herself in the porch; "and Venetia, my child, come hither to me."

"Mamma," said Venetia, "what is the name of the gentleman to whom this abbey belongs?"

"Lord Cadurcis, love."

"I should like to know why Lord Cadurcis lives abroad?" said Venetia musingly.

"There are many reasons why persons may choose to quit their native country, and dwell in

another, my love," said Lady Annabel, very quietly; "some change the climate for their health."

"Did Lord Cadurcis, mamma?" asked Venetia.

"I do not know Lord Cadurcis, dear, or any thing of him, except that he is a very old man, and has no family."

At this moment there was a sound of bars and bolts withdrawn, and the falling of a chain, and at length the massy door slowly opened, and the old man appeared and beckoned to them to enter.

"'Tis eight years, come Martinmass, since I opened this door," said the old man. "and it sticks a bit. You must walk about by yourselves, for I have no breath, and my mistress is bed-ridden. There, straight down the cloister, you can't miss your way; there is not much to see."

The interior of the abbey formed a quadrangle, surrounded by the cloisters, and in this inner court was a very curious fountain, carved with exquisite skill by some gothic artist in one of those capricious moods of sportive invention, that produced those grotesque medleys for which the feudal sculptor was celebrated. Not a sound was heard except the fall of the fountain and the light echoes that its voice called up.

The staircase led Lady Annabel and her party through several small rooms, scantily garnished with very ancient furniture, in some of which were portraits of the family, until they at length entered a noble saloon, once the refectory of the abbey, and not deficient in splendour, though sadly soiled and worm-eaten. It was hung with tapestry representing the Cartoons of Raffael, and their still vivid colours contrasted with the faded hangings and the dingy damask, of the chairs and sofas. A mass of Cromwellian armour was huddled together in a corner of a long monkish gallery, with a standard, encrusted with dust, and a couple of old drums, one broken. From one of the windows they had a good view of the old walled garden, which did not tempt them to enter it; it was a wilderness, the walks no longer distinguishable from the rank vegetables of the once cultivated lawns; the terraces choked up with the unchecked shrubberies; and here and there a leaden statue, a goddess or a satyr, prostrate, and covered with moss and lichen.

"It makes me melancholy," said Lady Annabel; "let us return."

"Mamma," said Venetia, "are there any ghosts in this abbey?"

"You may well ask me, love," replied Lady Annabel; "it seems a spell-bound place. But, Venetia, I have often told you there are no such things as ghosts."

"Is it naughty to believe in ghosts, mamma, for I cannot help believing in them?"

"When you are older, and have more knowledge, you will not believe in them, Venetia," replied Lady Annabel.

Our friends left Cadurcis abbey. Venetia mounted her donkey, her mother walked by her side; the sun was beginning to decline when they again reached Cherbury, and the air was brisk. Lady Annabel was glad to find herself by her fireside in her little terrace-room, and Venetia, fetching her book, read to her mother until their dinner hour.

CHAPTER III.

Two serene and innocent years had glided away at Cherbury since this morning ramble to Cadurcis abbey, and Venetia had grown in loveliness, and goodness, and intelligence. Her lively and somewhat precocious mind had become greatly developed; and, though she was only nine years of age, it scarcely needed the affection of a mother to find in her an interesting and engaging companion. Although feminine education was little regarded in those days, that of Lady Annabel had been an exception to the general practice of society. She had been brought up with the consciousness of other objects of female attainment and accomplishment than embroidery, "the complete art of making pastry," and reading "The Whole Duty of Man." She had profited, when a child, by the guidance of her brother's tutor, who had bestowed no unfruitful pains upon no ordinary capacity. She was a good linguist, a fine musician, was well read in our elder poets and their Italian originals, was no unskilful artist, and had acquired some knowledge of botany when wandering, as a girl, in her native woods. Since her retirement to Cherbury, reading had been her chief resource. The hall contained a library whose shelves, indeed, were more full than choice; but amid folios of theological controversy and civil law, there might be found the first editions of most of the celebrated writers of the reign of Anne, which the contemporary proprietor of Cherbury, a man of wit and fashion in his day, had duly collected in his yearly visits to the metropolis, and finally deposited in the family book-room.

The education of her daughter was not only the principal duty of Lady Annabel, but her chief delight. To cultivate the nascent intelligence of a child, in those days, was not the mere piece of scientific mechanism that the admirable labours of so many ingenious writers have since permitted it comparatively to become. In those days there was no Mrs. Barbauld, no Madame de Genlis, no Miss Edgeworth; no "Evenings at Home," no "Children's Friend," no "Parent's Assistant." Venetia loved her book; indeed, she was never happier than when reading; but she soon recoiled from the gilt and lilliputian volumes of the good Mr. Newbury, and her mind required some more substantial excitement than "Tom Thumb," or even "Goody Two-Shoes." "The Seven Champions" was a great resource and a great favourite; but it required all the vigilance of a mother to eradicate the false impressions which such studies were continually making on so tender a student; and to disenchant, by rational discussion, the fascinated imagination of her child. Lady Annabel endeavoured to find some substitute in the essays of Addison and Steele; but they required more knowledge of the every day world for their enjoyment than an infant, bred in such seclusion, could at present afford; and at last Venetia lost herself in the wildering pages of Clelia and the Arcadia, which she pored over with a rapt and ecstatic spirit, that would not comprehend the warning scepticism of her parent. Let us picture to ourselves the high-bred Lady Annabel in the terrace-room of her ancient hall, working at her tapestry, and, seated at her feet, her little daughter Venetia, reading aloud the Arcadia! The peacocks have

jumped up on the window sill, to look at their friends who love to feed them, and by their pecking have aroused the bloodhound, crouching at Lady Annabel's feet. And Venetia looks up from her folio with a flushed and smiling face to catch the sympathy of her mother, who rewards her daughter's study with a kiss. Ah! there are no such mothers and no such daughters now!

Thus it will be seen that the life and studies of Venetia tended rather dangerously, in spite of all the care of her mother, to the development of her imagination, in case indeed she possessed that terrible and fatal gift. She passed her days in unbroken solitude, or broken only by affections which softened her heart, and in a scene which itself might well promote any predisposition of the kind; beautiful and picturesque objects surrounded her on all sides; she wandered, as it were, in an enchanted wilderness, and watched the deer reposing under the green shadow of stately trees; the old hall itself was calculated to excite mysterious curiosity; one wing was uninhabited and shut up; each morning and evening she repaired with her mother and the household through long galleries to the chapel, where she knelt to her devotions, illumined by a window blazoned with the arms of that illustrious family of which she was a member, and of which she knew nothing. She had an indefinite and painful consciousness that she had been early checked in the natural inquiries which occur to every child; she had insensibly been trained to speak only of what she saw; and, when she listened, at night, to the long ivy rustling about the windows, and the wild owls hooting about the mansion, with their pining, melancholy voices, she might have been excused for believing in those spirits, which her mother warned her to discredit; or she forgot these mournful impressions in dreams caught from her romantic volumes, of bright knights and beautiful damsels.

Only one event of importance had occurred at Cherbury, during the two years, if indeed that be not too strong a phrase to use in reference to an occurrence which occasioned so slight and passing an interest. Lord Cadurcis had died. He had left his considerable property to his natural children, but the abbey had descended with the title to a very distant relative. The circle at Cherbury had heard, and that was all, that the new lord was a minor, a little boy, indeed very little older than Venetia herself; but this information produced an impression. The abbey was still deserted and desolate as ever.

CHAPTER IV.

EVERY Sunday afternoon, the rector of a neighbouring, though still somewhat distant parish, of which the rich living was in the gift of the Herberts, came to perform divine service at Cherbury. It was a subject of deep regret to Lady Annabel that herself and her family were debarred from the advantage of more frequent and convenient spiritual consolation; but at this time, the parochial discipline of the Church of England was not so strict as it fortunately is at present. Cherbury, though a vicarage, possessed neither parish church, nor a residence for the clergyman;

nor was there indeed a village. The peasants on the estate, or labourers as they are now styled, a term whose introduction into our rural world is much to be lamented, lived in the respective farm-houses on the lands which they cultivated. These were scattered about at considerable distances, and many of their inmates found it more convenient to attend the church of the contiguous parish than to repair to the hall chapel, where the household and the dwellers in the few cottages scattered about the park and woods always assembled. The Lady Annabel, whose lot it had been in life to find her best consolation in religion, and who was influenced by not only a sincere, but even a severe piety, had no other alternative, therefore, but engaging a chaplain; but this, after much consideration, she had resolved not to do. She was indeed her own chaplain, herself performing each day such parts of our morning and evening service whose celebration becomes a laic, and reading portions from the writings of those eminent divines, who, from the Restoration to the conclusion of the last reign, have so eminently distinguished the communion of our national Church.

Each Sunday, after the performance of divine service, the Rev. Dr. Masham dined with the family, and he was the only guest at Cherbury Venetia ever remembered seeing. The doctor was a regular orthodox divine of the eighteenth century; with a large cauliflower wig, shovel-hat, and huge knee-buckles, barely covered by his top-boots; learned, jovial, humorous, and somewhat courtly; truly pious, but not enthusiastic; not forgetful of his tithes, but generous and charitable when they were once paid; never neglecting the sick, yet occasionally following a fox; a fine scholar, an active magistrate, and a good shot; reading the pope, and hating the presbyterians.

The doctor was attached to the Herbert family not merely because they had given him a good living. He had a great reverence for an old English race, and turned up his nose at the Walpolian loanmongers. Lady Annabel, too, so beautiful, so dignified, so amiable and highly bred, and, above all, so pious, had won his regard. He was not a little proud, too, that he was the only person in the county who had the honour of her acquaintance, and yet was disinterested enough to regret that she led so secluded a life, and often lamented that nothing would induce her to show her elegant person on a race-course, or to attend an assize ball, an assembly which was then becoming much the fashion. The little Venetia was a charming child, and the kind-hearted doctor, though a bachelor, loved children;

“O! matre pulchra, filia pulchrior,”

was the Rev. Dr. Masham’s apposite and favourite quotation after his weekly visit to Cherbury.

Divine service was concluded; the doctor had preached a capital sermon; for he had been one of the shining lights of his university until his rich but isolating preferment had apparently closed the great career which it was once supposed awaited him. The accustomed walk on the terrace was completed, and dinner was announced. This meal was always celebrated at Cherbury, where new fashions stole down with a lingering pace, in the great hall itself. An ample table was placed in the centre on a mat of rushes, sheltered by a large screen covered with huge maps of the

shire and the neighbouring counties. The Lady Annabel and her good pastor seated themselves at each end of the table, while Venetia, mounted on a high chair, was waited on by Mistress Pouncefort, who never condescended by any chance attention to notice the presence of any other individual but her little charge, on whose chair she just leaned with an air of condescending devotion. The butler stood behind his lady, and two other servants watched the doctor; rural bodies all, but decked on this day in gorgeous livery coats of blue and silver, which had been made originally for men of very different size and bearing. Simple as was the usual diet at Cherbury, the cook was permitted on Sunday full play to her art, which in the eighteenth century, indulged in the production of dishes more numerous and substantial than our refined tastes could at present tolerate. The doctor appreciated a good dinner, and his countenance glistened with approbation as he surveyed the ample tureen of pottage royal, with a boned duck swimming in its centre. Before him still scowled in death the countenance of a huge roast pike, flanked on one side by a leg of mutton *a-la-daube*, and on the other by the tempting delicacies of bombarded veal. To these succeeded that master-piece of the culinary art, a great battalia pie, in which the bodies of chickens, pigeons and rabbits were embalmed in spices, cocks’ combs, and savory balls, and well bedewed with one of those rich sauces of claret, anchovy, and sweet herbs, in which our great-grandfathers delighted, and which was technically termed a Lear. But the grand essay of skill was the cover of this pasty, whereon the curious cook had contrived to represent all the once-living forms that were now entombed in that gorgeous sepulchre. A Florentine tourte or tansy, an old English custard, a more refined blamango, and a riband jelly of many colours, offered a pleasant relief after these vaster inventions, and the repast closed with a dish of oyster loaves and a pompetone of larks.

Notwithstanding the abstemiousness of his hostess, the doctor was never deterred from doing justice to her hospitality. Few were the dishes that ever escaped him. The demon dyspepsia had not waved its fell wings over the eighteenth century, and wonderful were the feats then achieved by a country gentleman with the united aid of a good digestion and a good conscience.

The servants had retired and Dr. Masham had taken his last glass of port, and then he rang a bell on the table, and—I trust my fair readers will not be frightened from proceeding with this history—a servant brought him his pipe. The pipe was well stuffed, duly lighted, and duly pulled; and then, taking it from his mouth, the doctor spoke.

“And so, my honoured lady, you have got a neighbour at last.”

“Indeed!” exclaimed Lady Annabel.

But the claims of the pipe prevented the good doctor from too quickly satisfying her natural curiosity. Another puff or two, and he then continued.

“Yes,” said he, “the old abbey has at last found a tenant.”

“A tenant, doctor?”

“Ay! the best tenant in the world—its proprietor.”

"You quite surprise me. When did this occur?"

"They have been there these three days; I have paid them a visit. Mrs. Cadureis has come to live at the abbey with the little lord."

"This is indeed news to us," said Lady Annabel; and what kind of people are they?"

"You know, my dear madam," said the doctor, just touching the ash of his pipe with his tobacco-stopper of chased silver, "that the present Lord is a very distant relative of the late one!"

Lady Annabel bowed assent.

"The late Lord," continued the doctor, "who was as strange and wrong-headed a man as ever breathed, though I trust he is in the kingdom of heaven for all that, left all his property to his lawful children, with the exception of this estate entailed on the title, as all estates should be. 'Tis a fine place, but no great rental. I doubt whether 'tis more than a clear twelve hundred a-year."

"And Mrs. Cadureis?" inquired Lady Annabel.

"Was an heiress," replied the doctor, "and the late Mr. Cadureis a spendthrift. He was a bad manager, and, worse, a bad husband. Providence was pleased to summon him suddenly from this mortal scene, but not before he had dissipated the greater part of his wife's means. Mrs. Cadureis, since she was a widow, has lived in strict seclusion with her little boy, as you may, my dear lady, with your dear little girl. But I am afraid," said the doctor, shaking his head, "she has not been in the habit of dining as well as we have to-day. A very limited income, my dear madam; a very limited income, indeed. And the guardians, I am told, will only allow the little Lord a hundred a-year; but, on her own income, whatever it may be, and that addition, she has resolved to live at the abbey; and I believe—I believe she has it rent-free; but I don't know."

"Poor woman!" said Lady Annabel, and not without a sigh. "I trust her child is her consolation."

Venetia had not spoken during this conversation, but she listened to it very attentively. At length she said, "Mamma, is not a widow a wife that has lost her husband?"

"You are right, my dear," said Lady Annabel, rather gravely.

Venetia mused a moment, and then replied, "Pray, mamma, are you a widow?"

"My dear little girl," said Dr. Masham, "go and give that beautiful peacock a pretty piece of cake."

Lady Annabel and the doctor rose from the table with Venetia, and took a turn in the park, while the doctor's horses were getting ready.

"I think, my good lady," said the doctor, "it would be but an act of Christian charity to call upon Mrs. Cadureis."

"I was thinking the same," said Lady Annabel; "I am interested by what you have told me of her history and fortunes. We have some woes in common—I hope some joys. It seems that this case should indeed be an exception to my rule."

"I would not ask you to sacrifice your inclinations to the mere pleasures of the world," said the Doctor: "but duties, my dear lady, duties; there are such things as duties to our neighbour; and here is a case where, believe me, they might be fulfilled."

The doctor's horses now appeared. Both

master and groom wore their pistols in their holsters. The doctor shook hands warmly with Lady Annabel, and patted Venetia on the head, as she ran up from a little distance, with an eager countenance, to receive her accustomed blessing. Then mounting his stout mare, he once more waved his hand with an air of courtliness to his hostess, and was soon out of sight. Lady Annabel and Venetia returned to the terrace room.

CHAPTER V.

"AND so I would, my lady," said Mistress Pauncefort, when Lady Annabel communicated to her faithful attendant, at night, the news of the arrival of the Cadureis family at the abbey, and her intention of paying Mrs. Cadureis a visit; "and so I would, my lady," said Mistress Pauncefort, "and it would be but an act of Christian charity after all, as the doctor says; for, although it is not for me to complain when my betters are satisfied, and after all I am always content, if your ladyship be; still there is no denying the fact, that this is a terrible lonesome life after all. And I cannot help thinking your ladyship has not been looking so well of late, and a little society would do your ladyship good; and Miss Venetia, too, after all, she wants a playfellow; I am certain sure that I was as tired of playing at ball with her this morning as if I had never sat down in my born days; and, I dare say, the little lord will play with her all day long.

"If I thought that this visit would lead to what is understood by the word society, my good Pauncefort, I certainly should refrain from paying it," said Lady Annabel, very quietly.

"O! Lord, dear my lady, I was not for a moment dreaming of any such thing," replied Mistress Pauncefort; "society, I know as well as any one, means grand balls, Ranelagh, and the masquerades. I can't abide the thought of them, I do assure your ladyship; all I meant was that a quiet dinner now and then with a few friends, a dance perhaps in the evening, or a hand of whist, or a game of romps at Christmas, when the abbey will of course be quite full, a—"

"I believe there is as little chance of the abbey being full at Christmas, or any other time, as there is of Cherbury," said Lady Annabel. "Mrs. Cadureis is a widow, with a very slender fortune. Her son will not enjoy his estate until he is of age, and its rental is small. I am led to believe that they will live quite as quietly as ourselves; and when I spoke of Christian charity, I was thinking only of kindness towards them, and not of amusement for ourselves."

"Well, my lady, your ladyship knows best," replied Mistress Pauncefort, evidently very disappointed; for she had indulged in momentary visions of noble visitors and noble valets: "I am always content, you know, when your ladyship is; but, I must say, I think it is very odd for a lord to be so poor. I never heard of such a thing. I think they will turn out richer than you have an idea, my lady. Your ladyship knows 'tis quite a saying, 'As rich as a lord.'"

Lady Annabel smiled, but did not reply.

The next morning the old fawn-coloured chariot, which had not been used since Lady Annabel's

arrival at Cherbury, and four black long-tailed coach-horses, that from absolute necessity had been degraded, in the interval, to the service of the cart and the plough, made their appearance, after much bustle and effort, before the hall-door. Although a morning's stroll from Cherbury through the woods, Caduceis was distant nearly ten miles by the road, and that road was in great part impassable, save in favourable seasons. This visit, therefore, was an expedition; and Lady Annabel, fearing the fatigue for a child, determined to leave Venetia at home, from whom she had actually never been separated one hour in her life. Venetia could not refrain from shedding a tear when her mother embraced and quitted her, and begged, as a last favour, that she might accompany her through the park to the avenue lodge. So Pauncefort and herself entered the chariot, that rocked like a ship, in spite of all the skill of the coachman and the postilion.

Venetia walked home with Mistress Pauncefort, but Lady Annabel's little daughter was not in her usual lively spirits; many a butterfly glanced around without attracting her pursuit, and the deer trooped by without eliciting a single observation. At length she said, in a very thoughtful tone, "Mistress Pauncefort, I should have liked to have gone and seen the little boy."

"You shall go and see him another day, Miss," replied her attendant.

"Mistress Pauncefort," said Venetia, "are you a widow?"

Mistress Pauncefort almost started; had the inquiry been made by a man, she would almost have supposed he was going to be very rude. She was indeed very much surprised.

"And pray, Miss Venetia, what could put it in your head to ask such an odd question?" exclaimed Mistress Pauncefort. "A widow! Miss Venetia; I have never yet changed my name, and I shall not in a hurry, that I can tell you."

"Do widows change their names?" said Venetia.

"All women change their names when they marry," responded Mistress Pauncefort.

"Is mamma married?" inquired Venetia.

"La! Miss Venetia. Well, to be sure, you do ask the strangest questions. Married! To be sure she is married," said Mistress Pauncefort, exceedingly future-l.

"And whom is she married to?" pursued the unwearied Venetia.

"Your papa, to be sure," said Mistress Pauncefort, blushing up to her eyes, and looking very confused; "that is to say, Miss Venetia, you are never to ask questions about such subjects. Have not I often told you it is not pretty?"

"Why is it not pretty?" said Venetia.

"Because it is not proper," said Mistress Pauncefort; "because your mamma does not like you to ask such questions, and she will be very angry with me for answering them, I can tell you that."

"I tell you what, Mistress Pauncefort," said Venetia, "I think mamma is a widow."

"And what then, Miss Venetia! There is no shame in that."

"Shame!" exclaimed Venetia. "What is shame?"

"Look, there is a pretty butterfly!" exclaimed Mistress Pauncefort. "Did you ever see such a pretty butterfly, Miss?"

"I do not care about butterflies to-day, Mistress Pauncefort; I like to talk about widows."

"Was there ever such a child?" exclaimed Mistress Pauncefort, with a wondering glance.

"I must have had a papa," said Venetia; "all the ladies I read about had papas, and married husbands. Then whom did my mamma marry?"

"Lord! Miss Venetia, you know very well your mamma always tells you that all those books you read are a pack of stories," observed Mistress Pauncefort, with an air of triumphant art.

"There never were such persons, perhaps," said Venetia, "but it is not true that there never were such things as papas and husbands, for all people have papas; you must have had a papa, Mistress Pauncefort?"

"To be sure I had," said Mistress Pauncefort, bridling up.

"And a mamma too?" said Venetia.

"As honest a woman as ever lived," said Mistress Pauncefort.

"Then if I have no papa, mamma must be a wife that has lost her husband, and that, mamma told me at dinner yesterday, was a widow."

"Was the like ever seen?" exclaimed Mistress Pauncefort. "And what then, Miss Venetia?"

"It seems to me so odd that only two people should live here, and both be widows," said Venetia, "and both have a little child; the only difference is, that one is a little boy, and I am a little girl."

"When ladies lose their husbands, they do not like to have their names mentioned," said Mistress Pauncefort; "and so you must never talk of your papa to my lady, and that is the truth."

"I will not now," said Venetia.

When they returned home, Mistress Pauncefort brought her work, and seated herself on the terrace, that she might not lose sight of her charge. Venetia played about for some little time; she made a castle behind a tree, and fancied she was a knight, and then a lady, and conjured up an ogre in the neighbouring shrubbery; but these day-dreams did not amuse her as much as usual. She went and fetched her book, but even "The Seven Champions" could not interest her. Her eye was fixed upon the page, and apparently she was absorbed in her pursuit, but her mind wandered, and the page was never turned. She indulged in an unconscious reverie; her fancy was with her mother on her visit; the old abbey rose up before her: she painted the scene without an effort: the court, with the fountain; the grand room, with the tapestry hangings; that desolate garden, with the fallen statues; and that long, gloomy gallery. And in all these scenes appeared that little boy, who, somehow or other, seemed wonderfully blended with her imaginings. It was a very long day this; Venetia dined alone with Mistress Pauncefort; the time hung very heavy; at length she fell asleep in Mistress Pauncefort's lap. A sound roused her—the carriage had returned: she ran to greet her mother, but there was no news;—Mrs. Caduceis had been absent; she had gone to a distant town to buy some furniture; and, after all, Lady Annabel had not seen the little boy.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW days after the visit to Cadurcis, when Lady Annabel was sitting alone, a post-chaise drove up to the hall, whence issued a short and very stout woman with a rubicund countenance, and dressed in a style which remarkably blended the shabby with the tawdry. She was accompanied by a boy between eleven and twelve years of age, whose appearance, however, very much contrasted with that of his mother, for he was very pale and slender, with long curling black hair and large black eyes, which occasionally, by their transient flashes, agreeably relieved a face, the general expression of which might be esteemed somewhat shy and sullen. The lady, of course, was Mrs. Cadurcis, who was received by Lady Annabel with the greatest courtesy.

"A terrible journey," exclaimed Mrs. Cadurcis, fanning herself as she took her seat, and so very hot! Plantagenet, my love, make your bow; have not I always told you to make a bow when you enter a room, especially where there are strangers? This is Lady Annabel Herbert, who was so kind as to call upon us. Make your bow to Lady Annabel."

The boy gave a sort of sulky nod, but Lady Annabel received it so graciously and expressed herself so kindly to him that his features relaxed a little, though he was quite silent and sat on the edge of his chair, the picture of dogged indifference.

"Charming country, Lady Annabel," said Mrs. Cadurcis, "but worse roads, if possible, than we had in Northumberland, where, indeed, there were no roads at all. Cherbury a delightful place, very unlike the abbey; dreadfully lonesome I assure you I find it, Lady Annabel. Great change for us from a little town and all our kind neighbours. Very different from Morpeth; is it not, Plantagenet?"

"I hate Morpeth," said the boy.

"Hate Morpeth!" exclaimed Mrs. Cadurcis, "Well, I am sure, that is very ungrateful, with so many kind friends as we always found. Besides, Plantagenet, have I not always told you that you are to hate nothing? It is very wicked. The trouble it costs me, Lady Annabel, to educate this dear child!" continued Mrs. Cadurcis, turning to Lady Annabel, and speaking in a semi-tone. "I have done it all myself, I assure you; and, when he likes, he can be as good as any one. Can't you, Plantagenet?"

Lord Cadurcis gave a grim smile; seated himself at the very back of the deep chair and swung his feet, which no longer reached the ground, to and fro.

"I am sure that Lord Cadurcis always behaves well," said Lady Annabel.

"There, Plantagenet," exclaimed Mrs. Cadurcis, "only listen to that. Hear what Lady Annabel Herbert says; she is sure you always behave well. Now mind, never give her ladyship cause to change her opinion.

Plantagenet curled his lip, and half-turned his back on his companions.

"I regretted so much that I was not at home when you did me the honour to call," resumed Mrs. Cadurcis; "but I had gone over for the day to Southport, buying furniture. What a business

it is to buy furniture, Lady Annabel!" added Mrs. Cadurcis, with a piteous expression.

"It is indeed very troublesome," said Lady Annabel.

"Ah! you have none of these cares," continued Mrs. Cadurcis, surveying the pretty apartment. "What a difference between Cherbury and the abbey! I suppose you have never been there?"

"Indeed it is one of my favourite walks," answered Lady Annabel, "and some two years ago I even took the liberty of walking through the house."

"Was there ever such a place!" exclaimed Mrs. Cadurcis. "I assure you my poor head turns, whenever I try to find my way about it. But the trustees offered it us, and I thought it my duty to my son to reside there. Besides it was a great offer to a widow; if poor Mr. Cadurcis had been alive it would have been different. I hardly know what I shall do there, particularly in winter. My spirits are always dreadfully low. I only hope Plantagenet will behave well. If he goes into his tantarums at the abbey, and particularly in winter, I hardly know what will become of me!"

"I am sure Lord Cadurcis will do every thing to make the abbey comfortable to you. Besides it is but a very short walk from Cherbury, and you must come very often and see us."

"O! Plantagenet can be good if he likes, I can assure you, Lady Annabel; and behave as properly as any little boy I know. Plantagenet my dear, speak. Have not I always told you, when you pay a visit, that you should open your mouth now and then. I don't like chatting children," added Mrs. Cadurcis, "but I like them to answer when they are spoken to."

"Nobody has spoken to me," said Lord Cadurcis, in a sullen tone.

"Plantagenet, my love!" said his mother, in a solemn voice.

"Well, mother, what do you want?"

"Plantagenet, my love, you know you promised me to be good!"

"Well! what have I done?"

"Lord Cadurcis," said Lady Annabel, interfering, "do you like to look at pictures?"

"Thank you," replied the little lord, in a more courteous tone, "I like to be left alone."

"Did you ever know such an odd child!" said Mrs. Cadurcis; "and yet, Lady Annabel, you must not judge him by what you see. I do assure you he can behave, when he likes, as pretty as possible."

"Pretty!" muttered the little lord between his teeth.

"If you had only seen him at Morpeth sometimes at a little tea-party," said Mrs. Cadurcis; "he really was quite the ornament of the company."

"No, I wasn't," said Lord Cadurcis.

"Plantagenet!" said his mother again in a solemn tone, "have I not always told you that you are never to contradict any one?"

The little lord indulged in a suppressed growl.

"There was a little play last Christmas," continued Mrs. Cadurcis, "and he acted quite delightfully. Now you would not think that from the way he sits upon that chair. Plantagenet, my dear, I do insist upon your behaving yourself. Sit like a man."

"I am not a man, said Lord Cadureis very quietly; "I wish I were."

"Plantagenet!" said the mother, "have not I always told you that you are never to answer me! It is not proper for children to answer. O! Lady Annabel, if you knew what it cost me to educate my son. He never does any thing I wish, and it is so provoking, because I know that he can behave as properly as possible if he likes. He does it to provoke me,—you know you do it to provoke me, you little brat; now, sit properly, sir; I do desire you to sit properly. How vexatious that you should call at Cherbury for the first time, and behave in this manner! Plantagenet, do you hear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Cadureis, with a face reddening to scarlet, and almost menacing a move from her seat.

"Yes, every body hears you, Mrs Cadureis," said the little lord.

"Don't call me Mrs. Cadureis," exclaimed the mother in a dreadful rage. "That is not the way to speak to your mother. I will not be called Mrs. Cadureis by you. Don't answer me, sir,—I desire you not to answer me. I have half a mind to get up and give you a good shake, that I have. O Lady Annabel," sighed Mrs. Cadureis, while a tear trickled down her cheek, "if you only knew the life I lead, and what trouble it costs me to educate that child!"

"My dear madam," said Lady Annabel, "I am sure that Lord Cadureis has no other wish but to please you. Indeed you have misunderstood him."

"Yes! she always misunderstands me," said Lord Cadureis, in a softer tone, but with pouting lips and suffused eyes.

"Now he is going on," said his mother, beginning herself to cry dreadfully. "He knows my weak heart; he knows nobody in the world loves him like his mother; and this is the way he treats me."

"My dear Mrs. Cadureis," said Lady Annabel, "pray take luncheon, after your long drive; and Lord Cadureis, I am sure you must be fatigued."

"Thank you, I never eat, my dear lady," said Mrs. Cadureis, "except at my meals. But one glass of Mountain, if you please, I would just take the liberty of tasting, for the weather is so dreadfully hot; and Plantagenet has so aggravated me, I really do not feel myself."

Lady Annabel sounded her silver hand-bell, and the butler brought some cakes and the Mountain. Mrs. Cadureis revived by virtue of her single glass, and the providential co-operation of a few subsequent ones. Even the cakes and the Mountain, however, would not tempt her son to open his mouth; and this, in spite of her returning composure, drove her to desperation. A conviction that the Mountain and the cakes were delicious, an amiable desire that the palate of her spoiled child should be gratified, some reasonable maternal anxiety that after so long and fatiguing a drive he in fact needed some refreshment, and the agonising consciousness that all her own physical pleasure at the moment was destroyed by the mental sufferings she endured at having quarrelled with her son, and that he was depriving himself of what was so agreeable only to pique her, quite overwhelmed the ill-regulated mind of this fond mother. Between each sip and each mouthful, she appealed to him to follow her example, now with

cajolery, now with menace, till at length, worked up by the united stimulus of her copious draughts of Mountain and her own ungovernable rage, she dashed down the glass and unfinished slice of cake, and before the astonished Lady Annabel, rushed forward to give him what she had long threatened, and what she in general ultimately had recourse to—a good shake.

Her agile son, experienced in these storms, escaped in time, and pushed his chair before his infuriated mother; Mrs. Cadureis, however, rallied, and chased him round the room; once more she flattered herself she had captured him, once more he evaded her, in her despair she took up Venetia's "Seven Champions," and threw the volume at his head; he laughed a fiendish laugh, as, ducking his head, the book flew on, and dashed through a pane of glass; Mrs. Cadureis made a desperate charge, and her son, a little frightened at her almost maniacal passion, saved himself by suddenly seizing Lady Annabel's work-table, and whirling it before her; Mrs. Cadureis fell over the leg of the table, and went into violent hysterics; while the blood-hound, who had long started from his repose, looked at his mistress for instructions, and in the meantime continued barking. The astonished and agitated Lady Annabel assisted Mrs. Cadureis to rise, and led her to a couch. Lord Cadureis, pale and dogged, stood in a corner, and after all this uproar there was a comparative calm, only broken by the sobs of the mother, each instant growing fainter and fainter.

At this moment the door opened, and Mistress Pauncefort ushered in the little Venetia. She really looked like an angel of peace sent from heaven on a mission of concord, with her long golden hair, her bright face, and smile of ineffable loveliness.

"Mamma!" said Venetia, in the sweetest tone.

"Hush! darling," said Lady Annabel, "this lady is not very well."

Mrs. Cadureis opened her eyes and sighed. She beheld Venetia and stared at her with a feeling of wonder. "O! Lady Annabel," she faintly exclaimed, "what must you think of me! But was there ever such an unfortunate mother! and I have not a thought in the world but for that boy. I have devoted my life to him, and never would have buried myself in this abbey but for his sake. And this is the way he treats me, and his father before him treated me even worse. Am I not the most unfortunate woman you ever knew!"

"My dear madam," said the kind Lady Annabel, in a soothing tone, "you will be very happy yet. All will be quite right and quite happy."

"Is this angel your child?" inquired Mrs. Cadureis, in a low voice.

"This is my little girl—Venetia. Come hither, Venetia, and speak to Mrs. Cadureis."

"How do you do, Mrs. Cadureis!" said Venetia. "I am so glad you have come to live at the abbey."

"The angel!" exclaimed Mrs. Cadureis. "The sweet seraph! Oh! why did not my Plantagenet speak to you, Lady Annabel, in the same tone! And he can, if he likes:—he can, indeed. It was his silence that so mortified me; it was his silence that led to all. I am so proud of him, and then he comes here and never speaks a word. O Plantagenet, I am sure you will break my heart."

Venetia went up to the little lord in the corner, and gently stroked his dark cheek. "Are you the little boy?" she said.

Cadurcis looked at her; at first the glance was rather fierce, but it instantly relaxed. "What is your name?" he said, in a low, but not unkind, tone.

"Venetia."

"I like you, Venetia," said the boy. "Do you live here?"

"Yes, with my mamma."

"I like your mamma, too; but not as much as you. I like your gold hair."

"Oh, how funny! to like my gold hair!"

"If you had come in sooner," said Cadurcis, "we should not have had this row."

"What is a row, little boy?" said Venetia.

"Do not call me little boy," he said, but not in an unkind tone; "call me by my name."

"What is your name?"

"Lord Cadurcis; but you may call me by my Christian name, because I like you."

"What is your Christian name?"

"Plantagenet."

"Plantagenet! What a long name!" said Venetia. "Tell me, then, Plantagenet, what is a row?"

"What often takes place between me and my mother, but which I am very sorry now has happened here, for I like this place, and should like to come often. A row is a quarrel."

"A quarrel! What! do you quarrel with your mamma?"

"Often."

"Why, then, you are not a good boy."

"Ah! my mamma is not like yours," said the little lord, with a sigh. "It is not my fault. But now I want to make it up; how shall I do it?"

"Go and give her a kiss."

"Poh! that is not the way."

"Shall I go and ask my mamma what is best to do?" said Venetia, and she stole away on tip-toe, and whispered to Lady Annabel that Plantagenet wanted her. Her mother came forward and invited Lord Cadurcis to walk on the terrace with her, leaving Venetia to amuse her other guest.

Lady Annabel, though very kind, was very frank and firm in her unexpected confidential interview with her new friend. She placed before him very clearly the enormity of his conduct, which no provocation could justify; it was a violation of divine law as well as human propriety. She found the little lord attentive, tractable, and repentant, and, what might not have been expected, exceedingly ingenious and intelligent. His observations, indeed, were distinguished by remarkable acuteness; and though he could not, and indeed did not even attempt to vindicate his conduct, he incidentally introduced much that might be urged in its extenuation. There was, indeed, in this his milder moment, something very winning in his demeanour, and Lady Annabel deeply regretted that a nature of so much promise and capacity should, by the injudicious treatment of a parent, at once fond and violent, afford such slight hopes of future happiness. It was arranged between Lord Cadurcis and Lady Annabel that she should lead him to his mother, and that he should lament the past, and ask her forgiveness; so they re-entered the room. Venetia was listening to a very long story from Mrs. Cadurcis, who appeared to

have entirely recovered herself; but her countenance assumed a befitting expression of grief and gravity, when she observed her son.

"My dear madam," said Lady Annabel, "your son is very unhappy that he should have offended you, and he has asked my kind offices to effect a perfect reconciliation between a child who wishes to be dutiful to a parent who, he feels, has always been so affectionate."

Mrs. Cadurcis began crying.

"Mother," said her son, "I am sorry for what has occurred; mine was the fault. I shall not be happy till you pardon me."

"No, yours was not the fault," said poor Mrs. Cadurcis, crying very bitterly. "Oh! no, it was not; I was in fault, only I. There, Lady Annabel, did I not tell you he was the sweetest, dearest, most generous-hearted creature that ever lived! Oh! if he would only always speak so, I am sure I should be the happiest woman that ever breathed! He puts me in mind quite of his poor dear father, who was an angel upon earth, he was indeed, when he was not vexed. O! my dear Plantagenet! my only hope and joy! you are the treasure and consolation of my life, and always will be. God bless you my darling child! You shall have that pony you wanted; I am sure I can manage it; I did not think I could."

As Lady Annabel thought it was as well that the mother and the son should not be immediately thrown together after this storm, she very kindly proposed that they should remain, and pass the day at Clerbury; and as Plantagenet's eyes brightened at the proposal, it did not require much trouble to persuade his mother to accede to it. The day, that had commenced so inauspiciously, turned out one of the most agreeable, both to Mrs. Cadurcis and her child. The two mothers conversed together, and, as Mrs. Cadurcis was a great workwoman there was at least one bond of sympathy between her and the tapestry of her hostess. They all took a stroll in the park; and as Mrs. Cadurcis was not able to walk for any length of time, the children were permitted to stroll about together, attended by Mistress Pauncefort, while Mrs. Cadurcis, chatting without ceasing, detailed to Lady Annabel all the history of her life, all the details of her various complaints and her economical arrangements, and all the secrets of her husband's treatment of her,—that favourite subject on which she ever waxed most eloquent. Plantagenet, equally indulging in confidence, which with him, however, was very unusual, poured all his soul into the charmed ear of Venetia. He told her how he and his mother had lived at Morpeth, and how he hated it; how poor they had been, and how rich he should be; how he loved the abbey, and especially the old gallery, and the drums and armour; how he had been a day-scholar at a little school which he abhorred, and how he was to go some day to Eaton, of which he was very proud.

At length they were obliged to return, and when dinner was over the post-chaise was announced. Mrs. Cadurcis parted from Lady Annabel with all the warm expressions of a heart naturally kind and generous; and Plantagenet embraced Venetia, and promised that the next day he would find his way alone from Cadurcis, through the wood, and come and take another walk with her.

CHAPTER VII.

THIS settlement of Mrs. Cadureis and her son in the neighbourhood was an event of no slight importance in the life of the family at Cherbury. Venetia at length found a companion of her own age, itself an incident which, in its influence upon her character and pursuits, was not to be disregarded. There grew up between the little lord and the daughter of Lady Annabel that fond intimacy which not rarely occurs in childhood. Plantagenet and Venetia quickly imbibed for each other a singular affection, not displeasing to Lady Annabel, who observed, without dissatisfaction, the increased happiness of her own child, and encouraged by her kindness the frequent visits of the boy, who soon learnt the shortest road from the abbey, and almost daily scaled the hill, and traced his way through the woods, to the hall. There was much, indeed, in the character and the situation of Lord Cadureis which interested Lady Annabel Herbert. His mild, engaging, and affectionate manners, when he was removed from the injudicious influence of his mother, won upon her feelings; she felt for this lone child, whom nature had gifted with so soft a heart and with a thoughtful mind whose out-breaks not unfrequently attracted her notice; with none to guide him, and with only one heart to look up to for fondness; and that, too, one that had already contrived to forfeit the respect even of so young a child.

Yet Lady Annabel was too sensible of the paramount claims of a mother—herself, indeed, too jealous of any encroachment on the full privileges of maternal love—to sanction in the slightest degree, by her behaviour, any neglect of Mrs. Cadureis by her son. For his sake, therefore, she courted the society of her new neighbour; and although Mrs. Cadureis offered little to engage Lady Annabel's attention as a companion, though she was violent in her temper, far from well informed, and—from the society in which, in spite of her original good birth, her later years had passed—very far from being refined, she was not without her good qualities. She was generous, kind-hearted, and grateful; not insensible of her own deficiencies, and respectable from her misfortunes. Lady Annabel was one of those who always judged individuals rather by their good qualities than their bad. With the exception of her violent temper, which—under the control of Lady Annabel's presence, and by the aid of all that kind person's skilful management—Mrs. Cadureis generally contrived to bridle, her principal faults were those of manner, which, from the force of habit, every day became less painful. Mrs. Cadureis—who, indeed, was only a child of a larger growth—became scarcely less attached to the Herbert family than her son; she felt that her life, under their influence, was happier and serenest than of yore; that there were less domestic broils than in old days; that her son was more dutiful; and, as she could not help suspecting, though she found it difficult to analyse the cause, herself more amiable. The truth was, Lady Annabel always treated Mrs. Cadureis with studied respect; and the children, and especially Venetia, followed her example. Mrs. Cadureis' self-complacency was not only less shocked, but more gratified than before; and this was the secret of her happiness.

For no one was more mortified by her rages, when they were past, than Mrs. Cadureis herself; she felt they compromised her dignity, and had lost her all moral command over a child whom she loved at the bottom of her heart with a kind of wild passion, though she would menace and strike him, and who often precipitated these paroxysms by denying his mother that duty and affection which were, after all, the great charm and pride of her existence.

As Mrs. Cadureis was unable to walk to Cherbury, and as Plantagenet soon fell into the habit of passing every morning at the hall, Lady Annabel was frequent in her visits to the mother, and soon she persuaded Mrs. Cadureis to order the old post-chaise regularly on Saturday, and remain at Cherbury until the following Monday; by these means both families united together in the chapel at divine service, while the presence of Dr. Masham, at their now increased Sunday dinner, was an incident in the monotonous life of Mrs. Cadureis far from displeasing to her. The doctor gave her a little news of the neighbourhood, and of the country in general; amused her with an occasional anecdote of the queen and the young princesses; and always lent her the last number of "Sylvanus Urban."

This weekly visit to Cherbury, the great personal attention which she always received there, and the frequent morning walks of Lady Annabel to the abbey, effectually repressed on the whole the jealousy which was a characteristic of Mrs. Cadureis' nature, and which the constant absence of her son from her in the mornings might otherwise have fatally developed. But Mrs. Cadureis could not resist the conviction that the Herberts were as much her friends as her child's; her jealousy was balanced by her gratitude; she was daily, almost hourly, sensible of some kindness of Lady Annabel, for there were a thousand services in the power of the opulent and ample establishment of Cherbury to afford the limited and desolate household at the abbey. Living in seclusion, it is difficult to refrain from imbibing even a strong regard for our almost solitary companion, however incompatible may be our pursuits, and however our tastes may vary, especially when that companion is grateful, and duly sensible of the condescension of our intimacy. And so it happened that, before a year had elapsed, that very Mrs. Cadureis, whose first introduction at Cherbury had been so unfavorable to her, and from whose temper and manners the elegant demeanour and the disciplined mind of Lady Annabel Herbert might have been excused for a moment revolting, had succeeded in establishing a strong hold upon the affections of her refined neighbour, who sought, on every occasion, her society, and omitted few opportunities of contributing to her comfort and welfare.

In the mean time her son was the companion of Venetia, both in her pastimes and studies. The education of Lord Cadureis had received no further assistance than was afforded by the little grammar-school at Morpeth, where he had passed three or four years as a day scholar, and where his mother had invariably taken his part on every occasion that he had incurred the displeasure of his master. There he had obtained some imperfect knowledge of Latin; yet the boy was fond of reading, and had picked up, in an odd way, mor-

knowledge than might have been supposed. He had read "Baker's Chronicle," and "The Old Universal History," and "Plutarch;" and had turned over—in the book-room of an old gentleman at Morpeth, who had been attracted by his intelligence—not a few curious old folios, from which he had gleaned no contemptible store of curious instances of human nature. His guardian, whom he had never seen, and who was a great nobleman and lived in London, had signified to Mrs. Cadureis his intention of sending his ward to Eton; but that time had not yet arrived, and Mrs. Cadureis, who dreaded parting with her son, determined to postpone it by every maternal artifice in her power. At present it would have seemed that her son's intellect was to be left utterly uncultivated, for there was no school in the neighbourhood which he could attend, and no occasional assistance which could be obtained; and to the constant presence of a tutor in the house Mrs. Cadureis was not less opposed than his lordship could have been himself.

It was by degrees that Lord Cadureis became the partner of Venetia in her studies. Lady Annabel had consulted Dr. Masham about the poor little boy, whose neglected state she deplored; and the good doctor had offered to ride over to Cherbury at least once a week, besides Sunday, provided Lady Annabel would undertake that his directions, in his absence, should be attended to. This her ladyship promised cheerfully; nor had she any difficulty in persuading Cadureis to consent to the arrangement. He listened with docility and patience to her representation of the fatal effects, in his after-life, of his neglected education; of the generous and advantageous offer of Dr. Masham; and how cheerfully she would exert herself to assist his endeavours, if Plantagenet would willingly submit to her supervision. The little lord expressed to her his determination to do all that she desired, and voluntarily promised her that she should never repent her goodness. And he kept his word. So every morning, with the full concurrence of Mrs. Cadureis, whose advice and opinion on the affair were most formally solicited by Lady Annabel, Plantagenet arrived early at the hall, and took his writing and French lessons with Venetia, and then they alternately read aloud to Lady Annabel from the histories of Hooke and Echarde. When Venetia repaired to her drawing, Cadureis sat down to his Latin exercise, and, in encouraging and assisting him, Lady Annabel, a proficient in Italian, began herself to learn the ancient language of the Romans. With such a charming mistress even these Latin exercises were achieved. In vain Cadureis, after turning leaf over leaf, would look around with a piteous air to his fair assistant—"O! Lady Annabel, I am sure the word is not in the dictionary;" Lady Annabel was in a moment at his side, and, by some magic of her fair fingers the word would somehow or other make its appearance. After a little exposure of this kind, Plantagenet would labour with double energy, until, heaving a deep sigh of exhaustion and vexation, he would burst forth—"O! Lady Annabel, indeed there is not a nominative case in this sentence." And then Lady Annabel would quit her easel, with her pencil in her hand, and give all her intellect to the puzzling construction; at length, she would say, "I think, Plan-

tagenet, this must be our nominative case;" and so it always was.

Thus, when Wednesday came, the longest and most laborious morning of all Lord Cadureis' studies, and when he neither wrote, nor read, nor learnt French with Venetia, but gave up all his soul to Dr. Masham, he usually acquitted himself to that good person's satisfaction, who left him, in general, with commendations that were not lost on the pupil, and plenty of fresh exercises to occupy him and Lady Annabel until the next week. When a year had thus passed away, the happiest year yet in Lord Cadureis' life, in spite of all his disadvantages, he had contrived to make no inconsiderable progress. Almost deprived of a tutor, he had advanced in classical acquirement more than during the whole of his preceding years of scholarship, while his hand-writing began to become intelligible; he could read French with comparative facility, and had turned over many a volume in the well-stored library at Cherbury.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the hours of study were past, the children, with that zest for play which occupation can alone secure, would go forth together, and wander in the park. Here they had made a little world for themselves, of which no one dreamed; for Venetia had poured forth all her Arcadian lore into the ear of Plantagenet, and they acted together many of the adventures of the romance, under the fond names of Musidorus and Philoclea. Cherbury was Arcadia, and Cadureis Macedon; while the intervening woods figured as the forests of Thessaly, and the breezy downs were the heights of Pindus. Unwearied was the innocent sport of their virgin imaginations; and it was a great treat if Venetia, attended by Mistress Pouncefort, were permitted to accompany Plantagenet some way on his return. Then they parted with an embrace in the woods of Thessaly, and Musidorus strolled home with a heavy heart to his Macedonian realm.

Parted from Venetia, the magic suddenly seemed to cease, and Musidorus was instantly transformed into the little Lord Cadureis, exhausted by the unconscious efforts of his fancy, depressed by the separation from his sweet companion, and shrinking from the unpoetical reception which at the best awaited him in his ungenial home. Often, when thus alone, would he loiter on his way and seat himself on the ridge, and watch the setting sun, as its dying glory illumined the turrets of his ancient house, and burnished the waters of the lake, until the tears stole down his cheek; and yet he knew not why. No thoughts of sorrow had flitted through his mind, nor indeed had ideas of any description occurred to him. It was a trance of unmeaning abstraction; all that he felt was a mystical pleasure in watching the sunset, and a conviction that, if he were not with Venetia, that which he loved next best was to be alone.

The little Cadureis in general returned home moody and silent, and his mother too often, irritated by his demeanour, indulged in all the expressions of a quick and offended temper; but since his intimacy with the Herberts, Plantagenet had learnt to control his emotions, and often suc-

cessfully laboured to prevent those scenes of domestic recrimination once so painfully frequent. There often, too, was a note from Lady Annabel to Mrs. Cadurcis, or some other slight memorial, borne by her son, which enlisted all the kind feelings of that lady in favour of her Cherbury friends, and then the evening was sure to pass over in peace; and, when Plantagenet was not thus armed, he exerted himself to be cordial; and so, on the whole, with some skill in management, and some trials of temper, the mother and the child contrived to live together with far greater comfort than they had of old.

Bed-time was always a great relief to Plantagenet, for it secured him solitude. He would lie awake for hours, indulging in sweet and unconscious reveries, and brooding over the future morn. that always brought happiness. All that he used to sigh for was to be Lady Annabel's son; were he Venetia's brother, then he was sure he never should be for a moment unhappy—that parting from Cherbury, and the gloomy evenings at Cadurcis, would then be avoided. In such a mood, and lying awake upon his pillow, he sought refuge from the painful reality that surrounded him in the creative solace of his imagination. Alone, in his little bed, Cadurcis was Venetia's brother, and he conjured up a thousand scenes in which they were never separated, and wherein he always played an amiable and graceful part. Yet he loved the abbey; his painful infancy was not associated with that scene; it was not connected with any of those grovelling common-places of his life, from which he had shrunk back with instinctive disgust, even at a very tender age. Cadurcis was the spot to which, in his most miserable moments at Morpeth, he had always looked forward, as the only chance of emancipation from the distressing scene that surrounded him. He had been brought up with a due sense of his future position, and although he had ever affected a haughty indifference on the subject, from his disrelish from the coarse acquaintances who were perpetually reminding him, with chuckling self-complacency, of his future greatness, in secret he had ever brooded over his destiny as his only consolation. He had imbibed him from his own reflections, at a very early period of life, a due sense of the importance of his lot; he was proud of his hereditary honours, blended, as they were, with some glorious passages in the history of his country, and prouder of his still more ancient line. The eccentric exploits and the violent passions, by which his race had been ever characterised, were to him a source of secret exultation. Even the late lord, who certainly had no claims to his gratitude, for he had robbed the inheritance to the utmost of his power, commanded, from the wild decision of his life, the savage respect of his successor. In vain Mrs. Cadurcis would pour forth upon this, the favourite theme for her wrath and her lamentations, all the bitter expressions of her rage and wo. Plantagenet had never imbibed her prejudices against the departed, and had often irritated his mother by maintaining that the late lord was perfectly justified in his conduct.

But in these almost daily separations between Plantagenet and Venetia, how different was her lot to that of her companion! She was the confidante of all his domestic sorrows, and often he had requested her to exert her influence to obtain some pacifying missive from Lady Annabel, which might

secure him a quiet evening at Cadurcis; and whenever this had not been obtained, the last words of Venetia were ever not to loiter, and to remember to speak to his mother as much as he possibly could. Venetia returned to a happy home, welcomed by the smile of a soft and beautiful parent, and with words of affection sweeter than music. She found an engaging companion, who had no thought but for her welfare, her amusement, and her instruction; and often, when the curtains were drawn, the candles lit, and Venetia, holding her mother's hand, opened her book, she thought of poor Plantagenet, so differently situated, with no one to be kind to him, with no one to sympathise with his thoughts, and perhaps, at the very moment, goaded into some unhappy quarrel with his mother.

CHAPTER IX.

THE appearance of the Cadurcis family on the limited stage of her life, and the engrossing society of her companion, had entirely distracted the thoughts of Venetia from a subject to which in old days they were constantly recurring, and that was her father. By a process which had often perplexed her, and which she could never succeed in analysing, there had arisen in her mind, without any ostensible agency on the part of her mother which she could distinctly recall, a conviction that this was a topic on which she was never to speak. This idea had once haunted her, and she had seldom found herself alone without almost unconsciously musing over it. Notwithstanding the unvarying kindness of Lady Annabel, she exercised over her child a complete and unquestioned control. Venetia was brought up with strictness, which was only not felt to be severe, because the system was founded on the most entire affection; but, fervent as her love was for her mother, it was equalled by her profound respect, which every word and action of Lady Annabel tended to maintain.

In all the confidential effusions with Plantagenet, Venetia had never dwelt upon this mysterious subject; indeed in these conversations when they treated of their real and not ideal life, Venetia was a mere recipient: all that she could communicate, Plantagenet could observe; he it was who avenged himself at these moments for his habitual silence before third persons; it was to Venetia that he poured forth all his soul, and she was never weary of hearing his stories about Morpeth, and all his sorrows, disgusts, and afflictions. There was scarcely an individual in that little town with whom, from his lively narratives, she was not familiar; and it was to her sympathising heart that he confided all his future hopes and prospects, and confessed the strong pride he experienced in being a Cadurcis, which from all others was studiously concealed.

It had happened that the first Christmas-day after the settlement of the Cadurcis family at the abbey occurred in the middle of the week; and as the weather was severe, in order to prevent two journeys at such an inclement season, Lady Annabel persuaded Mrs. Cadurcis to pass the whole week at the hall. This arrangement gave such pleasure to Plantagenet that the walls of the a

hey, as the old post-chaise was preparing for their journey, quite resounded with his merriment. In vain, his mother, harassed with all the mysteries of packing, indulged in a thousand irritable expressions, which at any other time might have produced a broil or even a fray; Cadurcis did nothing but laugh. There was at the bottom of this boy's heart, with all his habitual gravity and reserve, a fund of humour which would occasionally break out, and which nothing could withstand. When he was alone with Venetia, he would imitate the old maids of Morpeth, and all the ceremonies of a provincial tea-party, with so much life and genuine fun, that Venetia was often obliged to stop in their rambles to indulge her overwhelming mirth. When they were alone, and he was gloomy, she was often accustomed to say, "Now, dear Plantagenet, tell me how the old ladies at Morpeth drink tea."

This morning at the abbey Cadurcis was irresistible, and, the more excited his mother became with the difficulties which beset her, the more gay and fluent were his quips and cranks. Puffing, panting, and perspiring, now directing her waiting-woman, now scolding her man-servant, and now ineffectually attempting to box her son's ears, Mrs. Cadurcis indeed offered a most ridiculous spectacle.

"John!" screamed Mrs. Cadurcis, in a voice of bewildered passion, and stamping with rage, "is that the place for my cap-box? You do it on purpose, that you do!"

"John," mimicked Lord Cadurcis, "how dare you do it on purpose!"

"Take that, you brat," shrieked the mother, and she struck her own hand against the doorway. "O! I'll give it you, I'll give it you," she bellowed under the united influence of rage and pain, and she pursued her agile child, who dodged her on the other side of the post-chaise, which he persisted in calling the family carriage.

"O! ma'am, my lady," exclaimed the waiting-woman, sallying forth from the abbey, "what is to be done with the parrot when we are away! Mrs. Brown says she won't see to it, that she won't; ta'n't her place."

This rebellion of Mrs. Brown was a diversion in favour of Plantagenet. Mrs. Cadurcis waddled down the cloisters with precipitation, rushed into the kitchen, seized the surprised Mrs. Brown by the shoulder, and gave her a good shake; and darting at the cage which held the parrot, she bore it in triumph to the carriage. "I will take the bird with me," said Mrs. Cadurcis.

"We cannot take the bird inside, madam," said Plantagenet, "for it will overhear all our conversation, and repeat it. We shall not be able to abuse our friends."

Mrs. Cadurcis threw the cage at her son's head, who, for the sake of the bird, dexterously caught it, but declared at the same time he would immediately throw it into the lake. Then Mrs. Cadurcis began to cry with rage and seating herself on the open steps of the chaise, sobbed hysterically. Plantagenet stole round on tip-toe, and peeped in her face,—"A merry Christmas and a happy new year, Mrs. Cadurcis!" said her son.

"How can I be merry and happy, treated as I am?" sobbed the mother. "You do not treat Lady Annabel so. O! no, it is only your mother whom you use in this manner! Go to Cherbury. Go by all means, but go by yourself; I shall not

go: go to your friends, Lord Cadurcis; they are your friends, not mine, and I hope they are satisfied, now that they have robbed me of the affections of my child. I have seen what they have been after all this time. I am not so blind as some people think. No! I see how it is. I am nobody. Your poor mother, who brought you up, and educated you, is nobody. This is the end of all your Latin and French, and your fine lessons Honour your father and your mother, Lord Cadurcis; that's a finer lesson than all. Oh! oh! oh!"

This allusion to the Herberts suddenly calmed Plantagenet. He felt in an instant the injudiciousness of fostering by his conduct the latent jealousy which always lurked at the bottom of his mother's heart, and which nothing but the united talent and goodness of Lady Annabel could have hitherto baffled. So he rejoined, in a kind yet playful tone, "If you will be good, I will give you a kiss for a Christmas-box, mother, and the parrot shall go inside if you like."

"The parrot may stay at home, I do not care about it: but I cannot bear quarrelling; it is not my temper, you naughty, very naughty boy."

"My dear mother," continued his lordship, in a soothing tone, "these scenes always happen when people are going to travel. I assure you it is quite a part of packing up."

"You will be the death of me, that you will," said the mother, "with all your violence. You are worse than your father, that you are."

"Come, mother," said her son, drawing nearer, and just touching her shoulder with his hand, "will you not have my Christmas-box?"

The mother extended her cheek, which the son slightly touched with his lip, and then Mrs. Cadurcis jumped up as lively as ever, called for a glass of Mountain, and began rating the foot-boy.

At length the post-chaise was packed; they had a long journey before them, because Lord Cadurcis would go round by Southport, to call upon a tradesman whom a month before he had commissioned to get a trinket made for him in London, according to the newest fashion, as a present for Venetia. The commission was executed; Mrs. Cadurcis, who had been consulted in confidence by her son on the subject, was charmed with the result of their united taste. She had very good-naturedly contributed one of her own few, but very fine, emeralds, to the gift; upon the back of the brooch was engraved:—

TO VENETIA, FROM HER AFFECTIONATE BROTHER,
PLANTAGENET.

"I hope she will be a sister, and more than a sister to you," said Mrs. Cadurcis.

"Why?" inquired her son, rather confused.

"You may look further, and fare worse," said Mrs. Cadurcis.

Plantagenet blushed; and yet he wondered why he blushed: he understood his mother, but he could not pursue the conversation; his heart fluttered.

A most cordial greeting awaited them at Cherbury; Dr. Masham was there, and was to remain until Monday. Mrs. Cadurcis would have opened about the present immediately, but her son warned her on the threshold that if she said a word about it, or seemed to be aware of its previous existence,

even when it was shown, he would fling it instantly away in the snow; and her horror of this catastrophe bridled her tongue. Mrs. Cadurcis, however, was happy, and Lady Annabel was glad to see her so; the doctor, too, paid her some most charming compliments; the good lady was in the highest spirits, for she was always in extremes, and at this moment she would willingly have laid down her life if she had thought the sacrifice could have contributed to the welfare of the Herberts.

Cadurcis himself drew Venetia aside, and then, holding the brooch reversed, he said, with rather a confused air, "Read that, Venetia."

"Oh! Plantagenet!" she said, very much astonished.

"You see, Venetia," he added, leaving it in her hand, "it is yours."

Venetia turned the jewel; her eye was dazzled with its brilliancy.

"It is too grand for a little girl, Plantagenet," she exclaimed, a little pale.

"No, it is not," said Plantagenet, firmly; "besides, you will not always be a little girl; and then, if ever we do not live together as we do now, you will always remember you have a brother."

"I must show it mamma; I must ask her permission to take it, Plantagenet."

Venetia went up to her mother, who was talking to Mrs. Cadurcis. She had not courage to speak before that lady and Dr. Masham, so she called her mother aside.

"Mamma," she said, "something has happened."

"What, my dear?" said Lady Annabel, somewhat surprised at the seriousness of her tone.

"Look at this, mamma!" said Venetia, giving her the brooch.

Lady Annabel looked at the jewel, and read the inscription. It was a more precious offering than the mother would willingly have sanctioned, but she was too highly bred, and too thoughtful of the feelings of others, to hesitate for a moment to admire it herself, and authorise its acceptance by her daughter. So she walked up to Cadurcis and gave him a mother's embrace for his magnificent present to his sister, placed the brooch itself near Venetia's heart, and then led her daughter to Mrs. Cadurcis, that the gratified mother might admire the testimony of her son's taste and affection. It was a most successful present, and Cadurcis felt grateful to his mother for her share in its production, and the very proper manner in which she received the announcement of its offering.

CHAPTER X.

THIS was Christmas-eve; the snow was falling briskly. After dinner they were glad to cluster round the large fire in the green drawing-room. Dr. Masham had promised to read the evening service in the chapel, which was now lit up, and the bell was sounding that the cottagers might have the opportunity of attending.

Plantagenet and Venetia followed the elders to the chapel; they walked hand-in-hand down the long galleries.

"I should like to go all over this house," said

Plantagenet, to his companion. "Have you ever been?"

"Never," said Venetia; "half of it is shut up. Nobody ever goes into it except mamma."

In the night there was a violent snow-storm; not only was the fall extremely heavy, but the wind was so high that it carried the snow off the hills, and all the roads were blocked up; in many places ten or twelve feet deep. All communication was stopped. This was an adventure that amused the children, though the rest looked rather grave. Plantagenet expressed to Venetia his wish that the snow would never melt, and that they might remain at Cherbury for ever.

The children were to have a holyday this week, and they had planned some excursions in the park and neighbourhood, but now they were all prisoners to the house. They wandered about, turning the staircase into mountains, the great hall into an ocean, and the different rooms into so many various regions. They amused themselves with their adventures, and went on endless voyages of discovery. Every moment Plantagenet longed still more for the opportunity of exploring the uninhabited chambers; but Venetia shook her head, because she was sure Lady Annabel would not grant them permission.

"Did you ever live at any place before you came to Cherbury?" inquired Lord Cadurcis of Venetia.

"I know I was not born here," said Venetia; "but I was so young that I have no recollection of any other place."

"And did any one live here before you came?" said Plantagenet.

"I do not know," said Venetia, "I never heard if any body did. I—I," she continued, a little constrained, "I know nothing."

"Do you remember your papa?" said Plantagenet.

"No," said Venetia.

"Then he must have died almost as soon as you were born," said Lord Cadurcis.

"I suppose he must," said Venetia, and her heart trembled.

"I wonder if he ever lived here?" said Plantagenet.

"Mamma does not like me to ask questions about my papa," said Venetia, "and I cannot tell you any thing."

"Ah! your papa was different to mine, Venetia," said Lord Cadurcis; my mother talks of him often enough. They did not agree very well; and, when we quarrel, she always says I remind her of him. I dare say Lady Annabel loved your papa very much."

"I am sure mamma did," replied Venetia.

The children returned to the drawing-room, and joined their friends: Mrs. Cadurcis was sitting on the sofa, occasionally dozing over a sermon; Dr. Masham was standing with Lady Annabel in the recess of a distant window. Her ladyship's countenance was averted; she was reading a newspaper, which the doctor had given her. As the door opened, Lady Annabel glanced round: her countenance was agitated; she folded up the newspaper rather hastily, and gave it to the doctor.

"And what have you been doing, little folks?" inquired the doctor of the newcomers.

"We have been playing at the History of Rome"

said Venetia, "and, now that we have conquered every place, we do not know what to do."

"The usual result of conquest," said the doctor, smiling. "This snow-storm is a great trial for you; I begin to believe that, after all, you would be more pleased to take your holidays at another opportunity."

"We could amuse ourselves very well," said Plantagenet, "if Lady Annabel would be so kind as to permit us to explore the part of the house that is shut up."

"That would be a strange mode of diversion," said Lady Annabel, very quietly, "and I do not think by any means a suitable one. There cannot be much amusement in roaming over a number of dusty unfurnished rooms."

"And so nicely dressed as you are too!" said Mrs. Cadurcis, rousing herself: I wonder such an idea could enter your head!"

"It snows harder than ever," said Venetia; "I think, after all, I shall learn my French vocabulary."

"If it snows to-morrow," said Plantagenet, "we will do our lessons as usual. Holydays, I find, are not so amusing as I supposed."

The snow did continue, and the next day the children voluntarily suggested that they should resume their usual course of life. With their mornings occupied, they found their sources of relaxation ample; and in the evening they acted plays, and Lady Annabel dressed them up in her shawls; and Dr. Masham read Shakspeare to them.

It was about the fourth day of the visit that Plantagenet, loitering in the hall with Venetia, said to her, "I saw your mamma go into the locked-up rooms last night. I do so wish that she would let us go there."

"Last night!" said Venetia; "when could you have seen her last night?"

"Very late: the fact is, I could not sleep, and I took it into my head to walk up and down the gallery. I often do so at the abbey. I like to walk up and down an old gallery alone at night. I do not know why; but I like it very much. Every thing is so still, and then you hear the owls. I cannot make out why it is; but nothing gives me more pleasure than to get up when every body is asleep. It seems as if one were the only living person in the world. I sometimes think, when I am a man, I will always get up in the night, and go to bed in the day-time. Is not that odd?"

"But mamma!" said Venetia, "how came you to see mamma?"

"O! I am certain of it," said the little lord; "for, to tell you the truth, I was rather frightened at first; only I thought it would not do for a Cadurcis to be afraid, so I stood against the wall, in the shade, and I was determined, whatever happened, not to cry out."

"O! you frighten me so, Plantagenet!" said Venetia.

"Ah! you might have been frightened if you had been there; past midnight, a tall white figure, and a light!—However, there is nothing to be alarmed about; it was Lady Annabel, nobody else. I saw her as clearly as I see you now. She walked along the gallery, and went to the very door you showed me the other morning. I marked the door; I could not mistake it. She unlocked it, and she went in."

"And then!" inquired Venetia, eagerly.

"Why then, like a fool, I went back to bed," said Plantagenet. "I thought it would seem so foolish if I were caught, and I might not have had the good fortune to escape twice. I know no more."

Venetia could not reply. She heard a laugh, and then her mother's voice. They were called with a gay summons to see a colossal snow-ball, that some of the younger servants had made and rolled to the window of the terracc-room. It was ornamented with a crown of holly and mistletoe, and the parti-coloured berries looked bright, in a straggling sunbeam which had fought its way through the still loaded sky, and fell upon the terrace.

In the evening, as they sat round the fire, Mrs. Cadurcis began telling Venetia a long rambling ghost story, which she declared was a real ghost story, and had happened in her own family. Such communications were not very pleasing to Lady Annabel, but she was too well bred to interrupt her guest. When, however, the narrative was finished, and Venetia by her observations, evidently indicated the effect that it had produced upon her mind, her mother took the occasion of impressing upon her the little credibility which should be attached to such legends, and the rational process by which many unquestionable apparitions might be accounted for. Dr. Masham, following this train, recounted a story of a ghost which had been generally received in a neighbouring village for a considerable period, and attested by the most veracious witnesses, but which was explained afterwards by turning out to be an instance of somnambulism. Venetia appeared to be extremely interested in the subject; she inquired much about sleep-walkers and sleep-walking; and a great many examples of the habit were cited. At length she said, "mamma, did you ever walk in your sleep?"

"Not to my knowledge," said Lady Annabel, smiling; "I should hope not."

"Well, do you know," said Plantagenet, who had hitherto listened in silence, "it is very curious, but I once dreamt that you did, Lady Annabel."

"Indeed!" said the lady.

"Yes! and I dreamt it last night too," continued the little lord. "I thought I was sleeping in the uninhabited rooms here, and the door opened, and you walked in with a light."

"No, Plantagenet," said Venetia, who was seated by him, and who spoke in a whisper, "it was not—"

"Hush!" said Lord Cadurcis, in a low voice.

"Well, that was a strange dream," said Mrs. Cadurcis; that is not, doctor?"

"Now, children, I will tell you a very curious story," said the doctor, "and it is quite a true one, for it happened to myself."

The doctor was soon embarked in his tale, and his audience speedily became interested in the narrative; but Lady Annabel for some time maintained complete silence.

CHAPTER XI.

THE spring returned; the intimate relations between the two families were each day more confirmed. Lady Annabel had presented her daughter and Plantagenet each with a beautiful pony,

but their rides were at first to be confined to the park, and to be ever attended by a groom. In time, however, duly accompanied, they were permitted to extend their progress as far as Cadurcis. Mrs. Cadureis had consented to the wishes of her son to restore the old garden, and Venetia was his principal adviser and assistant in the enterprise. Plantagenet was fond of the old abbey, and nothing but the agreeable society of Cherbury on the one hand, and the relief of escaping from his mother on the other, could have induced him to pass so little of his time at home; but, with Venetia for his companion, his mornings at the abbey passed charmingly, and, as the days were now at their full length again, there was abundance of time after their studies at Cherbury to ride together through the woods to Cadurcis, spend several hours there, and for Venetia to return to the hall before sunset. Plantagenet always accompanied her to the limits of the Cherbury grounds, and then returned by himself solitary and full of fancies.

Lady Annabel had promised the children that they should some day ride together to Marringhurst, the rectory of Dr. Masham, to eat strawberries and cream. This was to be a great festival, and was looked forward to with corresponding interest. Her ladyship had kindly offered to accompany Mrs. Cadureis in the carriage; but that lady was an invalid, and declined the journey; so Lady Annabel, who herself was a good horsewoman, mounted her mare with Venetia and Plantagenet.

Marringhurst was only five miles from Cherbury by a cross-road, which was scarcely passable for carriages. The rectory house was a substantial, square-built, red brick mansion, shaded by gigantic elms, but the southern front covered with a famous vine, trained over it with elaborate care, and of which and his espaliers the doctor was very proud. The garden was thickly stocked with choice fruit-trees; there was not the slightest pretence of pleasure grounds; but there was a capital bowling-green, and, above all, a grotto, where the doctor smoked his evening pipe, and moralized in the midst of his cucumbers and cabbages. On each side extended the meadows of his glebe, where his kine ruminated at will. It was altogether a scene as devoid of the picturesque as any that could be well imagined; flat, but not low, and rich, and green, and still.

His expected guests met as warm a reception as such a hearty friend might be expected to afford. Dr. Masham was scarcely less delighted at the excursion than the children themselves, and rejoiced in the sunny day that made every thing more glad and bright. The garden, the grotto, the bowling-green, and all the novelty of the spot, greatly diverted his young companions; they visited his farm-yard, were introduced to his poultry, rambled over his meadows, and admired his cows, which he had collected with equal care and knowledge. Nor was the interior of this bachelor's residence devoid of amusement. Every nook and corner was filled with objects of interest; and every thing was in the most admirable order. The goddess of neatness and precision reigned supreme, especially in his hall, which, though barely six feet square, was a cabinet of rural curiosities. His guns, his fishing tackle, a cabinet of birds stuffed by himself, a fox in a glass case that seemed absolutely running, and an otter with a real fish in its mouth, in turn

delighted them; but chiefly, perhaps, his chimney corner of Dutch tiles, all scriptural subjects, which Venetia and Plantagenet emulated each other in discovering.

Then his library, which was rare and splendid, for the doctor was one of the most renowned scholars in the kingdom, and his pictures, his prints and his gold fish, and his canary birds; it seemed they never could exhaust such sources of endless amusement; to say nothing of every other room in the house, for, from the garret to the dairy, his guests encouraged him in introducing them to every thing, every person, and every place.

"And this is the way we old bachelors contrive to pass our lives," said the good doctor; "and now, my dear lady, Goody Blount will give us some dinner."

The doctor's repast was a very substantial one; he seemed resolved, at one ample swoop, to repay Lady Annabel for all her hospitality; and he really took such delight in their participation of it, that his principal guest was constrained to check herself in more than one warning intimation that moderation was desirable, were it only for the sake of the strawberries and cream. All this time, his housekeeper, Goody Blount, as he called her, in her lace cap and ruffles, as precise and starch as an old picture, stood behind his chair with pleased solemnity, directing, with unruffled composure, the movements of the liveried bumpkin who this day was promoted to the honour of "waiting at table."

"Come," said the doctor, as the cloth was cleared, "I must bargain for one toast, Lady Annabel: Church and State."

"What is Church and State?" said Venetia.

"As good things, Miss Venetia, as strawberries and cream," said the doctor, laughing; "and, like them, always best united."

After their repast, the children went into the garden to amuse themselves. They strolled about some time, until Plantagenet at length took it into his head that he should like to learn to play at bowls; and he said, if Venetia would wait in the grotto, where they then were talking, he would run back and ask the doctor if the servant might teach him. He was not long absent; but appeared, on his return, a little agitated. Venetia inquired if he had been successful; but he shook his head, and said, he had not asked.

"Why did you not?" said Venetia.

"I did not like," he replied, looking very serious; "something happened."

"What could have happened?" said Venetia.

"Something strange," was his answer.

"O, do tell me, Plantagenet!"

"Why," said he, in a low voice, "your mamma is crying."

"Crying!" exclaimed Venetia; "my dear mamma crying! I must go to her directly."

"Hush!" said Plantagenet, shaking his head, "you must not go."

"I must."

"No, you must not go, Venetia," was his reply; "I am sure she does not want us to know she is crying."

"What did she say to you?"

"She did not see me; the doctor did, and he gave me a nod to go away."

"I never saw mamma cry," said Venetia.

"Don't you say any thing about it, Venetia," said Plantagenet, with a very manly air. "Listen to what I say."

"I do, Plantagenet, always; but still I should like to know what mamma is crying about. Do tell me all about it."

"Why I came to the room by the open windows, and your mamma was standing up, with her back to me, and leaning on the mantel-piece, with her face in her handkerchief; and the doctor was standing up too, only his back was to the fire-place; and when he saw me, he made me a sign to go away, and I went directly."

"Are you sure mamma was crying?"

"I heard her sob."

"I think I shall cry," said Venetia.

"You must not; you must know nothing about it. If you let your mamma know that I saw her crying, I shall never tell you any thing again."

"What do you think she was crying about, Plantagenet?"

"I cannot say; perhaps she had been talking about your papa. I do not want to play at bowls now," added Plantagenet. "Let us go and see the cows."

In the course of half an hour the servant summoned the children to the house. The horses were ready, and they were now to return. Lady Annabel received them with her usual cheerfulness.

"Well, dear children," she said, "have you been very much amused?"

Venetia ran forward and embraced her mother with even unusual fondness. She was mindful of Plantagenet's injunctions, and was resolved not to revive her mother's grief by any allusion that could recall the past; but her heart was, nevertheless, full of sympathy, and she could not have rode home, had she not thus expressed her love for her mother.

With the exception of this strange incident, over which, afterwards, Venetia often pondered, and which made her rather serious the whole of the ride home, this expedition to Marringhurst was a very happy day.

CHAPTER XII.

THIS happy summer was succeeded by a singularly wet autumn. Weeks of continuous rain rendered it difficult even for the little Cadurcis, who defied the elements, to be as constant as heretofore in his daily visits to Cherbury. His mother, too, grew daily a greater invalid, and, with increasing sufferings and infirmities, the natural captiousness of her temper proportionably exhibited itself. She insisted upon the companionship of her son, and that he should not leave the house in such unseasonable weather. If he resisted, she fell into one of her jealous rages, and taunted him with loving strangers better than his own mother, Cadurcis, on the whole, behaved very well; he thought of Lady Annabel's injunctions, and restrained his passion. Yet he was not repaid for the sacrifice; his mother made no effort to render their joint society agreeable, or even endurable. She was rarely in an amiable mood, and generally either irritable or sullen. If the weather held up a little, and he ventured to pay a visit to Cherbury,

he was sure to be welcomed back with a fit of passion; either Mrs. Cadurcis was angered for being left alone, or had fermented herself into fury by the certainty of his catching a fever. If Plantagenet remained at the abbey, she was generally sullen; and, as he himself was naturally silent under any circumstances, his mother would indulge in that charming monologue, so conducive to domestic serenity, termed "talking at a person," and was continually insinuating that she supposed he found it very dull to pass his day with her, and that she dared say that somebody could be lively enough if he were somewhere else.

Cadurcis would turn pale, and bite his lip, and then leave the room; and whole days would sometimes pass with barely a monosyllable being exchanged between this parent and child. Cadurcis had found some opportunities of pouring forth his grief and mortification into the ears of Venetia, and they had reached her mother; but Lady Annabel, though she sympathised with this interesting boy, invariably counselled duty. The morning studies were abandoned, but a quantity of books were sent over from Cherbury for Plantagenet, and Lady Annabel seized every opportunity of conciliating Mrs. Cadurcis temper in favour of her child, by the attention which she paid the mother. The weather, however, prevented either herself or Venetia from visiting the abbey; and, on the whole, the communications between the two establishments and their inmates had become very rare.

Though now a continual inmate of the abbey, Cadurcis was seldom the companion of his mother. They met at their meals, and that was all. He entered the room every day with an intention of conciliating; but the mutual tempers of the mother and the son were so quick and sensitive, that he always failed in his purpose, and could only avoid a storm by dogged silence. This enraged Mrs. Cadurcis more even than his impertinence; she had no conduct; she lost all command over herself, and did not hesitate to address to her child terms of reproach and abuse, which a vulgar mind could only conceive and a coarse tongue alone express. What a contrast to Cherbury, to the mild maternal elegance and provident kindness of Lady Annabel, and the sweet tones of Venetia's ever-sympathising voice! Cadurcis, though so very young was gifted with an innate fastidiousness, that made him shrink from a rude woman. His feelings were different in regard to men; he sympathised at a very early age with the bold and the energetic; his favourites among the peasantry were ever those who excelled in athletic sports; and, though he never expressed the opinion, he did not look upon the poacher with the evil eye of his class. But a coarse and violent woman jarred even his young nerves; and this woman was his mother, his only parent, almost his only relation; for he had no near relative, except a cousin whom he had never even seen, the pennyless orphan of a pennyless brother of his father, and who had been sent to sea at a very early age; so that, after all, his mother was the only natural friend he had. This poor little boy would fly from that mother with a sullen brow, or, perhaps, even with a harsh and cutting repartee; and then he would lock himself up in his room and weep. But he allowed no witnesses in this weakness. The lad was very proud. If any of the household

passed by as he quitted the saloon, and stared for a moment at his pale and agitated face, he would coin a smile for the instant, and say even a kind word, for he was very courteous to his inferiors, and all the servants loved him; and then take refuge in his solitary woe.

Relieved by this indulgence of his mortified heart, Cadureis looked about him for resources. The rain was pouring in torrents, and the splash of the troubled and swollen lake might be heard even at the abbey. At night the rising gusts of wind, for the nights were always clear and stormy, echoed down the cloisters with a wild moan to which he loved to listen. In the morning he beheld with interest the savage spoils of the tempest; mighty branches of trees strewn about, and sometimes a vast trunk uprooted from its ancient settlement. Irresistibly the conviction impressed itself upon his mind, that, if he were alone in his old abbey, with no mother to break that strange fountain of fancies that seemed always to bubble up in his solitude, he might be happy. He wanted no companions; he loved to be alone, to listen to the winds, and gaze upon the trees and waters, and wander in those dim cloisters and that gloomy gallery.

From the first hour of his arrival he had loved the venerable hall of his fathers. Its appearance harmonised with all the associations of his race. Power and pomp, ancestral fame, the legendary respect of ages, all that was great, exciting, and heroic, all that was marked out from the commonplace current of human events, hovered round him. In the halls of Cadureis he was the Cadureis; though a child, he was keenly sensible of his high race; his whole being sympathised with their glory; he was capable of dying sooner than of disgracing them; and then came the memory of his mother's sharp voice and harsh vulgar words, and he shivered with disgust.

Forced into solitude, forced to feed upon his own mind, Cadureis found in that solitude each day a dearer charm, and in that mind a richer treasure of interest and curiosity. He loved to wander about, dream of the past, and conjure up a future as glorious. What was he to be?—What should be his career?—Whither should he wend his course? Even at his early age, dreams of far lands flitted over his mind, and schemes of fantastic and adventurous life. But now he was a boy—a wretched boy—controlled by a vulgar and narrow-minded woman! And this servitude must last for years; yes! years must elapse before he was his own master. O! if he could only pass them alone, without a human voice to disturb his musings, a single form to distract his vision!

Under the influence of such feelings, even Cherbury figured to his fancy in somewhat faded colours. There, indeed, he was loved and cherished; there, indeed, no sound was ever heard, no sight ever seen, that could annoy or mortify the high pitch of his unconscious ideal; but still, even at Cherbury, he was a child. Under the influence of daily intercourse, his tender heart had balanced, perhaps even out-weighted, his fiery imagination. That constant yet delicate affection had softened all his soul: he had no time but to be grateful and to love. He returned home only to muse over their sweet society, and contrast their refined and gentle life with the harsh rude hearth that awaited him. Whatever might be his recep-

tion at home, he was thrown back for solace on their memory, not upon his own heart; and he felt the delightful conviction that to-morrow would renew the spell whose enchantment had enabled him to endure the present vexation. But now the magic of that intercourse had ceased; after a few days of restlessness and repining, he discovered that he must find in his desolation sterner sources of support than the memory of Venetia, and the recollections of the domestic joys of Cherbury. It was astonishing with what rapidity the character of Cadureis developed itself in solitude; and strange was the contrast between the gentle child who, a few weeks before, had looked forward with so much interest to accompanying Venetia to a childish festival, and the stern and moody being who paced the solitary cloisters of Cadureis, and then would withdraw to his lonely chamber and the amusement of a book. He was at this time deeply interested in Purchas's Pilgrimage, one of the few books of which the late lord had not despoiled him. Narratives of travels and voyages always particularly pleased him; he had an idea that he was laying up information which might be useful to him hereafter; the Cherbury collection was rich in this class of volumes, and Lady Annabel encouraged their perusal.

In this way many weeks elapsed at the abbey, during which the visits of Plantagenet to Cherbury were very few. Sometimes, if the weather cleared for an hour during the morning, he would mount his pony, and gallop without stopping to the hall. The rapidity of the motion excited his mind; he fancied himself, as he embraced Venetia, some chieftain who had escaped for a moment from his castle to visit his mistress; his imagination conjured up a war between the opposing towers of Cadureis and Cherbury; and when his mother fell into a passion on his return, it passed with him only, according to its length and spirit, as a brisk skirmish or a general engagement.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE afternoon, on his return from Cherbury, Plantagenet found the fire extinguished in the little room which he had appropriated to himself, and where he kept his books. As he had expressed his wish to the servant that the fire should be kept up, he complained to him of the neglect, but was informed, in reply, that the fire had been allowed to go out by his mother's orders, and that she desired in future that he would always read in the saloon. Plantagenet had sufficient self-control to make no observation before the servant, and soon after joined his mother, who looked very sullen, as if she were conscious that she had laid a train for an explosion.

Dinner was now served, a short and silent meal. Lord Cadureis did not choose to speak because he felt aggrieved, and his mother because she was husbanding her energies for the contest which she believed impending. At length, when the table was cleared, and the servant departed, Lord Cadureis said in a very quiet tone, "I think I shall write to my guardian to-morrow about my going to Eton."

"You shall do no such thing," said Mrs. Ca

durcis, bristing up, "I never heard such a ridiculous idea in my life as a boy like you writing letters on such subjects to a person you have never even seen. When I think it proper that you should go to Eton I shall write."

"I wish you would think it proper now then, ma'am."

"I won't be dictated to," said Mrs. Cadurecis, fiercely.

"I was not dictating," replied her son, calmly.

"You would if you could," said his mother.

"Time enough to find fault with me when I do, ma'am."

"There is enough to find fault about at all times, sir."

"On which side, Mrs. Cadurecis?" inquired Plantagenet, with a sneer.

"Don't aggravate me, Lord Cadurecis," said his mother.

"How am I aggravating you, ma'am?"

"I won't be answered," said the mother.

"I prefer silence myself," said the son.

"I won't be insulted in my own room, sir," said Mrs. Cadurecis.

"I am not insulting you, Mrs. Cadurecis," said Plantagenet, rather fiercely; "and as for your own room, I never wish to enter it. Indeed I should not be here at this moment, had you not ordered my fire to be put out, and particularly requested that I should sit in the saloon."

"Oh! you are a vastly obedient person, I dare say," replied Mrs. Cadurecis, very pettishly. "How long, I should like to know, have my requests received such particular attention? Pooh!"

"Well, then, I will order my fire to be lighted again," said Plantagenet.

"You shall do no such thing," said the mother; "I am mistress in this house. No one shall give orders here but me, and you may write to your guardian and tell him that if you like."

"I shall certainly not write to my guardian for the first time," said Lord Cadurecis, "about any such nonsense."

"Nonsense, sir! Nonsense you said, did you? Your mother nonsense! This is the way to treat a parent, is it? I am nonsense, am I? I will teach you what nonsense is. Nonsense shall be very good sense; you shall find that, sir, that you shall. Nonsense, indeed! I'll write to your guardian, that I will! You call your mother nonsense, do you? And where did you learn that, I should like to know? Nonsense, indeed! This comes of your going to Chisbury! So your mother is nonsense; a pretty lesson for Lady Annabel to teach you. Oh! I'll speak my mind to her, that I will."

"What has Lady Annabel to do with it?" inquired Lord Cadurecis in a loud tone.

"Don't threaten me, sir," said Mrs. Cadurecis, with violent gesture, "I won't be menaced; I won't be menaced by my son. Pretty goings on, indeed! But I will put a stop to them; will I not? that is all. Nonsense, indeed; your mother nonsense!"

"Well, you do talk nonsense, and the greatest," said Plantagenet, doggedly; "you are talking nonsense now, you are always talking nonsense, and you never open your mouth about Lady Annabel without talking nonsense."

"If I was not very ill I would give it you," said his mother, grinding her teeth. "O! you brat! You wicked brat you! Is this the way to

address me? I have half a mind to shake your viciousness out of you, that I have! You are worse than your father, that you are!"—and here she wept with rage.

"I dare say my father was not so bad, after all," said Lord Cadurecis.

"What should you know about your father, sir?" said Mrs. Cadurecis. "How dare you speak about your father!"

"Who should speak about a father but a son!"

"Hold your impudence, sir!"

"I am not impudent, ma'am."

"You aggravating brat!" exclaimed the enraged woman, "I wish I had something to throw at you!"

"Did you throw things at my father!" asked his lordship.

Mrs. Cadurecis went into an hysterical rage; then, suddenly jumping up, she rushed at her son. Lord Cadurecis took up a position behind the table, but the sportive and mocking air which he generally instinctively assumed on these occasions, and which, while it irritated his mother more, was in reality affected by the boy from a sort of nervous desire of preventing these dreadful exposures from assuming a too tragic tone, did not characterise his countenance on the present occasion; on the contrary, it was pale, but composed and very serious. Mrs. Cadurecis, after one or two ineffectual attempts to catch him, paused and panted for breath. He took advantage of this momentary cessation, and spoke thus—"Mother, I am in no humour for frolics. I moved out of your way that you might not strike me, because I have made up my mind that, if ever you strike me again, I will live with you no longer. Now I have given you warning; do what you please; I shall sit down in this chair and not move. If you strike me, you know the consequences." So saying, his lordship resumed his chair.

Mrs. Cadurecis simultaneously sprang forward and boxed his ears; and then her son rose without the slightest expression of any kind, and slowly quitted the chamber.

Mrs. Cadurecis remained alone in a savage sulk: hours passed away, and her son never made his appearance. Then she rang the bell, and ordered the servant to tell Lord Cadurecis that tea was ready; but the servant returned, and reported that his lordship had locked himself up in his room, and would not reply to his inquiries. Determined not to give in, Mrs. Cadurecis, at length, retired for the night, rather regretting her violence, but still sullen. Having well scolded her waiting-woman, she, at length, fell asleep.

The morning brought breakfast, but no Lord Cadurecis; in vain were all the messages of his mother, her son would make no reply to them. Mrs. Cadurecis, at length, personally repaired to his room and knocked at the door, but she was as unsuccessful as the servants; she began to think he would starve, and desired the servant to offer from himself to bring his meal. Still silence. Indignant at his treatment of these overtures of conciliation, Mrs. Cadurecis returned to the saloon, confident that hunger, if no other impulse, would bring her wild cub out of his lair; but, just before dinner, her waiting-woman came running into the room.

"O, ma'am, ma'am, I don't know where Lord Cadurecis has gone; but I have just seen John, and he says there was no pony in the stable this morning."

Mrs. Cadureis sprang up, rushed to her son's chamber, found the door still locked, ordered it to be burst open, and then it turned out that his lordship had never been there at all, for the bed was unused. Mrs. Cadureis was frightened out of her life; the servants, to console her, assured her that Plantagenet must be at Cherbury; and while she believed their representations, which were probable, she became not only more composed, but resumed her jealousy and sullenness. Gone to Cherbury, indeed! No doubt of it! Let him remain at Cherbury. Execrating Lady Annabel, she flung herself into her easy chair, and dined alone, preparing herself to speak her mind on her son's return.

The night, however, did not bring him, and Mrs. Cadureis began to recur to her alarm. Much as she now disliked Lady Annabel, she could not resist the conviction that her ladyship would not permit Plantagenet to remain at Cherbury. Nevertheless, jealous, passionate, and obstinate, she stifled her fears, vented her spleen on her unhappy domestics, and, finally, exhausting herself by a storm of passion about some very unimportant subject, again sought refuge in sleep.

She awoke early in a fright, and inquired immediately for her son. He had not been seen. She ordered the abbey bell to be sounded, sent messengers throughout the demesne, and directed all the offices to be searched. At first she thought he must have returned, and slept, perhaps, in a barn; then she adopted the more probable conclusion, that he had drowned himself in the lake. Then she went into hysterics; called Plantagenet her lost darling; declared he was the best and most dutiful of sons, and the image of his poor father—then abused all the servants, and then abused herself.

About noon she grew quite distracted, and rushed about the house with her hair dishevelled, and in a dressing-gown—looked in all the closets, behind the screens, under the chairs, into her work-box—but, strange to say, with no success. Then she went off into a swoon, and her servants, alike frightened about master and mistress, mother and son, despatched a messenger immediately to Cherbury for intelligence, advice, and assistance. In less than an hour's time the messenger returned, and informed them that Lord Cadureis had not been at Cherbury since two days back, but that Lady Annabel was very sorry to hear that their mistress was so ill, and would come on to see her immediately. In the mean time Lady Annabel added, that she had sent to Dr. Masham, and had great hopes that Lord Cadureis was at Marringhurst. Mrs. Cadureis, who had now come to, as her waiting-woman described the returning consciousness of her mistress, eagerly embraced the hope held out of Plantagenet being at Marringhurst, poured forth a thousand expressions of gratitude, admiration, and affection for Lady Annabel, who, she declared, was her best, her only friend, and the being in the world whom she loved most, next to her unhappy and injured child.

After another hour of suspense Lady Annabel arrived, and her entrance was the signal for a renewed burst of hysterics from Mrs. Cadureis, so wild and terrible, that they must have been contagious to any female of less disciplined emotions than her guest.

CHAPTER XIV.

TOWARDS the evening, Dr. Masham arrived at Cadureis. He could give no intelligence of Plantagenet, who had not called at Marringhurst; but he offered, and was prepared, to undertake his pursuit. The good doctor had his saddle bags well stocked, and was now on his way to Southport, that being the nearest town, and where he doubted not to gain some tidings of the fugitive. Mrs. Cadureis he found so indisposed, that he anticipated the charitable intentions of Lady Annabel not to quit her; and, after having bid them place their confidence in Providence and his humble exertions, he at once departed on his researches.

In the meantime let us return to the little lord himself. Having secured the advantages of a long start, by the device of turning the key of his chamber, he repaired to the stables, and, finding no one to observe him, saddled his pony and galloped away, without plan or purpose. An instinctive love of novelty and adventure induced him to direct his course by a road which he had never before pursued; and, after two or three miles' progress through a wild open country of brushwood, he found that he had entered that considerable forest which formed the boundary of many of the views from Cadureis. The afternoon was clear and still, the sun shining in the light blue sky, and the wind altogether hushed. On each side of the winding road spread the bright green turf, occasionally shaded by picturesque groups of doddered oaks. The calm beauty of the sylvan scene wonderfully touched the fancy of the youthful fugitive; it soothed and gratified him. He pulled up his pony; patted its lively neck, as if in gratitude for its good service, and, confident that he could not be successfully pursued, indulged in a thousand dreams of Robin Hood and his merry men. As for his own position and prospects, he gave himself no anxiety about them; satisfied with his escape from a revolting thralldom, his mind seemed to take a bound from the difficulty of his situation and the wildness of the scene, and he felt himself a man, and one, too, whom nothing could daunt or appal.

Soon the road itself quite disappeared and vanished in a complete turf track; but the continuing marks of cart-wheels assured him that it was a thoroughfare, although he was now indeed journeying in the heart of a forest of oaks, and he doubted not it would lead to some town or village, or at any rate to some farm-house. Towards sunset he determined to make use of the remaining light, and pushed on apace; but it soon grew so dark, that he found it necessary to resume his walking pace, from fear of the overhanging branches and the trunks of felled trees which occasionally crossed his way.

Notwithstanding the very probable prospect of passing his night in the forest, our little adventurer did not lose heart. Cadureis was a very intrepid child, and, when in the company of those with whom he was not familiar, and free from those puerile associations to which those who had known and lived with him long were necessarily subject, he would assume a staid and firm demeanour very unusual with one of such tender years. A light in the distance was now not only a signal that the shelter he desired was at hand,

but reminded him that it was necessary by his assured port to prove that he was not unused to travel alone, and that he was perfectly competent and qualified to be his own master.

As he drew nearer the lights multiplied, and the moon, which now rose over the forest, showed to him that the trees, retiring on both sides to some little distance, left a circular plot of ground, on which were not only the lights which had at first attracted his attention, but the red flames of a watch-fire, round which some dark figures had hitherto been clustered. The sound of horses' feet had disturbed them, and the fire was now more and more visible. As Cadurcis approached, he observed some low tents, and in a few minutes he was in the centre of an encampment of gypsies. He was for a moment somewhat dismayed, for he had been brought up with the usual terror of these wild people; nevertheless, he was not unequal to the occasion. He was surrounded in an instant, but only with women and children; for the gypsies never immediately appear. They smiled with their bright eyes, and the flames of the watch-fire threw a lurid glow over their dark and flushing countenances; they held out their practised hands; they uttered unintelligible, but not unfriendly sounds. The heart of Cadurcis faltered, but his voice did not betray him.

"I am cold, good people," said the undaunted boy; "will you let me warm myself by your fire?"

A beautiful girl, with significant gestures, pressed her hand to her heart, then pointed in the direction of the tents, and then rushed away, soon re-appearing with a male. He was a short thin man, inclining to middle age, but of a compact and apparently powerful frame, lithe, supple and sinewy. His complexion was dark, but clear; his eye large, liquid, and black; but his other features small, though precisely moulded. He wore a green jacket, and a pair of black velvet breeches, his legs and feet being bare, with the exception of slippers. Round his head was twisted a red handkerchief, which, perhaps, might not have looked like a turban on a countenance less oriental.

"What would the young master?" inquired the gipsy-man, in a voice far from disagreeable, and with a gesture of courtesy; but, at the same time, he shot a scrutinising glance first at Plantagenet, and then at his pony.

"I would remain with you," said Lord Cadurcis, "that is if you will let me.

The gipsy-man made a sign to the women, and Plantagenet was lifted by them off his pony, before he could be aware of their purpose; the children led the pony away, and the gipsy-man conducted Plantagenet to the fire, where an old woman sat, presiding over the mysteries of an enormous flesh-pot. Immediately his fellows, who had originally been clustered around it, re-appeared; fresh blocks and branches were thrown on, the flames crackled and rose, the men seated themselves around, and Plantagenet, excited by the adventure, rubbed his hands before the fire, and determined to fear nothing.

A savoury steam exuded from the flesh-pot.

"That smells well," said Plantagenet.

"'Tis a dimber cove," whispered one of the younger men to a companion.*

"Our supper has but rough seasoning for such as you," said the man who had at first saluted him, and who was apparently the leader, "but the welcome is hearty."

The women and girls now came with wooden bowls and platters, and, after serving the men, seated themselves in an exterior circle, the children playing round them.

"Come, old mort," said the leader, in a very different tone to the one in which he addressed his young guest, "tout the cobble-colter; are we to have dark-mans upon us! And, Beruna, flick the panam!"*

Upon this, that beautiful girl, who had at first attracted the notice of Cadurcis, called out, in a sweet lively voice, "Ay! ay! Morgana!" and in a moment handed over the heads of the women a pannier of bread, which the leader took, and offered its contents to our fugitive. Cadurcis helped himself with a bold but gracious air. The pannier was then passed round, and the old woman, opening the pot, drew out with a huge iron fork a fine turkey, which she tossed into a large wooden platter, and cut up with great quickness. First she helped Morgana, but only gained a reproof for her pains, who immediately yielded his portion to Plantagenet. Each man was provided with his knife, but the guest had none. Morgana immediately gave up his own.

"Beruna!" he shouted, "gibel a chiv for the gentry cove."†

"Ay! ay! Morgana," said the girl, and she brought the knife to Plantagenet himself, saying at the same time, with sparkling eyes, "Yam, yam, gentry cove."‡

Cadurcis really thought it was the most delightful meal he had ever made in his life. The flesh-pot held something besides turkeys. Rough as was the fare it was good and plentiful. As for beverage, they drank humpty-dumpty, which is ale boiled with brandy, and which is not one of the slightest charms of a gipsy's life. When the men were satisfied, their platters were filled, and given to the women and children; and Beruna, with her portion came and seated herself by Plantagenet, looking at him with a blended glance of delight and astonishment, like a beautiful young savage, and then turning to her female companions to stifle a laugh. The flesh-pot was carried away, the men lit their pipes, the fire was replenished, its red shadow mingled with the silver beams of the moon; around were the glittering tents and the silent woods,—on all sides flashing eyes and picturesque forms. Cadurcis glanced at his companions, and gazed upon the scene with feelings of ravishing excitement; and then, almost unconscious of what he was saying, he exclaimed—"At length I have found the life that suits me!"

"Indeed! squire," said Morgana. "Would you be one of us?"

"From this moment," said Cadurcis, "if you will admit me to your band. But what can I do? And I have nothing to give you. You must teach me to earn my right to our supper."

"We'll make a Turkey merchant§ of you yet," said an old gipsy, "never fear that."

* Come old woman; look after the turkey. Are we to wait till night? And, Beruna, cut the bread.

† Bring a knife for the gentleman.

‡ Eat, eat, gentleman.

§ I. E. We will teach you to steal a turkey.

* 'Tis a lively lad.

"Bah! Peter," said Morgana, with an angry look, "your red rag will never lie still. And what was the purpose of your present travel?" he continued to Plantagenet.

"None; I was sick of silly home."

"The gentry cove will be romboyed by his dam," said a third gipsy; "Queer Cuslin will be the word yet, if we don't tout."*

"Well, you shall see a little more of us before you decide," said Morgana thoughtfully, and turning the conversation. "Beruna!"

"Ay! ay! Morgana!"

"Tip me the clank, like a dimker mort as you are; trim a ken for the gentry cove; he is no lanspresado, or I am a kinchin.†"

"Ay! ay! Morgana," gaily exclaimed the girl, and she ran off to prepare a bed for the Lord of Cadureis.

CHAPTER XV.

DR. MASHAM could gain no tidings of the object of his pursuit at Southport: here, however, he ascertained that Plantagenet could not have fled to London, for in those days public conveyances were rare. There was only one coach that ran, or rather jogged, along this road, and it went but once a week, it being expected that very night; while the innkeeper was confident that, as far as Southport was concerned, his little lordship had not sought refuge in the wagon, which was more frequent, though somewhat slower, in its progress to the metropolis. Unwilling to return home, although the evening was now drawing in, the doctor resolved to proceed to a considerable town about twelve miles farther, which Cadureis might have reached by a cross road; so drawing his cloak around him, looking to his pistols, and desiring his servant to follow his example, the stout-hearted Rector of Marringhurst pursued his way.

It was dark when the doctor entered the town, and he proceeded immediately to the inn where the coach was expected, with some faint hope that the fugitive might be discovered abiding within its walls; but, to all his inquiries about young gentlemen and ponies, he received very unsatisfactory answers; so, reconciling himself as well as he could to the disagreeable posture of affairs, he settled himself in the parlour of the inn, with a good fire, and, lighting his pipe, desired his servant to keep a sharp look-out.

In due time a great uproar in the inn-yard announced the arrival of the stage,—an unwieldy machine, carrying six inside and dragged by as many horses. The doctor, opening the door of his apartment,—which led on to a gallery that ran round the inn-yard,—leaned over the balustrade with his pipe in his mouth, and watched proceedings. It so happened that the stage was to discharge one of its passengers at this town, who had come from the north, and the doctor recognised in him a neighbor and brother magistrate, one Squire Mountmeadow, a very important personage in his way, the terror of poachers, and somewhat

of an oracle on the bench, as it was said that he could even taken a deposition without the assistance of his clerk. Although, in spite of the ostler's lanterns, it was very dark, it was impossible ever to be unaware of the arrival of Squire Mountmeadow; for he was one of those great men who take care to remind the world of their dignity by the attention which they require on every occasion.

"Coachman!" said the authoritative voice of the squire; "Where is the coachman? Oh! you are there, sir, are you? Postilion! Where is the postilion? Oh! you are there, sir, are you? Host! Where is the host? Oh! you are there, sir, are you? Waiter! Where is the waiter? I say where is the waiter?"

"Coming, please your worship!"

"How long am I to wait? Oh! you are there, sir, are you? Coachman!"

"Your worship!"

"Postilion!"

"Yes, your worship!"

"Host!"

"Your worship's servant!"

"Waiter!"

"Your worship's honour's humble servant!"

"I am going to alight."

All four attendants immediately bowed, and extended their arms to assist this very great man; but Squire Mountmeadow, scarcely deigning to avail himself of their proffered assistance, and pausing on each step, looking around him with his long, lean, solemn visage, finally reached terra firma in safety, and slowly stretched his tall, ungainly figure. It was at this moment that D. Masham's servant approached him, and informed his worship that his master was at the inn, and would be happy to see him. The countenance of the great Mountmeadow relaxed at the mention of a name of a brother magistrate, and in an audible voice he bade the groom "tell my worthy friend, his worship, your worthy master, that I shall be rejoiced to pay my respects to an esteemed neighbour and a brother magistrate."

With slow and solemn steps, preceded by the host and followed by the waiter, Squire Mountmeadow ascended the staircase of the external gallery, pausing occasionally, and looking around him with thoughtful importance, and making an occasional inquiry as to the state of the town and neighbourhood during his absence, in this fashion:—"Stop, where are you, host? Oh! you are there, sir, are you? Well, Mr. Host, and how have we been!—orderly, eh?"

"Quite orderly, your worship."

"Hoh! Orderly! Hem! Well, very well! Never easy, if absent only four-and-twenty hours. The law must be obeyed."

"Yes, your worship."

"Lead on, sir. And, waiter; where are you, waiter! Oh! you are there, sir, are you! And so my brother magistrate is here!"

"Yes, your honour's worship."

"Hem! What can he want?—something in the wind; wants my advice, I dare say; shall have it. Soldiers ruly; king's servants; must be obeyed."

"Yes, your worship; quite ruly, your worship," said the host.

"As obliging and obstreperous as can be," said the waiter.

* His mother will make a hue-and-cry after the gentleman you; justice of the peace will be the word, if we don't look sharp.

† Give me the tankard like a pretty girl. Get a ted ready for the gentleman. He is no informer, or I am an infant.

"Well, very well," and here the squire had gained the gallery, where the doctor was ready to receive him.

"It always gives me pleasure to meet a brother magistrate," said Squire Mountmeadow, bowing with cordial condescension; "and a gentleman of your cloth, too. The clergy must be respected; I stand or fall by the church. After you, doctor,—after you." So saying, the two magistrates entered the room.

"An unexpected pleasure, doctor," said the Squire; "and what brings your worship to town?"

"A somewhat strange business," said the doctor; "and indeed I am not a little glad to have the advantage of your advice and assistance."

"Hem! I thought so," said the Squire; "your worship is very complimentary. What is the case?—larceny?"

"Nay, my good Sir, 'tis a singular affair; and, if you please, we will order supper first, and discuss it afterwards. 'Tis for your private ear."

"O! ho!" said the squire, looking very mysterious and important. "With your worship's permission," he added, filling a pipe.

The host was no laggard in waiting on two such important guests. The brother magistrates despatched their rump-steak; the foaming tankard was replenished; the fire renovated. At length, the table and the room being alike clear, Squire Mountmeadow drew a long puff, and said "Now for business, doctor."

His companion then informed him of the exact object of his visit, and narrated to him as much of the preceding incidents as was necessary. The squire listened in solemn silence, elevating his eyebrows, nodding his head, trimming his pipe, with profound interjections; and finally, being appealed to for his opinion by the doctor, delivered himself of a most portentous "Hem!"

"I question, doctor," said the squire, "whether we should not communicate with the Secretary of State. 'Tis no ordinary business. 'Tis a spiriting away of a peer of the realm. It smacks of treason."

"Egad!" said the doctor, suppressing a smile. "I think we can hardly make a truant boy a cabinet question."

The squire glanced a look of pity at his companion. "Prove the truancy, doctor; prove it. 'Tis a case of disappearance; and how do we know that there is not a Jesuit at the bottom of it?"

"There is something in that," said the doctor.

"There is every thing in it," said the squire, triumphantly. "We must offer rewards; we must raise the posse comitatus."

"For the sake of the family, I would make as little stir as necessary," said Dr. Masham.

"For the sake of the family!" said the squire. "Think of the nation, sir! For the sake of the nation we must make as much stir as possible. 'Tis a Secretary of State's business; 'tis a case for a general warrant."

"He is a well-meaning lad enough," said the doctor.

"Ay, and therefore more easily played upon," said the squire. "Rome is at the bottom of it, brother Masham, and I am surprised that a good Protestant like yourself—one of the King's Justices of the Peace, and a doctor of divinity to boot—should doubt the fact for an instant."

"We have not heard much of the Jesuits of late years," said the doctor."

"The very reason that they are more active," said the squire.

"An only child!" said Dr. Masham.

"A peer of the realm!" said Squire Mountmeadow.

"I should think he must be in the neighbourhood."

"More likely at St. Omer's."

"They would scarcely take him to the plantations with this war?"

"Let us drink 'confusion to the rebels!'" said the squire. "Any news?"

"How sails this week," said the doctor.

"May he burn Boston!" said the squire.

"I would rather he would reduce it, without such extremities," said Dr. Masham.

"Nothing is to be done without extremities," said Squire Mountmeadow.

"But this poor child?" said the doctor, leading back the conversation. "What can we do?"

"The law of the case is clear," said the squire; "we must move a habeas corpus."

"But shall we be nearer getting him for that?" inquired the doctor.

"Perhaps not, sir; but 'tis the regular way. We must proceed by rule."

"I am sadly distressed," said Dr. Masham. "The worst is, he has gained such a start upon us; and yet he can hardly have gone to London;—he would have been recognised here or at Southport."

"With his hair cropped, and in a Jesuit's cap?" inquired the squire, with a slight sneer. "Ah! doctor, doctor, you know not the gentry you have to deal with!"

"We must hope," said Dr. Masham. "Tomorrow we must organise some general search."

"I fear it will be of no use," said the squire, replenishing his pipe. "These Jesuits are deep fellows."

"But we are not sure about the Jesuits, squire."

"I am," said the squire; "the case is clear, and the sooner you break it to his mother the better. You asked me for my advice, and I give it you."

CHAPTER XVI.

It was on the following morning, as the doctor was under the operation of the barber, that his groom ran into the room with a pale face and agitated air, and exclaimed,

"O! master, master, what do you think? here is a man in the yard with my lord's pony."

"Stop him, Peter," exclaimed the doctor; "No! watch him—watch him—send for a constable. Are you certain 'tis the pony?"

"I could swear to it out of a thousand," said Peter.

"There, never mind my beard, my good man," said the doctor. "There is no time for appearances. Here is a robbery, at least; God grant no worse. Peter, my boots!" So saying, the doctor, half equipped, and followed by Peter and the barber, went forth on the gallery. "Where is he?" said the doctor.

"He is down below, talking to the ostler, and trying to sell the pony," said Peter.

"There is no time to lose," said the doctor; "follow me, like true men," and the doctor ran down stairs in his silk nightcap, for his wig was not yet prepared.

"There he is," said Peter; and true enough there was a man in a smock frock, and mounted on the very pony which Lady Annabel had presented to Plantagenet.

"Seize this man in the King's name," said the doctor, hastily advancing to him. "Ostler, do your duty; Peter, be firm. I charge you all; I am a justice of the peace. I charge you arrest this man."

The man seemed very much astonished; but he was composed, and offered no resistance. He was dressed like a small farmer, in top boots and a smock frock. His hat was rather jauntily placed on his curly red hair.

"Why am I seized?" at length said the man.

"Where did you get that pony?" said the doctor.

"I bought it," was the reply.

"Of whom?"

"A stranger at market."

"You are accused of robbery, and suspected of murder," said Dr. Masham. "Mr. Constable," said the doctor, turning to that functionary, who had now arrived, "handcuff this man, and keep him in strict custody until further orders."

The report that a man was arrested for robbery, and suspected of murder, at the Red Dragon, spread like wildfire through the town; and the inn-yard was soon crowded with the curious and excited inhabitants.

Peter and the barber, to whom he had communicated every thing, were well qualified to do justice to the important information of which they were the sole depositaries; the tale lost nothing by their telling; and a circumstantial narrative of the robbery and murder of no less a personage than Lord Cadurcis, of Cadurcis Abbey, was soon generally prevalent.

The stranger was secured in a stable, before which the constable kept guard; mine host, and the waiter, and the ostlers, acted as a sort of supernumerary police, to repress the multitude; while Peter held the real pony by the bridle, whose identity, which he frequently attested, was considered by all present as an incontrovertible evidence of the commitment of the crime.

In the mean time Dr. Masham really very agitated, roused his brother magistrate, and communicated to his worship the important discovery. The squire fell into a solemn flutter. "We must be regular, brother Masham; we must proceed by rule; we are a bench in ourselves. Would that my clerk were here! We must send for Seal-signer forthwith. I will not decide without the statutes. The law must be consulted, and it must be obeyed. The fellow hath not brought my wig." "Tis a case of murder, no doubt. A peer of the realm murdered! You must break the intelligence to his surviving parent, and I will communicate to the Secretary of State. Can the body be found? That will prove the murder. Unless the body be found, the murder will not be proved, save the villain confesses, which he will not do, unless he hath sudden compunctions. I have known sudden compunctions go a great way. We had a

case before our bench last month; there was no evidence. It was not a case of murder; it was of wood-cutting; there was no evidence; but the defendant had compunctions. O! here is my wig. We must send for Signsealer. He is clerk to our bench, and he must bring the statutes. 'Tis not simple murder this; it involves petty treason."

By this time his worship had completed his toilet, and he and his colleague took their way to the parlour they had inhabited the preceding evening. Mr. Signsealer was in attendance, much to the real, though concealed, satisfaction of Squire Mountmeadow. Their worships were seated like two consuls before the table, which Mr. Signsealer had duly arranged with writing materials and various piles of calf-bound volumes. Squire Mountmeadow then, arranging his countenance, announced that the bench was prepared, and mine host was instructed forthwith to summon the constable and his charge, together with Peter and the ostler as witnesses. There was a rush among some of the crowd who were nearest the scene to follow the prisoner into the room; and, sooth to say, the great Mountmeadow was much too enamoured of his own self-importance to be by any means a patron of close courts and private hearings; but then, though he loved his power to be witnessed, he was equally desirous that his person should be revered. It was his boast that he could keep a court of quarter sessions as quiet as a church; and now, when the crowd rushed in with all those sounds of tumult incidental to such a movement, it required only Mountmeadow slowly to rise, and, drawing himself up to the full height of his gaunt figure, to knit his severe brow, and throw one of his peculiar looks around the chamber, to insure a most awful silence. Instantly every thing was so hushed, that you might have heard Signsealer knib his pen.

The witnesses were sworn; Peter proved that the pony belonged to Lord Cadurcis, and that his lordship had been missing from home for several days, and was believed to have quitted the abbey on this identical pony. Dr. Masham was ready, if necessary, to confirm this evidence. The accused adhered to his first account, that he had purchased the animal the day before at a neighbouring fair, and doggedly declined to answer any cross-examination. Squire Mountmeadow looked alike pompous and puzzled; whispered to the doctor; and then shook his head at Mr. Signsealer.

"I doubt whether there be satisfactory evidence of the murder, brother Masham," said the squire; "what shall be our next step?"

"There is enough evidence to keep this fellow in custody," said the doctor. "We must remand him, and make inquiries at the market town. I shall proceed there immediately. He is a strange-looking fellow," added the doctor, "were it not for his carry locks, I should scarcely take him for a native."

"Hem!" said the squire, "I have my suspicions. Fellow," continued his worship, in an awful tone, "you say that you are a stranger, and that your name is Morgan; very suspicious all this; you have no one to speak of your character or station, and you are found in possession of stolen goods. The bench will remand you for the present, and will at any rate commit you for

trial for the robbery. But here is a peer of the realm missing, fellow, and you are most grievously suspected of being concerned in his spiriting away, or even murder. You are upon tender ground, prisoner; 'tis a case verging on petty treason, if not petty treason itself. Eh! Mr. Signsealer? Thus runs the law, as I take it? Prisoner, it would be well for you to consider your situation. Have you no compunctions? Compunctions might save you if not a principal offender. It is your duty to assist the bench in executing justice. The Crown is merciful; you may be king's evidence."

Mr. Signsealer whispered the bench; he proposed that the prisoner's hat should be examined, as the name of its maker might afford a clue to his residence.

"True, true, Mr. Clerk," said Squire Mountmeadow, "I am coming to that. 'Tis a sound practice; I have known such a circumstance lead to great disclosures. But we must proceed in order. Order is every thing. Constable, take the prisoner's hat off."

The constable took the hat off somewhat rudely; so rudely, indeed, that the carotky locks came off in company with it, and revealed a profusion of long plaited hair which had been adroitly twisted under the wig, more in character with the countenance than its previous covering.

"A Jesuit, after all!" exclaimed the squire.

"A gipsy, as it seems to me," whispered the doctor.

"Still worse," said the squire,

"Silence in the Court!" exclaimed the awful voice of Squire Mountmeadow, for the excitement of the audience was considerable. The disguise was generally esteemed as incontestable evidence of the murder. "Silence, or I will order the Court to be cleared. Constable, proclaim silence. This is an awful business," added the squire, with a very long face. "Brother Masham, we must do our duty; but this is an awful business. At any rate we must try to discover the body. A peer of the realm must not be suffered to lie murdered in a ditch. He must have Christian burial, if possible, in the vaults of his ancestors."

When Morgana, for it was indeed he, observed the course affairs were taking, and ascertained that his detention under present circumstances was inevitable, he relaxed from his doggedness, and expressed a willingness to make a communication to the bench. Squire Mountmeadow lifted up his eyes to Heaven, as if entreating the interposition of Providence to guide him in his course; then turned to his brother magistrate, and then nodded to the clerk.

"He has compunctions, brother Masham," said his worship: "I told you so; he has compunctions. Trust me to deal with these fellows. He knew not his perilous situation; the hint of petty treason staggered him. Mr. Clerk, take down the prisoner's confession; the court must be cleared; constable, clear the Court. Let a stout man stand on each side of the prisoner, to protect the bench. The magistracy of England will never shrink from doing their duty, but they must be protected. Now, prisoner, the bench is ready to hear your confession. Conceal nothing, and if you were not

a principal in the murder, or an accessory before the fact; eh? Mr. Clerk, thus runs the law, as I take it! there may be mercy; at any rate, if you be hanged, you will have the satisfaction of having cheerfully made the only atonement to society in your power."

"Hanging be damned!" said Morgana.

Squire Mountmeadow started from his seat, his cheeks distended with rage, his dull eyes for once flashing fire; "Did you ever witness such atrocity, brother Masham?" exclaimed his worship. "Did you hear the villain? I'll teach him to respect the bench. I'll fine him before he is executed, that I will!"

"The young gentleman to whom this pony belongs," continued the gipsy, "may or may not be a lord. I never asked him his name, and he never told it me; but he sought hospitality of me and my people, and we gave it him, and he lives with us of his own free choice. The pony is of no use to him now, and so I came to sell it for our common good."

"A peer of the realm turned gipsy!" exclaimed the squire. "A very likely tale! I'll teach you to come here and tell your cock-and-bull stories to two of his majesty's justices of the peace. 'Tis a flat case of robbery and murder, and I venture to say something else. You shall go to gaol directly, and the Lord have mercy on your soul!"

"Nay," said the gipsy appealing to Dr. Masham, "you, sir, appear to be the friend of this youth. You will not regain him by sending me to gaol. Load me, if you will, with irons, surround me with armed men, but at least give me the opportunity of proving the truth of what I say. I offer in two hours to produce to you the youth, and you shall find he is living with my people in content and peace."

"Content and fiddlestick!" said the squire in a rage.

"Brother Mountmeadow," said the doctor, in a low tone, to his colleague, "I have private duties to perform to this family. Pardon me if, with all deference to your sounder judgment and greater experience, I myself accept the prisoner's offer."

"Brother Masham, you are one of his majesty's justices of the peace, you are a brother magistrate, and you are a Doctor of Divinity; you owe a duty to your country, and you owe a duty to yourself. Is it wise, is it decorous, that one of the Quorum should go a-gipsying? Is it possible that you can credit this preposterous tale? Brother Masham, there will be a rescue, or my name is not Mountmeadow."

In spite, however, of all these solemn warnings, the good doctor, who was not altogether unaware of the character of his pupil, and could comprehend that it was very possible the statement of the gipsy might be genuine, continued without very much offending his colleague, who looked upon his conduct indeed rather with pity than resentment, to accept the offer of Morgana; and consequently, well-secured and guarded, and preceding the doctor, who rode behind the cart with his servant, the gipsy soon sallied forth from the inn-yard, and requested the driver to guide his course in the direction of the forest.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was the afternoon of the third day after the arrival of Cadureis at the gipsy encampment, and nothing had yet occurred to make him repent his flight from the abbey, and the choice of life he had made. He had experienced nothing but kindness and hospitality, while the beautiful Beruna seemed quite content to pass her life in studying his amusement. The weather, too, had been extremely favourable to his new mode of existence; and, stretched at his length upon the turf, with his head on Beruna's lap, and his eyes fixed upon the rich forest foliage glowing in the autumnal sunset, Plantagenet only wondered that he could have endured, for so many years, the shackles of his common-place home.

His companions were awaiting the return of their leader, Morgana, who had been absent since the preceding day, and who had departed on Plantagenet's pony. Most of them were lounging or strolling in the vicinity of their tents; the children were playing; the old woman was cooking at the fire; and altogether, save that the hour was not so late, the scene presented much the same aspect as when Cadureis had first beheld it. As for his present occupation, Beruna was giving him a lesson in the gipsy language, which he was acquiring with a rapid facility, which quite exceeded all his previous efforts in such acquisitions.

Suddenly a scout sang out that a party was in sight. The men instantly disappeared; the women were all on the alert; and one ran forward as a spy, on the pretence of telling fortunes. This bright-eyed professor of palmistry soon, however, returned, running, and out of breath, yet chatting all the time with inconceivable rapidity, and accompanying the startling communication she was evidently making with the most animated gestures. Beruna started up, and, leaving the astonished Cadureis, joined them. She seemed alarmed. Cadureis was soon convinced there was consternation in the camp.

Suddenly a horseman galloped up, and was immediately followed by a companion. They called out, as if encouraging followers, and one of them immediately galloped away again, as if to detail the results of their reconnaissance. Before Cadureis could well rise and make inquiries as to what was going on, a light cart, containing several men, drove up, and in it, a prisoner, he detected Morgana. The branches of the trees concealed for a moment two other horsemen who followed the cart; but Cadureis, to his infinite alarm and mortification, soon recognised Dr. Masham and Peter.

When the gipsies found their leader was captive, they no longer attempted to conceal themselves; they all came forward, and would have clustered round the cart, had not the riders, as well as those who more immediately guarded the prisoner, prevented them. Morgana spoke some words in a loud voice to the gipsies, and they immediately appeared less agitated, then turning to Dr. Masham, he said in English, "Behold your child!"

Instantly two gipsy men seized Cadureis, and led him to the doctor.

"How, now, my lord?" said the worthy rector,

in a stern voice, "is this your duty to your mother and your friends!"

Cadureis looked down, but rather dogged than ashamed.

"You have brought an innocent man into great peril," continued the doctor. "This person, no longer a prisoner, has been arrested on suspicion of robbery, and even murder, through your freak. Morgana, or whatever your name may be, here is some reward for your treatment of this child, and some compensation for your detention. Mount your pony Lord Cadureis, and return to your home with me."

"This is my home, sir," said Plantagenet.

"Lord Cadureis, this childish nonsense must cease: it has already endangered the life of your mother, nor can I answer for her safety, if you lose a moment in returning."

"Child, you must return," said Morgana.

"Child!" said Plantagenet, and he walked some steps away, and leant against a tree. "You promised that I should remain," said he, addressing himself reproachfully to Morgana.

"You are not your own master," said the gipsy; "your remaining here will only endanger and disturb us. Fortunately we have nothing to fear from laws we have never outraged; but had there been a judge less wise and gentle than the master here, our peaceful family might have been all harassed and hunted to the very death."

He waved his hand, and addressed some words to his tribe, whereupon two brawny fellows seized Cadureis, and placed him again, in spite of his struggling, upon his pony, with the same irresistible facility with which they had a few nights before dismounted him. The little lord looked very sulky, but his position was beginning to get ludicrous. Morgana, pocketing his five guineas, leaped over the side of the cart, and offered to guide the doctor and his attendants through the forest. They moved on accordingly. It was the work of an instant, and Cadureis suddenly found himself returning home between the rector and Peter. Not a word, however, escaped his lips; once, only, he moved; the light branch of a tree, aimed with delicate precision, touched his back; he looked round; it was Beruna. She kissed her hand to him, and a tear stole down his pale, sullen cheek, as, taking from his breast his handkerchief, he threw it behind him, unperceived, that she might pick it up and keep it for his sake.

After proceeding two or three miles, under the guidance of Morgana, the equestrians gained the road, though it still ran through the forest. Here the doctor dismissed the gipsyman, with whom he had occasionally conversed during their progress; but not a sound ever escaped from the mouth of Cadureis, or rather, the captive who was now substituted in Morgana's stead. The doctor now addressing himself to Plantagenet, informed him that it was of importance that they should make the best of their way, and so he put spurs to his mare, and Cadureis sullenly complied with the intimation. At this rate, in the course of little more than another hour, they arrived in sight of the demesne of Cadureis, where they pulled up their steeds.

They entered the park—they approached the portal of the abbey—at length they dismounted. Their coming was announced by a servant, who

had recognised his lord at a distance, and had ran on before with the tidings. When they entered the abbey, they were met by Lady Annabel in the cloisters; her countenance was very serious. She shook hands with Doctor Masham, but did not speak, and immediately led him aside. Cadureis remained standing in the very spot where Doctor Masham left him, as if he were quite a stranger in the place, and was no longer master of his own conduct. Suddenly Doctor Masham—who was at the end of the cloister, while Lady Annabel was mounting the staircase—looked round with a very pale face, and said in an agitated voice, “Lord Cadureis, Lady Annabel wishes to speak to you in the saloon.”

Cadureis immediately, but slowly, repaired to the saloon. Lady Annabel was walking up and down it. She seemed greatly disturbed. When she saw him, she put her arm round his neck very affectionately, and said in a low voice, “My dearest Plantagenet, it has devolved upon me to communicate to you some very distressing intelligence.” Her voice faltered, and the tears stole down her cheek.

“My mother, then, is dangerously ill?” he inquired in a calm but softened tone.

“It is even sadder news than that, dear child.”

Cadureis looked about him wildly, and then with an inquiring glance at Lady Annabel—

“There can be but one thing worse than that,” he at length said.

“What if it have happened?” said Lady Annabel.

He threw himself into a chair, and covered his face with his hands. After a few minutes he looked up and said, in a low but distinct voice—“it is too terrible to think of; it is too terrible to mention; but, if it have happened, let me be alone.”

Lady Annabel approached him with a light step; she embraced him, and, whispering that she should be found in the next room, she quitted the apartment.

Cadureis remained seated for more than half an hour without changing in the slightest degree his position. The twilight died away; it grew quite dark; he looked up with a slight shiver, and then quitted the apartment.

In the adjoining room, Lady Annabel was seated with Doctor Masham, and giving him the details of the fatal event. It had occurred that morning. Mrs. Cadureis, who had never slept a wink since her knowledge of her son's undoubted departure, and scarcely for an hour been free from the most violent epileptic fits, had fallen early in the morning into a doze, which lasted about half an hour, and from which her medical attendant, who with Pouncefort had set up with her during the night, augured the most unfavourable consequences. About half-past six o'clock she woke, and inquired whether Plantagenet had returned. They answered her that Dr. Masham had not yet arrived, but would probably be at the abbey in the course of the morning. She said it would be too late. They endeavoured to encourage her, but she asked to see Lady Annabel, who was immediately called, and lost no time in repairing to her. When Mrs. Cadureis recognised her, she held out her hand, and said in a dying tone—“It was my fault; it was ever my fault; it is too late now;

let him find a mother in you.” She never spoke again, and in the course of an hour expired.

While Lady Annabel and the doctor were dwelling on these sad circumstances, and debating whether he should venture to approach Plantagenet, and attempt to console him—for the evening was now far advanced, and nearly three hours had elapsed since the fatal communication had been made to him—it happened that Mistress Pouncefort chanced to pass Mrs. Cadureis' room, and as she did so she heard some one violently sobbing. She listened, and hearing the sounds frequently repeated, she entered the room, which, but for her candle, would have been quite dark, and there she found Lord Cadureis kneeling and weeping by his mother's bed-side. He seemed annoyed at being seen and disturbed, but his spirit was too broken to murmur. “La! my lord,” said Mistress Pouncefort, “you must not take on so; you must not, indeed. I am sure this dark room is enough to put any one in low spirits. Now do go down stairs, and sit with my lady and the doctor, and try to be cheerful; that is a dear good young gentleman. I wish Miss Venetia were here, and then she would amuse you. But you must not take on, because there is no use in it. You must exert yourself, for what is done cannot be undone; and, as the doctor told us last Sunday, we must all die; and well for those who die with a good conscience; and I am sure the poor dear lady that is gone, must have had a good conscience, because she had a good heart, and I never heard any one say the contrary. Now do exert yourself, my dear lord, and try to be cheerful, do; for there is nothing like a little exertion in these cases, for God's will must be done, and it is not for us to say yea or nay, and taking on is a murmuring against God's providence.” And so Mistress Pouncefort would have continued urging the usual topics of coarse and common-place consolation; but Cadureis only answered with a sigh that came from the bottom of his heart, and said with streaming eyes, “Ah! Mrs. Pouncefort, God had only given me one friend in this world, and there she lies!”

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE first conviction that there is death in the house is perhaps the most awful moment of youth. When we are young, we think that not only ourselves, but that all about us, are immortal. Until the arrow has struck a victim round our own hearth, death is merely an unmeaning word; until then, its casual mention has stamped no idea upon our brain. There are few, even among those least susceptible of thought and emotion, in whose hearts and minds the first death in the family does not act as a very powerful revelation of the mysteries of life, and of their own being; there are few who, after such a catastrophe, do not look upon the world and the world's ways, at least for a time, with changed and tempered feelings. It recalls the past, it makes us ponder over the future; and youth, gay and light-hearted youth, is taught, for the first time, to regret and to fear.

On Lord Cadureis, a child of pensive temperament, and in whose strange and yet undeveloped character there was, amid lighter elements, a con

stitutional principle of melancholy, the sudden decease of his mother produced a very profound effect. All was forgotten of his parent, except the intimate and natural tie, and her warm and genuine affection. He was now alone in the world; for reflection impressed upon him at this moment, what the course of existence too generally teaches to us all, that mournful truth, that, after all, we have no friends that we can depend upon in this life but our parents. All other intimacies, however ardent, are liable to cool; all other confidence, however unlimited, to be violated. In the phantasmagoria of life, the friend with whom we have cultivated mutual trust for years is often suddenly or gradually estranged from us, or becomes, from painful, yet irresistible, circumstances, even our deadliest foe. As for women, as for the mistresses of our hearts, who has not learnt that the links of passion are fragile as they are glittering; and that the bosom on which we have reposed with idolatry all our secret sorrows and sanguine hopes, eventually becomes the very heart that exults in our misery and baffles our welfare? Where is the enamoured face that smiled upon our early love, and was to shed tears over our grave? Where are the choice companions of our youth, with whom we were to breast the difficulties and share the triumphs of existence? Even in this inconstant world, what changes like the heart? Love is a dream, and friendship a delusion. No wonder we grow callous; for how few have the opportunity of returning to the hearth which they quitted in levity or thoughtless weariness, yet which alone is faithful to them; whose sweet affections require not the stimulus of prosperity or fame, the lure of accomplishments, or the tribute of flattery; but which are constant to us in distress, and console us even in disgrace?

Before she retired for the night, Lady Annabel was anxious to see Plantagenet. Mistress Pauncefort had informed her of his visit to his mother's room. Lady Annabel found Cadurcis in the gallery, now partially lighted by the moon, which had recently risen. She entered with her light, as if she were on her way to her own room, and not seeking him.

"Dear Plantagenet," she said, "will you not go to bed?"

"I do not intend to go to bed night," he replied.

She approached him and took him by the hand, which he did not withdraw from her, and they walked together once or twice up and down the gallery.

"I think, dear child," said Lady Annabel, "you had better come and sit with us."

"I like to be alone," was his answer; but not in a sullen voice, low and faltering.

"But in sorrow we should be with our friends," said Lady Annabel.

"I have no friends," he answered. "I only had one."

"I am your friend, dear child; I am your mother now, and you shall find me one if you like. And Venetia, have you forgotten your sister? Is she not your friend? And Dr. Masham, surely you cannot doubt his friendship?"

Cadurcis tried to stifle a sob. "Ay, Lady Annabel," he said, "you are my friend now, and so are you all; and you know I love you very much.

But you were not my friends two years ago; and things will change again; they will indeed. A mother is your friend as long as she lives; she cannot help being your friend."

"You shall come to Cherbury, and live with us," said Lady Annabel. "You know you love Cherbury, and you shall find it a home, a real home."

He pressed her hand to his lips; the hand was covered with tears.

"We will go to Cherbury to-morrow, dear Plantagenet; remaining here will only make you sad."

"I will never leave Cadurcis again while my mother is in this house," he said, in a firm and serious voice. And then, after a moment's pause, he added, "I wish to know when the burial is to take place."

"We will ask Dr. Masham," replied Lady Annabel. "Come, let us go to him; come, my own child."

He permitted himself to be led away. They descended to the small apartment where Lady Annabel had been previously sitting. They found the doctor there; he rose and pressed Plantagenet's hand with great emotion. They made room for him at the fire between them; he sat in silence with his gaze intensely fixed upon the decaying embers, yet did not quit his hold of Lady Annabel's hand. He found it a consolation to him; it linked him to a being who seemed to love him. As long as he held her hand he did not seem quite alone in the world.

Now nobody spoke; for Lady Annabel felt that Cadurcis was in some degree solaced; and she thought it unwise to interrupt the more composed train of his thoughts. It was, indeed, Plantagenet himself who first broke silence.

"I do not think I can go to bed, Lady Annabel," he said. "The thought of this night is terrible to me. I do not think it ever can end. I would much sooner sit up in this room."

"Nay! my child, sleep is a great consoler; try to go to bed, love."

"I should like to sleep in my mother's room," was his strange reply. "It seems to me that I could sleep there. And if I woke in the night I should like to see her."

Lady Annabel and the doctor exchanged looks.

"I think," said the doctor, "you had better sleep in my room, and then, if you wake in the night, you will have some one to speak to. You will find that a comfort."

"Yes, that you will," said Lady Annabel. "I will go and have the sofa bed made up in the doctor's room for you. Indeed that will be the very best plan."

So at last, but not without a struggle, they persuaded Cadurcis to retire. Lady Annabel embraced him tenderly when she bade him good night; and, indeed, he felt consoled by her affection.

As nothing could persuade Plantagenet to leave the abbey until his mother was buried, Lady Annabel resolved to take up her abode there, and she sent the next morning for Venetia. There were a great many arrangements to make about the burial and the mourning; and Lady Annabel and Dr. Masham were obliged, in consequence, to go the next morning to Southport; but they delayed their

departure until the arrival of Venetia, that Cadurcis might not be left alone.

The meeting between himself and Venetia was a very sad one, and yet her companionship was a great solace. Venetia urged every topic that she fancied could re-assure his spirits, and upon the happy home he would find at Cherbury.

"Ah!" said Cadurcis, "they will not leave me here; I am sure of that. I think our happy days are over, Venetia."

What mourner has not felt the magic of time? Before the funeral could take place, Cadurcis had recovered somewhat of his usual cheerfulness, and would indulge with Venetia in plans of their future life. And living, as they all were, under the same roof, sharing the same sorrows, participating in the same cares, and all about to wear the same mournful emblems of their domestic calamity, it was difficult for him to believe that he was indeed that desolate being he had at first correctly estimated himself. Here were true friends, if such could exist; here were fine sympathies, pure affections, innocent and disinterested hearts! Every domestic tie yet remained perfect, except the spell-bound tie of blood. That wanting, all was a bright and happy vision, that might vanish in an instant, and for ever; that perfect, even the least graceful, the most repulsive home, had its irresistible charms; and its loss, when once experienced, might be mourned forever, and could never be restored.

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER the funeral of Mrs. Cadurcis, the family returned to Cherbury with Plantagenet, who was hereafter to consider it his home. All that the most tender solicitude could devise to reconcile him to the change in his life was fulfilled by Lady Annabel and her daughter, and under their benignant influence, he soon regained his usual demeanour. His days were now spent as in the earlier period of their acquaintance, with the exception of those painful returns to home, which had once been a source to him of so much gloom and unhappiness. He pursued his studies as of old, and shared the amusements of Venetia. His allotted room was ornamented by her drawings, and in the evenings they read aloud by turns to Lady Annabel the volume which she selected. The abbey he never visited again after his mother's funeral.

Some weeks had passed in this quiet and contented manner, when one day Doctor Masham, who, since the death of his mother, had been in correspondence with his guardian, received a letter from that nobleman, to announce that he had made arrangements for sending his ward to Eton, and to request that he would accordingly instantly proceed to the metropolis. This announcement occasioned both Cadurcis and Venetia poignant affliction. The idea of separation was to both of them most painful; and although Lady Annabel herself was in some degree prepared for an arrangement, which sooner or later she considered inevitable, she was herself scarcely less distressed. The good doctor, in some degree to break the bitterness of parting, proposed accompanying Plantagenet to London, and himself personally delivering the charge, in whose welfare they were so

much interested, to his guardian. Nevertheless, it was a very sad affair, and the week which was to intervene before his departure found both himself and Venetia often in tears. They no longer took any delight in their mutual studies, but passed the day walking about and visiting old haunts, and endeavouring to console each other for what they both deemed a great calamity, and which was, indeed, the only serious misfortune Venetia had herself experienced in the whole course of her serene career.

"But if I were really your brother," said Plantagenet, "I must have quitted you the same Venetia. Boys always go to school; and then we shall be so happy when I return!"

"O! but we are so happy now, Plantagenet. I cannot believe that we are going to part. And are you sure that you will return? Perhaps your guardian will not let you, and will wish you to spend your holidays at his house. His house will be your home now."

It was impossible for a moment to forget the sorrow that was impending over them. There were so many preparations to be made for his departure, that every instant something occurred to remind them of their sorrow. Venetia sat with tears in her eyes marking his new pocket handkerchiefs, which they had all gone to Southport to purchase, for Plantagenet asked, as a particular favour, that no one should mark them but Venetia. Then Lady Annabel gave Plantagenet a writing-case, and Venetia filled it with pens and paper, that he might never want means to communicate with them; and her evenings were passed in working him a purse, which Lady Annabel took care should be well stocked. All day long there seemed something going on to remind them of what was about to happen; and as for Pauncefort, she flounced in and out the room fifty times a-day, with "what is to be done about my lord's shirts, my lady? I think his lordship had better have another dozen, your la'ship. Better too much than too little, I always say;" or "O! my lady, your la'ship cannot form an idea of what a state my lord's stockings are in, my lady. I think I had better go over to Southport with John, my lady, and buy him some;" or "Please, my lady, did I understand your la'ship spoke to the tailor on Thursday about my lord's things? I suppose your la'ship knows my lord has got no great-coat?"

Every one of these inquiries made Venetia's heart tremble. Then there was the sad habit of dating every coming day by its distance from the fatal one. There was the last day but four, and the last day but three, and the last day but two. The last day but one at length arrived; and at length, too, it seemed incredible, the last day itself.

Plantagenet and Venetia both rose very early, that they might make it as long as possible. They sighed involuntarily when they met, and then they went about to pay last visits to every creature and object of which they had been so long fond. Plantagenet went to bid farewell to the horses, and adieu to the cows, and then walked down to the woodman's cottage, and then to shake hands with the keeper. He would not say "Good b'ye" to the household until the very last moment; and as for Marmion, the blood-hound, he accompanied both of them so faithfully in this melancholy

amble, and kept so close to both, that it was useless to break the sad intelligence to him yet.

"I think now, Venetia, we have been to see every thing," said Plantagenet, "I shall see the peacocks at breakfast time. I wish Eton was near Cherbury, and then I could come home on Sunday. I cannot bear going to Cadureis again, but I should like you to go once a week, and try to keep up our garden, and look after every thing, though there is not much that will not take care of itself, except the garden. We made that together, and I could not bear its being neglected."

Venetia could not assure him that no wish of his should be neglected because she was weeping.

"I am glad the doctor," he continued, "is going to take me to town. I should be very wretched by myself. But he will put me in mind of Cherbury, and we can talk together of Lady Annabel and you. Hark! the bell rings; we must go to breakfast, the last breakfast but one."

Lady Annabel endeavoured, by unusual good spirits, to cheer up her little friends. She spoke of Plantagenet's speedy return so much as a matter of course, and the pleasant things they were to do when he came back, that she really succeeded in exciting a smile in Venetia's April face, for she was smiling amid tears.

Although it was the last day, time hung heavily on their hands. After breakfast they went over the house together; and Cadureis, half with genuine feeling and half in a spirit of mockery of their sorrow, made a speech to the inanimate walls, as if they were aware of his intended departure. At length, in their progress, they passed the door of the closed apartments, and here, holding Venetia's hand, he stopped, and, with an expression of irresistible humour, making a very low bow to them, he said, very gravely, "And good b'ye rooms that I have never entered; perhaps, before I come back, Venetia will find out what is locked up in you!"

Doctor Masham arrived for dinner, and in a post-chaise. The unusual conveyance reminded them of the morrow very keenly. Venetia could not bear to see the doctor's portmanteau taken out and carried into the hall. She had hopes, until then, that something would happen and prevent all this misery. Cadureis whispered her, "I say, Venetia, do not you wish this was winter?"

"Why, Plantagenet?"

"Because then we might have a good snowstorm, and be blocked up again for a week."

Venetia looked at the sky, but not a cloud was to be seen.

The doctor was glad to warm himself at the hall-fire, for it was a fresh autumnal afternoon.

"Are you cold, sir?" said Venetia approaching him.

"I am, my little maiden," said the doctor.

"Do you think there is any chance of its snowing, Doctor Masham?"

"Snowing! my little maiden; what can you be thinking of?"

The dinner was rather gayer than might have been expected. The doctor was jocular, Lady Annabel very lively, and Plantagenet excited by an extraordinary glass of wine. Venetia alone remained dispirited. The doctor made mock speeches and proposed toasts, and told Plantagenet that he must learn to make speeches too, or what would he do when he was in the House of Lords? And

then Plantagenet tried to make a speech, and proposed Venetia's health; and then Venetia, who could not bear to hear herself praised by him on such a day—the last day—burst into tears. Her mother called her to her side and consoled her, and Plantagenet jumped up and wiped her eyes with one of those very pocket handkerchiefs on which she had embroidered his cipher and coronet with her own beautiful hair.

Towards evening, Plantagenet began to experience the reaction of his artificial spirits. The doctor had fallen into a gentle slumber, Lady Annabel had quitted the room, Venetia sat, with her hand in Plantagenet's, on a stool by the fire-side. Both were very sad and silent. At last Venetia said, "O, Plantagenet, I wish I were your real sister! Perhaps, when I see you again, you will forget this," and she turned the jewel that was suspended round her neck, and showed him the inscription.

"I am sure when I see you again, Venetia," he replied, "the only difference will be that I shall love you more than ever."

"I hope so," said Venetia.

"I am sure of it. Now remember what we are talking about. When we meet again, we shall see which of us two will love each other most."

"O Plantagenet, I hope they will be kind to you at Eton."

"I will make them."

"And, whenever you are the least unhappy, you will write to us!"

"I shall never be unhappy about any thing but being away from you. As for the rest, I will make people respect me; I know what I am.

"Because, if they do not behave well to you, mamma could ask Doctor Masham to come and see you, and they will attend to him; and I would ask him too."

"I wonder," she continued, after a moment's pause, "if you have every thing you want. I am quite sure, the instant you are gone, we shall remember something you ought to have; and then I shall be quite broken-hearted."

"I have got every thing."

"You said you wanted a large knife."

"Yes! but I am going to buy one in London."

Doctor Masham says he will take me to a place where the finest knives in the world are to be bought. It is a great thing to go to London with Doctor Masham."

"I have never written your name in your Bible and Prayer Book. I will do it this evening."

"Lady Annabel is to write it in the Bible, and you are to write it in the Prayer Book."

"You are to write to us from London by Doctor Masham, if only a line."

"I shall not fail."

"Never mind about your hand-writing; but mind you write."

At this moment Lady Annabel's step was heard, and Plantagenet said, "Give me a kiss, Venetia, for I do not mean to bid good b'ye to-night."

"But you will not go to-morrow before we are up."

"Yes, we shall."

"Now, Plantagenet, I shall be up to bid you good b'ye; mind that."

Lady Annabel entered, the doctor woke, lights followed, the servant made up the fire, and the room looked cheerful again. After tea, the names were duly written in the Bible and Prayer Book; the last arrangements were made, all the baggage was brought down into the hall, all ransacked their memory and fancy to see if it were possible that any thing that Plantagenet could require was either forgotten or had been omitted. The clock struck ten; Lady Annabel rose. The travellers were to part at an early hour: she shook hands with Doctor Masham, but Cadurcis was to bid her farewell in her dressing-room, and then, with heavy hearts and glistening eyes, they all separated. And thus ended the last day!

CHAPTER XX.

VENETIA passed a restless night. She was so resolved to be awake in time for Plantagenet's departure, that she could not sleep; and at length, towards morning, fell, from exhaustion, into a slight slumber, from which she sprang up convulsively, roused by the sound of the wheels of the post-chaise. She looked out her window, and saw the servant strapping on the portmanteaus. Shortly after this she heard Plantagenet's step in the vestibule; he passed her room, and proceeded to her mother's dressing-room, at the door of which she heard him knock, and then there was silence.

"You are in good time," said Lady Annabel, who was seated in an easy chair when Plantagenet entered her room. "Is the doctor up?"

"He is breakfasting."

"And have you breakfasted?"

"I have no appetite."

"You should take something, my child, before you go. Now, come hither, my dear Plantagenet," she said, extending her hand; "listen to me, one word. When you arrive in London, you will go to your guardian's. He is a great man, and I believe a very good one, and the law and your father's will have placed him in the position of a parent to you. You must therefore love, honour, and obey him; and I doubt not he will deserve all your affection, respect, and duty. Whatever he desires or counsels you will perform and follow. As long as you act according to his wishes, you cannot be wrong. But, my dear Plantagenet, if by any chance it ever happens, for strange things sometimes happen in this world, that you are in trouble and require a friend, remember that Cherbury is also your home; the home of your heart, if not of the law; and that not merely from my own love for you, but, because I promised your poor mother on her death-bed, I esteem myself morally, although not legally, in the light of a parent to you. You will find Eton a great change; you will experience many trials and temptations; but you will triumph over and withstand them all, if you will attend to these few directions. Fear God; morning and night, let nothing induce you ever to omit your prayers to him; you will find that praying will make you happy. Obey your superiors, always treat your masters with respect.

Ever speak the truth. As long as you adhere to this rule, you never can be involved in any serious misfortune. A deviation from truth is, in general, the foundation of all misery. Be kind to your companions, but be firm. Do not be laughed into doing that which you know to be wrong. Be modest and humble, but ever respect yourself. Remember who you are, and also that it is your duty to excel. Providence has given you a great lot. Think ever that you are born to perform great duties.

"God bless you, Plantagenet!" continued her ladyship, after a slight pause, with a faltering voice—"God bless you, my sweet child. And God will bless you, if you remember him. Try also to remember us," she added, as she embraced him, and placed in his hand Venetia's well-lined purse. "Do not forget Cherbury and all it contains; hearts that love you dearly, and will pray ever for your welfare."

Plantagenet leaned upon her bosom. He had entered the room resolved to be composed, with an air even of cheerfulness, but his tender heart yielded to the first appeal to his affections. He could only murmur out some broken syllables of devotion, and almost unconsciously found that he had quitted the chamber.

With streaming eyes and hesitating steps he was proceeding along the vestibule, when he heard his name called by a low sweet voice. He looked round; it was Venetia. Never had he beheld such a beautiful vision. She was muffled up in her dressing-gown, her small white feet only guarded from the cold by her slippers. Her golden hair seemed to reach her waist, her cheek was flushed, her large blue eyes glittered with tears.

"Plantagenet," said she—

Neither of them could speak. They embraced, they mingled their tears together, and every instant they wept more plentifully. At length a footstep was heard; Venetia murmured a blessing, and vanished.

Cadurcis lingered on the stairs a moment to compose himself. He wiped his eyes; he tried to look undisturbed. All the servants were in the hall; from Mistress Pouncefort to the scullion there was not a dry eye. All loved the little lord, he was so gracious and so gentle. Every one asked leave to touch his hand before he went. He tried to smile and say something kind to all. He recognised the gamekeeper, and told him to do what he liked at Cadurcis; said something to the coachman about his pony; and begged Mistress Pouncefort, quite aloud, to take great care of her young mistress. As he was speaking, he felt something rubbing against his hand; it was Marmion, the old blood-hound. He also came to bid his adieux. Cadurcis patted him with great affection, and said "Ah! my old fellow, we shall yet meet again."

The doctor appeared, smiling as usual, made his inquiries whether all were right, nodded to the weeping household, called Plantagenet his brave boy, and patted him on the back, and bade him jump into the chaise. Another moment, and Doctor Masham had also entered; the door was closed, the fatal "All right" sung out, and Lord Cadurcis was whirling away from that Cherbury where he was so loved!

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

LIFE is not dated merely by years. Events are sometimes the best calendars. There are epochs in our existence which cannot be ascertained by a formal appeal to the registry. The arrival of the Cadurcis family at their old abbey, their consequent intimacy at Cherbury, the death of the mother, and the departure of the son—these were events which had been crowded into a space of less than two years; but those two years were not only the most eventful in the life of Venetia Herbert, but in their influence upon the development of her mind, and the formation of her character, far exceeded the effects of all her previous existence.

Venetia once more found herself with no companion but her mother, but in vain she attempted to recall the feelings she had before experienced under such circumstances, and to revert to the resources she had before commanded. No longer could she wander in imaginary kingdoms, or transform the limited world of her experience into a boundless region of enchanted amusement. Her play-pleasure hours were fled for ever. She sighed for her faithful and sympathising companion. The empire of fancy yielded without a struggle to the conquering sway of memory.

For the first few weeks Venetia was restless and dispirited, and when she was alone she often wept. A mysterious instinct prompted her, however, not to exhibit such emotion before her mother. Yet she loved to hear Lady Annabel talk of Plantagenet, and a visit to the abbey was ever her favourite walk. Sometimes, too, a letter arrived from Lord Cadurcis, and this was great joy, but such communications were rare. Nothing is more difficult than for a junior boy at a public school to maintain a correspondence; yet his letters were most affectionate, and always dwelt upon the prospect of his return. The period for this hoped-for return at length arrived, but it brought no Plantagenet. His guardian wished that the holidays should be spent under his roof. Still at intervals Cadurcis wrote to Cherbury, to which, as time flew on, it seemed destined he never was to return. Vacation followed vacation, alike passed with his guardian, either in London or at a country seat still more remote from Cherbury, until at length it became so much a matter of course that his guardian's house should be esteemed his home, that Plantagenet ceased to allude even to the prospect of return. In time his letters became rarer and rarer, until, at length, they altogether ceased. Meanwhile Venetia had overcome the original pang of separation; if not as gay as in old days, she was serene and very studious; delighting less in her flowers and birds, but much more in her books, and pursuing her studies with an earnestness and assiduity which her mother was rather fain to check than to encourage. Venetia Herbert, indeed, promised to become a most accomplished woman. She had a fine ear for music, a ready tongue for languages; already she emulated her mother's skill in the arts; while the library of Cherbury afforded welcome and inexhaustible resources to a girl whose genius deserved the richest and most sedulous cultivation, and whose peculiar situation, independent of her

studious predisposition, rendered reading a pastime to her rather than a task. Lady Annabel watched the progress of her daughter with the most lively interest, and spared no efforts to assist the formation of her principles and her taste. That deep religious feeling which was the characteristic of the mother had been carefully and early cherished in the heart of the child, and in time the unrivalled writings of the great divines of our church became a principal portion of her reading. Order, method, severe study, strict religious exercise, with no amusement or relaxation but of the most simple and natural character, and with a complete seclusion from society, altogether formed a system, which, acting upon a singularly susceptible and gifted nature, secured the promise in Venetia Herbert, at fourteen years of age, of a very extraordinary woman; a system, however, against which her lively and somewhat restless mind might probably have rebelled, had not that system been so thoroughly imbued with all the melting spell of maternal affection. It was the inspirations of this sacred love that hovered like a guardian angel over the life of Venetia. It roused her from her morning slumbers with an embrace, it sanctified her evening pillow with a blessing; it anticipated the difficulty of the student's page, and guided the faltering hand of the hesitating artist; it refreshed her memory, it modulated her voice; it accompanied her in the cottage, and knelt by her at the altar. Marvellous and beautiful is a mother's love! And when Venetia, with her strong feelings and enthusiastic spirit, would look around and mark that a graceful form and a bright eye were for ever watching over her wants and wishes, instructing with sweetness, and soft even with advice, her whole soul rose to her mother, all thoughts and feelings were concentrated in that sole existence, and she desired no happier destiny than to pass through life living in the light of her mother's smiles, and clinging with passionate trust to that beneficent and guardian form.

But with all her quick and profound feelings Venetia was thoughtful, and even shrewd, and when she was alone her very love for her mother, and her gratitude for such an ineffable treasure as parental affection, would force her mind to a subject which had haunted her even from her earliest childhood. Why had she only one parent? What mystery was this that enveloped that great tie? For that there was a mystery Venetia felt as assured as that she was a daughter. By a process which she could not analyse, her father had become a forbidden subject. True, Lady Annabel had placed no formal prohibition upon its mention; nor at her present age was Venetia one who would be influenced in her conduct by the by-gone and arbitrary intimations of a menial; nevertheless, that the mention of her father would afford pain to the being she loved best in the world was a conviction which had grown with her years and strengthened with her strength. Pardonable, natural, even laudable as was the anxiety of the daughter upon such a subject, an instinct with which she could not struggle closed the lips of Venetia for ever upon this topic. His name was never mentioned, his past existence was never alluded to. Who was he? That he was of noble family, and great position, her name betokened, and the state in which they lived. He must have died very early; perhaps even before her mother

gave her birth. A dreadful lot indeed; and yet was the grief that even such a dispensation might occasion, so keen, so overwhelming, that after fourteen long years his name might not be permitted, even for an instant, to pass the pale lips of his bereaved wife? Was his child to be deprived of the only solace for his loss, the consolation of cherishing his memory? Strange, passing strange indeed, and very bitter! At Cherbury the family of Herbert were honoured only from tradition. Until the arrival of Lady Annabel, as we have before mentioned, they had not resided at the hall for more than half a century. There were no old retainers there from whom Venetia might glean, without suspicion, the information for which she panted. Slight too, as was Venetia's experience of society, there were times when she could not resist the impression that her mother was not happy; that there was some secret sorrow that weighed upon her spirit, some grief that gnawed at her heart. Could it be still the recollection of her lost sire? Could one so religious, so resigned, so assured of meeting the lost-one in a better world, brood with a repining soul over the will of her Creator? Such conduct was entirely at variance with all the tenets of Lady Annabel. It was not thus she consoled the bereaved, that she comforted the widow, and solaced the orphan. Venetia, too, observed every thing and forgot nothing. Not an incident of her earliest childhood that was not as fresh in her memory as if it had occurred yesterday. Her memory was naturally keen; living in solitude, with nothing to distract it, its impressions never faded away. She had never forgotten her mother's tears the day that she and Plantagenet had visited Marringhurst. Somehow or other Dr. Masham seemed connected with this sorrow. Whenever Lady Annabel was most despirited it was after an interview with that gentleman; yet the presence of the doctor always gave her pleasure, and he was the most kind-hearted and cheerful of men. Perhaps, after all, it was only her illusion; perhaps, after all, it was the memory of her father to which her mother was devoted, and which occasionally overcame her; perhaps she ventured to speak of him to Dr. Masham, though not to her daughter, and this might account for that occasional agitation which Venetia had observed at his visits. And yet, and yet, and yet—in vain she reasoned. There is a strange sympathy which whispers convictions that no evidence can authorise, and no arguments dispel. Venetia Herbert, particularly as she grew older, could not refrain at times from yielding to the irresistible belief that her existence was enveloped in some mystery. Mystery too often presupposes the idea of guilt. Guilt! who was guilty? Venetia shuddered at the current of her own thoughts. She started from the garden seat in which she had fallen into this dangerous and painful reverie; flew to her mother, who received her with smiles; and buried her face in the bosom of Lady Annabel.

CHAPTER II.

WE have indicated in a few pages the progress of three years. How differently passed to the two preceding ones, when the Cadurcis family were

settled at the abbey! For during this latter period it seemed that not a single incident had occurred. They had glided away in one unbroken course of study, religion, and domestic love, the enjoyment of nature, and the pursuits of charity; like a long summer sabbath-day, sweet and serene and still, undisturbed by a single passion, hallowed and hallowing.

If the Cadurcis family were now not absolutely forgotten at Cherbury, they were at least only occasionally remembered. These last three years so completely harmonised with the life of Venetia before their arrival, that, taking a general view of her existence, their residence at the abbey figured only as an episode in her career; active indeed and stirring, and one that had left some impressions not easily discarded; but, on the whole, mellowed by the magic of time, Venetia looked back to her youthful friendship as an event that was only an exception in her lot, and she viewed herself as a being born and bred up in a seclusion which she was never to quit, with no aspirations beyond the little world in which she moved, and where she was to die in peace, as she had lived in purity.

One Sunday, the conversation after dinner fell upon Lord Cadurcis. Doctor Masham had recently met a young Etonian, and had made some inquiries about their friend of old days. The information he had obtained was not very satisfactory. It seemed that Cadurcis was a more popular boy with his companions than his tutors; he had been rather unruly, and had only escaped expulsion by the influence of his guardian, who was not only a great noble, but a powerful minister.

This conversation recalled old times. They talked over the arrival of Mrs. Cadurcis at the abbey, her strange character, her untimely end. Lady Annabel expressed her conviction of the natural excellence of Plantagenet's disposition, and her regret of the many disadvantages under which he laboured; it gratified Venetia to listen to his praise.

"He has quite forgotten us, mamma," said Venetia.

"My love, he was very young when he quitted us," replied Lady Annabel; "and you must remember the influence of a change of life at so tender an age. He lives now in a busy world."

"I wish that he had not forgotten to write to us sometimes," said Venetia.

"Writing a letter is a great achievement for a schoolboy," said the Doctor; "it is a duty which even grown-up persons too often forget to fulfil, and, when postponed, it is generally deferred for ever. However, I agree with Lady Annabel, Cadurcis was a fine fellow, and, had he been properly brought up, I cannot help thinking might have turned out something."

"Poor Plantagenet!" said Venetia, "how I pity him. His was a terrible lot—to lose both his parents! Whatever were the errors of Mrs. Cadurcis, she was his mother, and, in spite of every mortification, he clung to her. Ah! I shall never forget when Pauncefort met him coming out of her room, the night before the burial, when he said, with streaming eyes, 'I only had one friend in the world, and now she is gone.' I could not love Mrs. Cadurcis, and yet, when I heard of these words, I cried as much as he."

"Poor fellow!" said the Doctor, filling his glass.

"If there be any person in the world whom I pity," said Venetia, "'tis an orphan. O! what should I be without mamma! And Plantagenet, poor Plantagenet, he has no mother, no father." Venetia added, with a faltering voice: "I can sympathise with him in some degree, I, I. I know, I feel the misfortune, the misery,—" her face became crimson, yet she could not restrain the irresistible words,—"the misery of never having known a father," she added.

There was a dead pause, a most solemn silence. In vain Venetia struggled to look calm and unconcerned; every instant she felt the blood mantling in her cheek with a more lively and spreading agitation. She dared not look up; it was not possible to utter a word to turn the conversation. She felt utterly confounded, and absolutely mute. At length Lady Annabel spoke. Her tone was severe and choking, very different to her usual silvery voice.

"I am sorry that my daughter should feel so keenly the want of a parent's love," said her ladyship.

What would not Venetia have given for the power of speech? but it seemed to have deserted her for ever. There she sat mute and motionless, with her eyes fixed on the table, and with a burning cheek, as if she were conscious of having committed some act of shame, as if she had been detected in some base and degrading deed. Yet, what had she done? A daughter had delicately alluded to her grief at the loss of a parent, and expressed her keen sense at the deprivation.

It was an autumnal afternoon: Dr. Masham looked at the sky, and, after a long pause, made an observation about the weather, and then requested permission to order his horses, as the evening came on apace, and he had some distance to ride. Lady Annabel rose; the Doctor, with a countenance unusually serious, offered her his arm; and Venetia followed them like a criminal. In a few minutes the horses appeared; Lady Annabel bid adieu to her friend in her usual kind tone, and with her usual sweet smile; and then, without noticing Venetia, instantly retired to her own chamber.

And this was her mother—her mother, who never before quitted her for an instant, without some sign and symbol of affection, some playful word of love, a winning smile, a passing embrace, that seemed to acknowledge that the pang of even momentary separation could only be alleviated by this graceful homage to the heart. What had she done! Venetia was about to follow Lady Annabel, but she checked herself. Agony at having offended her mother, and for the first time, was blended with a strange curiosity as to the cause, and some hesitating indignation at her treatment. Venetia remained anxiously awaiting the return of Lady Annabel, but her ladyship did not reappear. Every instant the astonishment and grief of Venetia increased. It was the first domestic difference that had occurred between them. It shocked her very much. She thought of Plantagenet and Mrs. Cadurcis. There was a mortifying resemblance, however slight, between the respective situations of the two families. Venetia, too, had quarrelled with her mother; that mother who, for fourteen years, had only looked upon her with fondness and joy; who had been ever kind, without being ever weak, and had rendered her

child happy by making her good; that mother whose beneficent wisdom had transmuted duty into delight; that superior yet gentle being, so indulgent yet so just, so gifted yet so condescending, who dedicated all her knowledge, and time, and care, and intellect, to her daughter.

Venetia threw herself upon a couch and wept. They were the first tears of unmixed pain that she had ever shed. It was said by the household of Venetia when a child, that she had never cried; not a single tear had ever sullied that sunny face. Surrounded by scenes of innocence, and images of happiness and content, Venetia smiled on a world that smiled on her, the radiant heroine of a golden age. She had, indeed, wept over the sorrows and the departure of Cadurcis; but those were soft showers of sympathy and affection sent from a warm heart, like drops from a summer sky. But now this grief was agony: her brow throbbled, her hand was clenched, her heart beat with tumultuous palpitation; the streaming torrent came scalding down her cheek like fire rather than tears, and, instead of assuaging her emotion, seemed, on the contrary, to increase its fierce and fervid power.

The sun had set, the red autumnal twilight had died away, the shadows of night were brooding over the halls of Chebury. The moan of the rising wind might be distinctly heard, and ever and anon the branches of neighbouring trees swung with a sudden yet melancholy sound against the windows of the apartment, of which the curtains had remained undrawn. Venetia looked up; the room would have been in perfect darkness but for a glimmer which just indicated the site of the expiring fire, and an uncertain light, or rather modified darkness, that seemed the sky. Alone and desolate! Alone and desolate and unhappy! Alone and desolate and unhappy, and for the first time! Was it a sigh, or a groan, that issued from the stifling heart of Venetia Herbert! That child of innocence, that bright emanation of love and beauty, that airy creature of grace and gentleness, who had never said an unkind word or done an unkind thing in her whole career, but had glanced and glided through existence, scattering happiness and joy, and receiving the pleasure which she herself imparted, how overwhelming was her first struggle with that dark stranger—Sorrow!

Some one entered the room; it was Mistress Pouncefort. She held a taper in her hand, and came tripping gingerly in, with a new cap streaming with ribands, and scarcely, as it were, condescending to execute the mission with which she was trusted, which was no greater than fetching her lady's reticule. She glanced at the table, but it was not there; and she turned up her nose at a chair or two, which she even condescended to propel a little with a saucy foot, as if the reticule might be hid under the hanging drapery, and then, unable to find the object of her search, Mistress Pouncefort settled herself before the glass, elevating the taper above her head, that she might observe what indeed she had been examining the whole day, the effect of her new cap. With a complacent simper, Mistress Pouncefort then turned from pleasure to business, and approaching the couch, gave a faint shriek, half genuine, half affected, as she recognised the recumbent form of her young mistress. "Well, to be sure," exclaimed Mistress Pouncefort, "was the like ever seen!

Miss Venetia, as I live! La! Miss Venetia, what can be the matter? I declare I am all in a palpitation."

Venetia, affecting composure, said she was rather unwell; that she had a headache, and rising, murmured that she would go to bed. "A headache!" exclaimed Mistress Pouncefort, "I hope no worse, for there is my lady, and she is as out of sorts as possible. She has a headache too, and when I shut the door just now, I am sure as quiet as a lamb, she told me not to make so much noise when I left the room. 'Noise!' says I; 'why really, my lady, I don't pretend to be a spirit; but if it comes to noise—' Never answer me, Pouncefort," said my lady. "'No, my lady,' says I, 'I never do, and, I am sure, when I have a headache myself, I don't like to be answered.' But, to be sure, if you have a headache, and my lady has a headache too, I only hope we have not got the epidemy. I vow, Miss Venetia, that your eyes are as red as if you had been running against the wind. Well, to be sure, if you have not been crying! I must go and tell my lady immediately."

"Light me to my room," said Venetia; "I will not disturb my mother, as she is unwell."

Venetia rose, and Mistress Pouncefort followed her to her chamber, and lit her candles. Venetia desired her not to remain; and when she had quitted the chamber, Venetia threw herself in her chair and sighed.

To sleep—it was impossible; it seemed to Venetia that she could never rest again. She wept no more, but her distress was very great. She felt it impossible to exist through the night without being reconciled to her mother; but she refrained from going to her room, from the fear of again meeting her troublesome attendant. She resolved, therefore, to wait until she heard Mistress Pouncefort retire for the night, and she listened with restless anxiety for the sign of her departure in the sound of her footsteps along the vestibule, on which the doors of Lady Annabel's and her daughter's apartments opened.

An hour elapsed, at length the sound was heard. Convinced that Pouncefort had now quitted her mother for the night, Venetia ventured forth; and, stopping before the door of her mother's room, she knocked gently. There was no reply, and in a few minutes Venetia knocked again, and rather louder. Still no answer. "Mamma," said Venetia in a faltering tone, but no sound replied. Venetia then tried the door, and found it fastened. Then she gave up the effort in despair, and, retreating to her own chamber, she threw herself on her bed, and wept bitterly.

Some time elapsed before she looked up again; the candles were flaring in their sockets. It was a wild windy night; Venetia rose, and withdrew the curtain of her window. The black clouds were scudding along the sky, revealing, in their occasional but transient rifts, some glimpses of the moon, that seemed unusually bright; or of a star that trembled with supernatural brilliancy. She stood a while gazing on the outward scene, that harmonised with her own internal agitation: her grief was like the storm, her love like the light of that bright moon and star. There came over her a desire to see her mother, which she felt irresistible; she was resolved that no difficulty, no impediment, should prevent her instantly from throwing herself on her bosom. It seemed to her that her

brain would burn, that this awful night could never end without such an interview. She opened her door, went forth again into the vestibule, and approached with a nervous but desperate step her mother's chamber. To her astonishment, the door was ajar, but there was a light within. With trembling step and downcast eyes, Venetia entered the chamber, scarcely daring to advance, or to look up.

"Mother," she said, but no one answered; she heard the tick of the clock; it was the only sound. "Mother," she repeated, and she dared to look up, but the bed was empty. There was no mother. Lady Annabel was not in the room. Following an irresistible impulse, Venetia knelt by the side of her mother's bed and prayed. She addressed, in audible and agitated tones, that Almighty and Benificent Being of whom she was so faithful and pure a follower. With sanctified simplicity, she communicated to her Creator and her Saviour all her distress, all her sorrow, all the agony of her perplexed and wounded spirit. If she had sinned, she prayed for forgiveness, and declared in solitude, to one whom she could not deceive, how unintentional was the trespass; if she were only misapprehended, she supplicated for comfort and consolation; for support under the heaviest visitation she had yet experienced, the displeasure of that earthly parent whom she revered only second to her heavenly Father.

"For thou art my Father," said Venetia, "I have no other father but thee, O God! Forgive me, then, my heavenly parent, if in my wilfulness, if in my thoughtless and sinful blindness, I have sighed for a father on earth, as well as in heaven! Great have thy mercies been to me, O God! in a mother's love. Turn, then, again to me the heart of that mother whom I have offended! Let her look upon her child as before; let her continue to me a double parent, and let me pay to her the duty and the devotion that might otherwise have been divided!"

"Amen!" said a sweet and solemn voice, and Venetia was clasped in her mother's arms.

CHAPTER III.

If the love of Lady Annabel for her child were capable of increase, it might have been believed that it absolutely became more profound and ardent after that short-lived but painful estrangement, which we have related in the last chapter. With all Lady Annabel's fascinating qualities and noble virtues, a fine observer of human nature, enjoying opportunities of intimately studying her character, might have suspected that an occasion only were wanted to display or develop in that lady's conduct no trifling evidence of a haughty, proud, and even inexorable, spirit. Circumstanced as she was at Cherbury, with no one capable or desirous of disputing her will, the more gracious and exalted qualities of her nature were alone apparent. Entertaining a severe, even a sublime sense of the paramount claims of duty in all conditions and circumstances of life, her own conduct afforded an invariable and consistent example of her tenet; from those around her she required little, and that was cheerfully granted; while on the other hand, her more eminent situation alike multiplied her

own obligations, and enabled her to fulfil them; she appeared, therefore, to pass her life in conferring happiness and in receiving gratitude. Strictly religious, of immaculate reputation, rigidly just, systematically charitable, dignified in her manners, yet more than courteous to her inferiors, and gifted at the same time with great self-control and great decision, she was looked up to by all within her sphere with a sentiment of affectionate veneration. Perhaps there was only one person within her little world who, both by disposition and relative situation, was qualified in any way to question her undoubted sway, or to cross by independence of opinion the tenor of the discipline she had established, and this was her child. Venetia, with one of the most affectionate and benevolent natures in the world, was gifted with a shrewd inquiring mind, and a restless imagination. She was capable of forming her own opinions, and had both reason and feeling at command to gauge their worth. But to gain an influence over this child had been the sole object of Lady Annabel's life, and she had hitherto met that success which usually awaits in this world the strong purpose of a determined spirit. Lady Annabel herself was far too acute a person not to have detected early in life the talents of her child, and she was proud of them. She had cultivated them with exemplary devotion, and with admirable profit. But Lady Annabel had not less discovered that, in the ardent and susceptible temperament of Venetia, means were offered by which the heart might be trained not only to cope with but overpower the intellect. With great powers of pleasing, beauty, accomplishments, a sweet voice, a soft manner, a sympathetic heart, Lady Annabel was qualified to charm the world; she had contrived to fascinate her daughter. She had inspired Venetia with the most romantic attachment for her: such as rather subsists between two female friends of the same age and hearts, than between individuals in the relative situations which they bore to each other. Yet while Venetia thus loved her mother, she could not but also respect and revere the superior being whose knowledge was her guide on all subjects, and whose various accomplishments deprived her secluded education of all its disadvantages; and when she felt that one so gifted had devoted her life to the benefit of her child, and that this beautiful and peerless lady had no other ambition but to be her guardian and attendant spirit; gratitude, fervent and profound, mingled with admiring reverence and passionate affection, and together formed a spell that encircled the mind of Venetia with talismanic sway.

Under the despotic influence of these enchanted feelings, Venetia was fast growing into womanhood, without a single cloud having ever disturbed the pure and splendid heaven of her domestic life. Suddenly the horizon had become clouded, a storm had gathered and burst, and an eclipse could scarcely have occasioned more terror to the untutored roamer of the wilderness, than this unexpected catastrophe to one so inexperienced in the power of the passions as our heroine. Her heaven was again serene; but, such was the effect of this ebullition on her character, so keen was her dread of again encountering the agony of another misunderstanding with her mother, that she recoiled with trembling from that subject which had so often and so deeply engaged her secret

thoughts; and the idea of her father, associated as it now was with pain, mortification, and misery, never rose to her imagination but instantly to be shunned as some unhallowed image, of which the bitter contemplation was fraught with not less disastrous consequences than the denounced idolatry of the holy people.

Whatever, therefore, might be the secret reasons which impelled Lady Annabel to shroud the memory of the lost parent of her child in such inviolate gloom, it is certain that the hitherto restless though concealed curiosity of Venetia upon the subject, the rash demonstration to which it led, and the consequence of her boldness, instead of threatening to destroy in an instant the deep and matured system of her mother, had, on the whole, greatly contributed to the fulfilment of the very purpose for which Lady Annabel had so long laboured. That lady spared no pains in following up the advantage which her acuteness and knowledge of her daughter's character assured her that she had secured. She hovered round her child more like an enamoured lover than a fond mother; she hung upon her looks, she read her thoughts, she anticipated every want and wish; her dulcet tones seemed even sweeter than before; her soft and elegant manners even more tender and refined. Though even in her childhood Lady Annabel had rather guided than commanded Venetia; now she rather consulted than guided her. She seized advantage of the advanced character and mature appearance of Venetia to treat her as a woman rather than a child, and as a friend rather than a daughter. Venetia yielded herself up to this flattering and fascinating condescension. Her love for her mother amounted to passion; she had no other earthly object or desire but to pass her entire life in her sole and sweet society; she could conceive no sympathy deeper or more delightful; the only unhappiness she had ever known, had been occasioned by a moment trenching upon its exclusive privilege; Venetia could not picture to herself that such a pure and entrancing existence could ever experience a change.

And this mother, this devoted yet mysterious mother, jealous of her child's regret for a father that she had lost, and whom she had never known! shall we ever penetrate the secret of her heart!

CHAPTER IV.

It was in the enjoyment of these exquisite feelings that a year, and more than another year, elapsed at our lone hall of Cherbury. Happiness and content seemed at least the blessed destiny of the Herberts. Venetia grew in years, and grace, and loveliness; each day, apparently more her mother's joy, and each day bound to that mother by, if possible, more ardent love. She had never again experienced those uneasy thoughts which at times had haunted her from her infancy; separated from her mother, indeed, scarcely for an hour together, she had no time to muse. Her studies, each day becoming more various and interesting, and pursued with so gifted and charming a companion, entirely engrossed her; even the exercise that was her relaxation was participated by Lady Annabel; and the mother and daughter, bounding together on their steeds, were fanned by the same

breeze, and freshened by the same graceful and healthy exertion.

One day the post, that seldom arrived at Cherbury, brought a letter to Lady Annabel, the perusal of which evidently greatly agitated her. Her countenance changed as her eye glanced over the pages; her hand trembled as she held it. But she made no remark; and succeeded in subduing her emotion so quickly, that Venetia, although she watched her mother with anxiety, did not feel justified in interfering with inquiring sympathy. But while Lady Annabel resumed her usual calm demeanour, she relapsed into unaccustomed silence, and, soon rising from the breakfast table, moved to the window, and continued apparently gazing on the garden, with her face averted from Venetia for some time. At length she turned to her, and said, "I think, Venetia, of calling on the doctor to-day; there is business on which I wish to consult him, but I will not trouble you, dearest, to accompany me. I must take the carriage, and it is a long and tiring drive."

There was a tone of decision even in the slightest observations of Lady Annabel, which, however sweet might be the voice in which they were uttered, scarcely encouraged their propriety to be canvassed. Now, Venetia was far from desirous of being separated from her mother this morning. It was not a vain and idle curiosity, prompted by the receipt of the letter and its consequent effects, both in the emotion of her mother and the visit which it had rendered necessary, that swayed her breast. The native dignity of a well-disciplined mind exempted Venetia from such feminine weakness. But some consideration might be due to the quick sympathy of an affectionate spirit that had witnessed with corresponding feeling, the disturbance of the being to whom she was devoted.

Why this occasional and painful mystery that ever and anon clouded the heaven of their love, and flung a frigid shadow over the path of a sunshiny life? Why was not Venetia to share the sorrow or the care of her only friend, as well as participate in her joy and her content? There were other claims, too, to this confidence, besides those of the heart. Lady Annabel was not merely her only friend, she was her parent, her only parent, almost, for aught she had ever heard or learnt, her only relative. For her mother's family, though she was aware of their existence by the freedom with which Lady Annabel ever mentioned them, and though Venetia was conscious that an occasional correspondence was maintained between them and Cherbury, occupied no station in Venetia's heart, scarcely in her memory. That noble family were nullities to her; far distant, apparently estranged from her heart, except in form, she had never seen them; they were associated in her recollection with none of the sweet ties of kindred. Her grandfather was dead without her ever having received his blessing; his successor, her uncle, was an ambassador, long absent from his country; her only aunt married to a soldier, and established at a foreign station. Venetia envied Dr. Masham the confidence which was extended to him; it seemed to her, even leaving out of sight the intimate feelings that subsisted between her and her mother, that the claims of blood to this confidence, were at least as strong as those of friendship. But Venetia stifled her emotions; she parted from

her mother with a kind, yet somewhat mournful expression. Lady Annabel might have read a slight sentiment of affectionate reproach in the demeanour of her daughter when she bade her farewell. Whatever might be the consciousness of the mother, she was successful in concealing her impression. Very kind, but calm and inscrutable, Lady Annabel, having given directions for postponing the dinner-hour, embraced her child and entered the chariot.

Venetia, from the terrace, watched her mother's progress through the park. After gazing for some minutes, a tear stole down her cheek. She started, as if surprised at her own emotion. And now the carriage was out of sight, and Venetia would have recurred to some of those resources which were ever at hand for the employment or amusement of her secluded life. But the favourite volume ceased to interest this morning, and almost fell from her hand. She tried her spinet, but her ear seemed to have lost its music; she looked at her easel, but the cunning had fled from her touch.

Restless and disquieted, she knew not why, Venetia went forth again into the garden. All nature smiled around her; the fitting birds were throwing their soft shadows over the sunny lawns, and rustling amid the blossoms of the variegated groves. The golden wreaths of the laburnum and the silver knots of the chestnut streamed and glittered around; the bees were as busy as the birds, and the whole scene was suffused and penetrated with brilliancy and odour. It still was spring, and yet the gorgeous approach of summer, like the advancing procession of some triumphant king, might almost be detected amid the lingering freshness of the year; a lively and yet magnificent period, blending, as it were, Attic grace with Roman splendour; a time when hope and fruition for once meet, when existence is most full of delight, alike delicate and voluptuous, and when the human frame is most sensible to the gayety and grandeur of nature.

And why was not the spirit of the beautiful and innocent Venetia as bright as the surrounding scene? There are moods of mind that baffle analysis, that arise from a mysterious sympathy we cannot penetrate. At this moment the idea of her father irresistibly recurred to the imagination of Venetia. She could not withstand the conviction that the receipt of the mysterious letter and her mother's agitation were by some inexplicable connexion linked with that forbidden subject. Strange incidents flitted across her memory: her mother weeping on the day they visited Marringhurst, the mysterious chambers—the nocturnal visit of Lady Annabel that Cadureis had witnessed—her unexpected absence from her apartment, when Venetia in her despair had visited her, some months ago. What was the secret that enveloped her existence? Alone, which was unusual,—dispirited, she knew not why,—and brooding over thoughts which haunted her like evil spirits, Venetia at length yielded to a degree of nervous excitement which amazed her. She looked up to the uninhabited wing of the mansion with an almost fierce desire to penetrate its mysteries. It seemed to her that a strange voice came whispering on the breeze urging her to the fulfilment of a mystical mission. With a vague, yet wild purpose, she entered the house, and took her way to

ner mother's chamber. Mistress Pouncefort was there. Venetia endeavoured to assume her accustomed serenity. The waiting-woman bustled about, arranging the toilet-table, which had been for a moment discomposed, putting away a cap, folding up a shawl, and indulging in a multitude of inane observations which little harmonised with the high strung tension of Venetia's mind. Mistress Pouncefort opened a casket with a spring lock, in which she placed some trinkets of her mistress. Venetia stood by her in silence; her eye, vacant and wandering, beheld the interior of the casket. There must have been something in it, the sight of which greatly agitated her, for Venetia turned pale, and in a moment left the chamber and retired to her own room.

She locked her door, threw herself in a chair almost gasping for breath, she covered her face with her hands. It was some minutes before she recovered comparative composure; she rose and looked in the mirror; her face was quite white, but her eyes glittering with excitement. She walked up and down her room with a troubled step, and a scarlet flush alternately returned to and retired from her changing cheek. Then she leaned against a cabinet in thought. She was disturbed from her musings by the sound of Pouncefort's step along the vestibule, as she quitted her mother's chamber. In a few minutes Venetia herself stepped forth into the vestibule, and listened. All was silent. The golden morning had summoned the whole household to its enjoyment. Not a voice, not a domestic sound, broke the complete stillness. Venetia again repaired to the apartment of Lady Annabel. Her step was light, but agitated; it seemed that she scarcely dared to breathe. She opened the door, rushed into the cabinet, pressed the spring lock, caught at something that it contained, and hurried again to her own chamber.

And what is this prize that the trembling Venetia holds almost convulsively in her grasp, apparently without daring even to examine it? Is this the serene and light-hearted girl, whose face was like the cloudless splendour of a sunny day? Why is she so pallid and perturbed? What strong impulse fills her frame? She clutches in her hand a key!

On that tempestuous night of passionate sorrow which succeeded the first misunderstanding between Venetia and her mother, when the voice of Lady Annabel had suddenly blended with that of her kneeling child, and had ratified with her devotional concurrence her wailing supplications; even at the moment when Venetia, in a rapture of love and duty, felt herself pressed to her mother's reconciled heart, it had not escaped her that Lady Annabel held in her hand a key; and, though the feelings which that night had so forcibly developed, and which the subsequent conduct of Lady Annabel had so carefully and skillfully cherished, had impelled Venetia to banish and erase from her thought and memory all the associations which that spectacle however slight was calculated to awaken, still, in her present mood, the unexpected vision of the same instrument, identical she could not doubt, had triumphed in an instant over all the long discipline of her mind and conduct, in an instant had baffled and dispersed her self-control, and been hailed as the providential means by which she might at length penetrate that mystery which she now felt no longer supportable.

The clock of the belfry of Cherbury at this moment struck, and Venetia instantly sprang from her seat. It reminded her of the preciousness of the present morning. Her mother was indeed absent, but her mother would return. Before that event a great fulfilment was to occur. Venetia, still grasping the key, as if it were the talisman of her existence, looked up to heaven, as if she required for her allotted task an immediate and special protection; her lips seemed to move, and then she again quitted her apartment. As she passed through an oriel in her way towards the gallery, she observed Pouncefort in the avenue of the park, moving in the direction of the keeper's lodge. This emboldened her. With a hurried step she advanced along the gallery, and at length stood before the long-sealed door that had so often excited her strange curiosity. Once she looked around; but no one was near, not a sound was heard. With a faltering hand she touched the lock with the key; but her powers deserted her: for a minute she believed that the key, after all, would not solve the mystery. And yet the difficulty arose only from her own agitation. She rallied her courage; once more she made the trial; the key fitted with completeness, and the lock opened with ease, and Venetia found herself in a small and scantily-furnished antechamber. Withdrawing then the key from the lock, and closing the door with noiseless care, Venetia stood trembling in the mysterious chamber, where apparently there was nothing to excite wonder. The door of the chamber into which the anteroom opened was still closed, and it was some minutes before the adventurous daughter of Lady Annabel could summon courage for the enterprise which awaited her.

Her hand is upon the lock; it yields without an effort. Venetia steps into a spacious and lofty chamber. For a moment she paused almost upon the threshold, and looked around her with a vague and misty vision. Anon she distinguished something of the character of the apartment. In the recess of a large oriel window, that looked upon the park, and of which the blinds were nearly drawn, was an old-fashioned yet sumptuous toilet-table of considerable size, arranged as if for use. Opposite this window, in a corresponding recess, was what might be deemed a bridal-bed, its furniture being of white satin, richly embroidered; the curtains half closed; and suspended from a canopy was a wreath of roses, that had once emulated, or rather excelled, the lustrous purity of the hangings, but now were wan and withered. The centre of the inlaid and polished floor of the apartment was covered with a Tournay carpet, of brilliant yet tasteful decoration. An old cabinet of fanciful workmanship, some chairs of ebony, and some girandoles of silver, completed the furniture of the room, save that at its extreme end, exactly opposite to the door by which Venetia entered, covered with a curtain of green silk, was what she concluded must be a picture.

An awful stillness pervaded the apartment: Venetia herself, with a face paler even than the hangings of the mysterious bed, stood motionless, with suppressed breath, gazing on the distant curtain, with a painful glance of agitated fascination. At length, summoning her energies as if for the achievement of some terrible yet inevitable enterprise, she crossed the room, and averting her face, and closing her eyes in a paroxysm of nervous ex-

citement, she stretched forth her arm, and with a rapid motion withdrew the curtain. The harsh sound of the brass rings drawn quickly over the rod, the only noise that had yet met her ear in this mystical chamber, made her start and tremble. She looked up—she beheld, in a very broad and massy frame, the full-length portrait of a man.

A man in the very spring of sunny youth, and of radiant beauty. Above the middle height, and very slender, yet with a form that displayed exquisite grace, he was habited in a green tunic that developed his figure to advantage, and became the scene in which he was placed—a park, with a castle in the distance; while a groom at hand held a noble steed, that seemed impatient for the chase. The countenance of its intended rider met fully the gaze of the spectator. It was a countenance of singular loveliness and power. The lips and the moulding of the chin resembled the eager and impassioned tenderness of the shape of Antinous; but, instead of the effeminate sullenness of the eye, and the narrow smoothness of the forehead, shone an expression of profound and piercing thought. On each side of the clear and open brow descended, even to the shoulders, the clustering locks of golden hair; while the eyes large, and yet deep, beamed with a spiritual energy, and shone like two wells of crystalline water that reflect the all-beholding heavens.

Now when Venetia Herbert beheld this countenance a change came over her. It seemed that, when her eyes met the eyes of the portrait, some mutual interchange of sympathy occurred between them. She freed herself in an instant from the apprehension and timidity that before oppressed her. Whatever might ensue, a vague conviction of having achieved a great object pervaded, as it were, her being. Some great end, vast, though indefinite, had been fulfilled. Abstract and fearless, she gazed upon the dazzling visage with a prophetic heart. Her soul was in a tumult, oppressed with thick-coming fancies too big for words, panting for expression. There was a word which must be spoken; it trembled on her convulsive lip, and would not sound. She looked around her with an eye glittering with unnatural fire, as if to supplicate some invisible and hovering spirit to her rescue, or that some floating and angelic chorus might warble the thrilling word, whose expression seemed absolutely necessary to her existence. Her cheek is flushed, her eye wild and tremulous, the broad blue veins of her immaculate brow quivering and distended; her waving hair falls back over her forehead, and rustles like a wood before the storm. She seems a priestess in the convulsive throes of inspiration, and about to breathe the oracle.

The picture, as we have mentioned, was hung in a broad and massy frame. In the centre of its base was worked an escutcheon, and beneath the shield this inscription,—

MARMION HERBERT, ET. XX.

Yet there needed not these letters to guide the agitated spirit of Venetia, for, before her eye had reached them, the word was spoken; and, falling on her knees before the portrait, the daughter of Lady Annabel had exclaimed "My father!"

CHAPTER V.

THE daughter still kneels before the form of the father, of whom she had heard for the first time in her life. He is at length discovered. It was, then, an irresistible destiny, that, after the wild musings and baffled aspirations of so many years, had guided her to this chamber. She is the child of Marmion Herbert; she beholds her lost parent. That being of supernatural beauty, on whom she gazes with a look of blended reverence and love, is her father. What a revelation! Its reality exceeded the wildest dreams of her romance; her brightest visions of grace and loveliness and genius, seemed personified in this form; the form of one to whom she was bound by the strongest of all earthly ties—of one on whose heart she had a claim second only to that of the being by whose lips his name was never mentioned. Was he, then, no more? Ah! could she doubt that bitterest calamity? Ah! was it, was it any longer a marvel, that one who had lived in the light of those seraphic eyes, and had watched them until their terrestrial splendour had been for ever extinguished, should shrink from the converse that could remind her of the catastrophe of all her earthly hopes! This chamber, then, was the temple of her mother's wo—the tomb of her baffled affections and bleeding heart. No wonder that Lady Annabel, the desolate Lady Annabel, that almost the same spring must have witnessed the most favoured and the most disconsolate of women, should have fled from the world, that had awarded her at the same time a lot so dazzling and so full of despair. Venetia felt that the existence of her mother's child, her own fragile being, could have been that mother's sole link to life. The heart of the young widow of Marmion Herbert must have broken but for Venetia; and the consciousness of that remaining tie, and the duties that it involved, could have alone sustained the victim under a lot of such unparalleled bitterness. The tears streamed down her cheek as she thought of her mother's misery, and her mother's gentle love; the misery that she had been so cautious her child should never share; the vigilant affection that, with all her own hopes blighted, had still laboured to compensate to her child for a deprivation, the fulness of which Venetia could only now comprehend.

When, where, why—did he die? O! that she might talk of him to her mother for ever! It seemed that life might pass away in listening to his praises. Marmion Herbert!—and who was Marmion Herbert? Young as he was, command and genius, the pride of noble passions, all the glory of a creative mind, seemed stamped upon his brow. With all his marvellous beauty, he seemed a being born for greatness. Dead—in the very burst of his spring, a spring so sweet and splendid—could he be dead! Why, then, was he ever born? It seemed to her that he could not be dead; there was an animated look about the form, that seemed as if it could not die without leaving mankind a prodigal legacy of fame.

Venetia turned and looked upon her parents' bridal bed. Now that she had discovered her father's portrait, every article in the room interested her, for her imagination connected every thing with him. She touched the wreath of withered

resses, and one instantly broke away from the circle, and fell; she knelt down and gathered up the scattered leaves, and placed them in her bosom. She approached the table in the oriel; in its centre was a volume, on which reposed a dagger of curious workmanship; the volume bound in velvet, and the word "ANNABEL" embroidered upon it in gold. Venetia unclasped it. The volume was MS.; in a fly-leaf were written these words—

"TO THE LADY OF MY LOVE, FROM HER MARMION
HERBERT."

With a fluttering heart, yet sparkling eye, Venetia sank into a chair, which was placed before the table, with all her soul concentrated in the contents of this volume. Leaning on her right hand, which shaded her agitated brow, she turned a page of the volume with a trembling hand. It contained a sonnet, delineating the feelings of a lover at the first sight of his beloved,—a being to him yet unknown. Venetia perused with breathless interest the graceful and passionate picture of her mother's beauty. A series of similar compositions detailed the history of the poet's heart, and all the thrilling adventures of his enchanted life. Not an incident, not a word, not a glance, in that spell-bound prime of existence, that was not commemorated by his lyre in strains as sweet and as witching! Now he poured forth his passion; now his doubts; now his hopes; now came the glowing hour when he was first assured of his felicity; the next page celebrated her visit to the castle of his fathers—and another led her to the altar.

With a flushed cheek and an excited eye Venetia had rapidly pored over these ardent annals of the heart from whose blood she had sprung. She turns the page—she starts—the colour deserts her countenance—a mist glides over her vision—she clasps her hands with convulsive energy—she sinks back in her chair. In a few moments she extends one hand, as if fearful again to touch the book that had excited so much emotion—raises herself in her seat—looks around her with a vacant and perplexed gaze—apparently succeeds in collecting herself—and then seizes, with an eager grasp, the volume, and throwing herself on her knees before the chair—her long locks hanging on each side over a cheek crimson as the sunset—loses her whole soul in the lines which the next page reveals.

ON THE NIGHT OUR DAUGHTER WAS BORN.

I.

Within our heaven of love, the new-born star
We long devoutly watched, like shepherd kings,
Steals into light, and, floating from afar,
Metunks some bright transcendent seraph sings,
Waving with flashing light her radiant wings,
Immortal welcome to the stranger fair!
To us a child is born. With transport clings
The mother to the babe she sighed to bear;
Of all our treasured loves, the long-expected heir!

II.

My daughter! can it be a daughter now
Shall greet my being with her infant smile?
And shall I press that fair and taintless brow
With my fond lips, and tempt, with many a wile
Of playful love, those features to beguile
A parent with their mirth? In the wild sea
Of this dark life, behold a little isle
Rises amid the waters, bright and free,
A haven for my hopes of fond security!

III.

And thou shalt hear a name my line has loved,
And their fair daughters owned for many an age,
Since first our fiery blood a wanderer roved,
And made in sunnier lands his pilgrimage,
Where proud defiance with the waters wage
The sea-born city's walls; the graceful towers
Loved by the hard and honoured by the sage!
My own VENETIA, now shall gild our bowers,
And with her spell enchain our life's enchanted hours!

IV.

O! if the blessing of a father's heart
Hath aught of sacred in its deep breath'd prayer,
Skilled to thy gentle being to impart,
As thy bright form itself, a fate as fair;
On thee I breathe that blessing! Let me share,
O God! her joys; and if the dark behest
Of wo resistless, and avoidless care,
Hath not gone forth, oh! spare this gentle guest,
And wreak thy needful wrath on my resigned breast!

An hour elapsed, and Venetia did not move. Over and over again she conned the only address from the lips of her father that had ever reached her ear. A strange inspiration seconded the exertion of an exercised memory. The duty was fulfilled—the task completed. Then a sound was heard without. The thought that her mother had returned occurred to her; she looked up, the big tears streaming down her face; she listened, like a young hind just roused by the still-distant huntsman, quivering and wild;—she listened, and she sprang up—replaced the volume—arranged the chair—cast one long, lingering, feverish glance at the portrait—skimmed through the room—hesitated one moment in the antechamber—opened, as all was silent, the no longer mysterious door—turned the noiseless lock—tripped lightly along the vestibule—glided into her mother's empty apartment—reposed the key that had opened so many wonders in the casket,—and then, having hurried to her own chamber, threw herself on her bed in a paroxysm of contending emotions, that left her no power of pondering over the strange discovery that had already given a new colour to her existence.

CHAPTER VI.

HER mother had not returned; it was a false alarm; but Venetia could not quit her bed. There she remained, repeating to herself her father's verses. Then one thought alone filled her being. Was he dead? Was this fond father, who had breathed this fervent blessing over her birth, and invoked on his own head all the wo and misfortunes of her destiny, was he, indeed, no more? How swiftly must the arrow have sped after he received the announcement that a child was given to him—

"Of all his treasured loves the long-expected heir!"

He could scarcely have embraced her ere the great Being, to whom he had offered his prayer, summoned him to his presence! Of that father she had not the slightest recollection, she had ascertained that she had reached Cherbury a child, even in arms, and she knew that her father had never lived under the roof. What an awful bereavement! Was it wonderful that her mother was inconsolable? Was it wonderful that she could not endure even his name to be mentioned

in her presence—that not the slightest allusion to his existence could be tolerated by a wife, who had been united to such a peerless being, only to behold him torn away from her embraces? O! could he, indeed be dead! That inspired countenance that seemed immortal, had it in a moment been dimmed; and all the symmetry of that matchless form, had it indeed been long mouldering in the dust! Why should she doubt it? Ah! why, indeed! How could she doubt it? Why, ever and anon, amid the tumult of her excited mind, came there an unearthly whisper to her ear, mocking her with the belief that he still lived? But he was dead; he must be dead; and why did she live? Could she survive what she had seen and learnt this day? Did she wish to survive it? But her mother, her mother, with all her sealed-up sorrows, had survived him. Why! For her sake; for her child, for “his own Venetia!” His own!

She clenched her feverish hand—her temples beat with violent palpitations—her brow was burning hot. Time flew on, and every minute Venetia was more sensible of the impossibility of rising to welcome her mother. That mother at length returned; Venetia could not again mistake the wheels of the returning carriage. Some minutes passed, and there was a knock at her door. With a choking voice Venetia bade them enter. It was Pouncefort.

“Well, Miss,” she exclaimed, “if you a’n’t here, after all! I told my lady, ‘My lady,’ says I, ‘I am sure Miss Venetia must be in the park, for I saw her go out myself, and I have never seen her come home.’ And, after all, you are here. My lady has come home, you know, Miss, and has been inquiring for you several times.”

“Tell mamma that I am not very well,” said Venetia, in a low voice, “and that I have been obliged to lie down.”

“Not well, Miss!” exclaimed Pouncefort; “and what can be the matter with you? I am afraid you have walked too much; overdone it, I dare say; or, mayhap, you have caught cold; it is an easterly wind; for I was saying to John this morning, ‘John,’ says I, ‘if Miss Venetia will walk about with only a handkerchief tied round her head, why—what can be expected?’”

“I have only a headache, a very bad headache, Pouncefort; I wish to be quiet,” said Venetia.

Pouncefort left the room accordingly, and straightway proceeded to Lady Annabel, when she communicated the information that Miss Venetia was in the house, after all, though she had never seen her return, and that she was lying down because she had a very bad headache. Lady Annabel, of course, did not lose a moment in visiting her darling. She entered the room very softly, so softly that she was not heard; Venetia was lying on her bed, with her back to the door. Lady Annabel stood by her bedside for some moments unnoticed. At length Venetia heaved a deep sigh. Her mother then said, in a very soft voice, “Are you in pain, darling?”

“Is that mamma?” said Venetia, turning with quickness.

“You are ill, dear,” said Lady Annabel, taking her hand. “Your hand is hot; you are feverish. How long has my Venetia felt ill?”

Venetia could not answer; she did nothing but sigh. Her strange manner excited her mother’s

wonder. Lady Annabel sat by the bedside, still holding her daughter’s hand in hers, watching her with a glance of great anxiety.

“Answer me, my love,” she repeated in a voice of tenderness. “What do you feel?”

“My head, my head,” murmured Venetia.

Her mother pressed her own hand to her daughter’s brow; it was very hot. “Does that pain you?” inquired Lady Annabel; but Venetia did not reply; her look was wild and abstracted. Her mother gently withdrew her hand, and then summoned Pouncefort, with whom she communicated without permitting her to enter the room.

“Miss Herbert is very ill,” said Lady Annabel, pale, but in a firm tone. “I am alarmed about her. She appears to me to have a fever; send instantly to Southport for Mr. Hawkins; and let the messenger use and urge all possible expedition. Be in attendance in the vestibule, Pouncefort; I shall not quit her room, but she must be kept perfectly quiet.”

Lady Annabel then drew her chair to the bedside of her daughter, and bathed her temples at intervals with rose-water; but none of these attentions apparently attracted the notice of the sufferer. She was, it would seem, utterly unconscious of all that was occurring. She now lay with her face turned towards her mother, but did not exchange even looks with her. She was restless, and occasionally she sighed very deeply.

Once, by way of experiment, Lady Annabel again addressed her, but Venetia gave no answer. Then the mother concluded what, indeed, had before attracted her suspicion, that Venetia’s head was affected. But, then, what was this strange, this sudden, attack, which appeared to have prostrated her daughter’s faculties in an instant? A few hours back, and Lady Annabel had parted from Venetia in all the glow of health and beauty. The season was most genial; her exercise had doubtless been moderate; as for her general health, so complete was her constitution, and so calm the tenor of her life, that Venetia had scarcely experienced in her whole career a single hour of indisposition. It was an anxious period of suspense until the medical attendant arrived from Southport. Fortunately he was one in whom, for reputation, Lady Annabel was disposed to place great trust; and his matured years, his thoughtful manner, and acute inquiries, confirmed her favorable opinion of him. All that Mr. Hawkins could say, however, was, that Miss Herbert had a great deal of fever, but the cause was concealed, and the suddenness of the attack perplexed him. He administered one of the usual remedies; and after an hour had elapsed, and no favourable change occurring, he bled her. He quitted Cherbury, with the promise of returning late in the evening, having several patients whom he was obliged to visit.

The night drew on; the chamber was now quite closed, but Lady Annabel never quitted it. She sat reading, removed from her daughter, that her presence might not disturb her, for Venetia seemed inclined to sleep. Suddenly Venetia spoke; but said only one word—“Father!”

Lady Annabel started—her book nearly fell from her hand—she grew very pale. Quite breathless, she listened, and again Venetia spoke, and again called upon her father. Now, with a great effort, Lady Annabel stole on tiptoe to the bedside of her daughter. Venetia was lying on her back,

her eyes were closed, her lips still, as it were, quivering with the strange word they had dared to pronounce. Again her voice sounded; she chanted, in an unearthly voice, verses. The perspiration stood in large drops on the pallid forehead of her mother as she listened. Still Venetia proceeded; and Lady Annabel, throwing herself on her knees, held up her hands to heaven in an agony of astonishment, terror, and devotion.

Now there was again silence; but her mother remained apparently buried in prayer. Again Venetia spoke; again she repeated the mysterious stanzas. With convulsive agony her mother listened to every fatal line that she unconsciously pronounced.

The secret was then discovered. Yes! Venetia must have penetrated the long-closed chamber; all the labours of long years had in a moment been subverted; Venetia had discovered her parent, and the effects of the discovery might, perhaps, be her death. Then it was that Lady Annabel, in the torture of her mind, poured forth her supplications that the life or the heart of her child might never be lost to her. "Grant, O merciful God!" she exclaimed, "that this sole hope of my being may be spared to me. Grant, if she be spared, that she may never desert her mother! And for him, of whom she has heard this day for the first time, let him be to her as if he were no more! May she never learn that he lives! May she never comprehend the secret agony of her mother's life! Save her, O God! save her from his fatal, his irresistible influence! May she remain pure and virtuous as she has yet lived! May she remain true to thee, and true to thy servant, who now bows before thee! Look down upon me at this moment with gracious mercy; turn to me my daughter's heart; and, if it be my dark doom to be in this world a widow, though a wife, add not to this bitterness that I shall prove a mother without a child!"

At this moment the surgeon returned. It was absolutely necessary that Lady Annabel should compose herself. She exerted all that strength of character for which she was remarkable. From this moment she resolved, if her life were the forfeit, not to quit for an instant the bedside of Venetia until she was declared out of danger; and feeling conscious that, if she once indulged her own feelings, she might herself soon be in a situation scarcely less hazardous than her daughter's, she controlled herself with a mighty effort. Calm as a statue, she received the medical attendant, who took the hand of the unconscious Venetia with apprehensions too visibly impressed upon his grave countenance. As he took her hand, Venetia opened her eyes, stared at her mother and her attendant, and then immediately closed them.

"She has slept!" inquired Lady Annabel.

"No," said the surgeon, "no: this is not sleep; it is a feverish trance, that brings her no refreshment." He took out his watch, and marked her pulse with great attention; then he placed his hand on her brow, and shook his head. "These beautiful curls must come off," he said. Lady Annabel glided to the table, and instantly brought the scissors, as if the delay of an instant might be fatal. The surgeon cut off those long golden locks. Venetia raised her hand to her head, and said, in a low voice, "They are for my father." Lady

Annabel leaned upon the surgeon's arm, and swook.

Now he led the mother to the window, and spoke in a very hushed tone.

"Is it possible that there is any thing on your daughter's mind, Lady Annabel?" he inquired.

The agitated mother looked at the inquirer, and then at her daughter; and then for a moment she raised her hand to her eyes; then she replied, in a low but firm voice, "Yes."

"Your ladyship must judge whether you wish me to be acquainted with it," said Mr. Hawkins, very calmly.

"My daughter has suddenly become acquainted, Sir, with some family incidents of a very painful nature, and the knowledge of which I have hitherto spared her. They are events long past, and their consequences are now beyond all control."

"She knows, then, the worst."

"Without her mind, I cannot answer that question," said Lady Annabel.

"It is my duty to tell you that Miss Herbert is in imminent danger; she has every appearance of a fever of the most malignant character. I cannot answer for her life."

"O God!" exclaimed Lady Annabel.

"Yet you must compose yourself, my dear lady. Her chance of recovery greatly depends upon the vigilance of her attendants. I shall bleed her again, and place leeches on her temples. There is inflammation on the brain. There are other remedies also not less powerful. We must not despair: we have no cause to despair until we find these fail. I shall not leave her again; and, for your satisfaction, not for my own, I shall call in additional advice,—the aid of a physician."

A messenger accordingly was instantly despatched for the physician, who resided at a town more distant than Southport; the very town, by-the-by, where Morgana, the gipsy, was arrested. They contrived, with the aid of Pauncefort, to undress Venetia, and place her in her bed, for hitherto they had refrained from this exertion. At this moment the withered leaves of a white rose fell from Venetia's dress. A sofa-bed was then made for Lady Annabel, of which, however, she did not avail herself. The whole night she sat by her daughter's side, watching every movement of Venetia, refreshing her hot brow and her parched lips, or arranging, at every opportunity, her disordered pillows. About an hour past midnight the surgeon retired to rest, for a few hours, in the apartment prepared for him, and Pauncefort, by the desire of her mistress, also withdrew: Lady Annabel was alone with her child, and with those agitated thoughts which the strange occurrences of the day were well calculated to excite.

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY in the morning the physician arrived at Chisbury. It remained for him only to approve of the remedies which had been pursued. No material change, however, had occurred in the state of Venetia: she had not slept, and still she seemed unconscious of what was occurring. The gracious interposition of Nature seemed the only

hope. When the medical men had withdrawn to consult in the terrace-room, Lady Annabel beckoned to Pauncefort, and led her to the window of Venetia's apartment, which she would not quit.

"Pauncefort," said Lady Annabel, "Venetia has been in her father's room."

"O! impossible, my lady," burst forth Mistress Pauncefort; but Lady Annabel placed her finger on her lip, and checked her. "There is no doubt of it, there can be no doubt of it, Pauncefort; she entered it yesterday; she must have passed the morning there, when you believed she was in the park."

"But, my lady," said Pauncefort, "how could it be? For I scarcely left your ladyship's room a second, and Miss Venetia, I am sure, never was near it. And the key, my lady, the key is in the casket. I saw it half an hour ago with my own eyes."

"There is no use arguing about it, Pauncefort," said Lady Annabel with decision. "It is as I say. I fear great misfortunes are about to commence at Cherbury."

"O! my lady, don't think of such things," said Pauncefort, herself not a little alarmed. "What can happen?"

"I fear more than I know," said Lady Annabel, "but I do fear much. At present I can only think of her."

"Well! my lady," said poor Mistress Pauncefort, looking very bewildered, "only to think of such a thing! and after all the pains I have taken! I am sure I have not opened my lips on the subject these fifteen years; and the many questions I have been asked too! I am sure there is not a servant in the house—"

"Hush! hush!" said Lady Annabel, "I do not blame you, and therefore you need not defend yourself. Go, Pauncefort, I must be alone." Pauncefort withdrew, and Lady Annabel resumed her seat by her daughter's side.

On the fourth day of her attack, the medical attendants observed a favourable change in their patient, and were not, of course, slow in communicating this joyful intelligence to her mother. The crisis had occurred, and was past: Venetia had at length sunk into slumber. How different was her countenance from the still, yet settled features, they had before watched with such anxiety! She breathed lightly, the tension of the eyelids had disappeared, her mouth was slightly open. The physician and his colleague declared that immediate danger was past, and they counselled Lady Annabel to take repose. On condition that one of them should remain by the side of her daughter, the devoted yet miserable mother quitted, for the first time, her child's apartment. Pauncefort followed her to her room.

"O! my lady," said Pauncefort, "I am so glad your ladyship is going to lie down a bit."

"I am not going to lie down, Pauncefort, give me the key."

And Lady Annabel proceeded alone to the forbidden chamber,—that chamber which, after what has occurred, we may now enter with her, and where, with so much labour, she had created a room exactly imitative of their bridal apartments at her husband's castle. With a slow but resolved step she entered the apartment, and proceeded immediately to the table, took up the book; it opened

at the stanzas to Venetia. The pages had recently been bedewed with tears. Lady Annabel then looked at the bridal bed, and marked the missing rose in the garland; it was as she expected. She seated herself then in the chair opposite the portrait, on which she gazed with a glance rather stern than fond.

"Marmion!" she exclaimed, "for fifteen years, a solitary votary, I have mourned over, in this temple of baffled affections, the inevitable past. The daughter of our love has found her way, perhaps by an irresistible destiny, to a spot sacred to my long-concealed sorrows. At length she knows her father. May she never know more! May she never learn that the being, whose pictured form has commanded her adoration, is unworthy of those glorious gifts that a gracious Creator has bestowed upon him! Marmion, you seem to smile upon me; you seem to exult in your triumph over the heart of your child. But there is a power in a mother's love that yet shall baffle you. Hitherto I have come here to deplore the past; hitherto I have come here to dwell upon the form that, in spite of all that has happened, I still was, perhaps, weak enough to love. Those feelings are past for ever. Yes! you would rob me of my child, you would tear from my heart the only consolation you have left me. But Venetia shall still be mine; and I, I am no longer yours. Our love, our still lingering love, has vanished. You have been my enemy; now I am yours. I gaze upon your portrait for the last time; and thus I prevent the magical fascination of that face again appealing to the sympathies of my child. Thus, and thus!"—She seized the ancient dagger, that we have mentioned as lying on the volume, and, springing on the chair, she plunged it into the canvas; then, tearing with unflinching resolution the severed parts, she scattered the fragments over the chamber, shook into a thousand leaves the melancholy garland, tore up the volume of his enamoured Muse, and then quitting the chamber, and locking and double locking the door, she descended the staircase, and, proceeding to the great well of Cherbury, hurled into it the fatal key.

"O! my lady," said Mistress Pauncefort, as she met Lady Annabel returning in the vestibule, "Doctor Masham is here."

"Is he?" said Lady Annabel, as calm as usual. "I will see him before I lie down. Do not go into Venetia's room. She sleeps, and Mr. Hawkins has promised me to let me know when she wakes."

CHAPTER VIII.

As Lady Annabel entered the terrace-room, Doctor Masham came forward and grasped her hand.

"You have heard of our sorrow!" said her ladyship in a faint voice.

"But this instant," replied the doctor, in a tone of great anxiety. "Immediate danger—"

"Is past. She sleeps," replied Lady Annabel. "A most sudden and unaccountable attack," said the doctor.

It is difficult to describe the contending emotions of the mother as her companion made this observation. At length she replied, "Sudden, certainly sudden; but not unaccountable. O! my

friend," she added, after a moment's pause, "they will not be content until they have torn my daughter from me."

"They tear your daughter from you!" exclaimed Doctor Masham. "Who?"

"He, he," muttered Lady Annabel; her speech was incoherent, her manner very disturbed.

"My dear lady," said the doctor, gazing on her with extreme anxiety, "you are yourself unwell."

Lady Annabel heaved a deep sigh; the doctor bore her to a seat. "Shall I send for any one, any thing?"

"No one, no one," quickly answered Lady Annabel. "With you, at least, there is no concealment necessary."

She leaned back in her chair, the doctor holding her hand, and standing by her side.

Still Lady Annabel continued sighing deeply: at length she looked up and said, "Does she love me? Do you think, after all, she loves me?"

"Venetia!" inquired the doctor, in a low and doubtful voice, for he was greatly perplexed.

"She has seen him; she loves him; she has forgotten her mother."

"My dear lady, you require rest," said Doctor Masham. "You are overcome with strange fancies. Who has your daughter seen?"

"Marnion."

"Impossible: you forget he is—"

"Here also."

"He has spoken to her: she loves him: she will recover: she will fly to him—sooner let us both die!"

"Shall I send for Pauncefort?"

"No, let me be alone with you, with you. You know all, Pauncefort knows all; and she, she knows every thing. Fate has baffled me; we cannot struggle with fate. She is his child; she is like him; she is not like her mother. O! she hates me; I know she hates me."

"Hush! hush! hush!" said the doctor, himself very much agitated. "Venetia loves you, only you. Why should she love any one else?"

"Who can help it! I loved him. I saw him: I loved him. His voice was music. He has spoken to her, and she yielded—she yielded in a moment. I stood by her bed-side. She would not speak to me; she would not know me; she shrank from me. Her heart is with her father—only with him."

"Where did she see him? How?"

"His room—his picture. She knows all. I was away with you, and she entered his chamber."

"Ah!"

"O! doctor, you have influence with her. Speak to her. Make her love me! Tell her she has no father; tell her he is dead."

"We will do that which is well and wise," replied Doctor Masham: "at present let us be calm; if you give way, her life may be the forfeit. Now is the moment for a mother's love."

"You are right. I would not have left her for an instant. I would not have her wake, and find her mother not watching over her. But I was tempted. She slept; I left her for a moment; I went to destroy the spell. She cannot see him again. No one shall see him again. It was my weakness, the weakness of long years; and now I am its victim."

"Nay, nay, my sweet lady, all will be quite well. Be but calm; Venetia will recover."

"But will she love me? O! no, no, no. She will think only of him. She will not love her mother. She will yearn for her father now. She has seen him, and she will not rest until she is in his arms. She will desert me, I know it."

"And I know the contrary," said the doctor, attempting to reassure her; "I will answer for Venetia's devotion to you. Indeed she has no thought but your happiness, and can love only you. When there is a fitting time, I will speak to her; but now—now is the time for repose. And you must rest, you must indeed."

"Rest! I cannot. I slumbered in the chair last night by her bedside, and a voice roused me. It was her own. She was speaking to her father. She told him how she loved him; how long, how much she thought of him; that she would join him when she was well, for she knew he was not dead; and, if he were dead, she would die also. She never mentioned me."

"Nay! the light meaning of a delirious brain."

"Truth—truth—bitter, inevitable truth. O! doctor, I could bear all but this; but my child—my beautiful fond child, that made up for all my sorrows. My joy—my hope—my life; I knew it would be so; I knew he would have her heart. He said she never could be alienated from him; he said she never could be taught to hate him. I did not teach her to hate him. I said nothing. I deemed, fond foolish mother, that the devotion of my life might bind her to me. But what is a mother's love? I cannot contend with him. He gained the mother; he will gain the daughter too."

"God will guard over you," said Masham, with streaming eyes: "God will not desert a pious and virtuous woman."

"I must go," said Lady Annabel, attempting to rise, but the doctor gently controlled her; "perhaps she is awake, and I am not at her side. She will not ask for me, she will ask for him; but I will be there; she will desert me, but she shall not say I ever deserted her."

"She will never desert you," said the doctor; "my life on her pure heart. She has been a child of unbroken love and duty; still she will remain so. Her mind is for a moment overpowered by a marvellous discovery. She will recover, and be to you as she was before."

"We'll tell her he is dead," said Lady Annabel, eagerly. "You must tell her. She will believe you. I cannot speak to her of him; no, not to secure her heart; never—never—never can I speak to Venetia of her father."

"I will speak," replied the doctor, "at the just time. Now let us think of her recovery. She is no longer in danger. We should be grateful, we should be glad."

"Let us pray to God!" Let us humble ourselves," said Lady Annabel. "Let us beseech him not to desert this house. We have been faithful to him—we have struggled to be faithful to him. Let us supplicate him to favour and support us!"

"He will favour and support you," said the doctor, in a solemn tone. "He has upheld you in many trials; he will uphold you still."

"Ah! why did I love him! Why did I continue to love him! How weak, how foolish, how mad I have been! I have alone been the cause of all this misery. Yes, I have destroyed my child."

"She lives—she will live. Nay, nay, you must reassure yourself. Come, let me send for your servant, and for a moment repose. Nay! take my arm. All depends upon you. We have great cares now; let us not conjure up fantastic fears."

"I must go to my daughter's room. Perhaps, by her side, I might rest. No where else. You will attend me to the door, my friend. Yes! it is something in this life to have a friend."

Lady Annabel took the arm of the good Masham. They stopped at her daughter's door.

"Rest here a moment," she said, as she entered the room without a sound. In a moment she returned. "She still sleeps," said the mother; "I shall remain with her, and you —?"

"I will not leave you," said the doctor, "but think not of me—Nay! I will not leave you. I will remain under this roof. I have shared its serenity and joy; let me not avoid it in this time of trouble and tribulation."

CHAPTER IX.

VENETIA still slept: her mother alone in the chamber watched by her side. Some hours had elapsed since her interview with Dr. Masham; the medical attendant had departed for a few hours.

Suddenly Venetia moved, opened her eyes, and said in a faint voice, "Mamma!"

The blood rushed to Lady Annabel's heart. That single word afforded her the most exquisite happiness.

"I am here, dearest," she replied.

"Mamma, what is all this?" inquired Venetia.

"You have not been well, my own, but now you are much better."

"I thought I had been dreaming," replied Venetia, "and that all was not right; somebody I thought struck me on my head. But all is right now, because you are here, my dear mamma."

But Lady Annabel could not speak for weeping.

"Are you sure, mamma, that nothing has been done to my head?" continued Venetia. "Why, what is this?" and she touched a light bandage on her brow.

"My darling, you have been ill, and you have lost blood; but now you are getting quite well. I am been very unhappy about you; but now I am quite happy, my sweet, sweet child."

"How long have I been ill?"

"You have been very ill indeed, for four or five days; you have had a fever, Venetia; but now the fever is gone, and you are only a little weak, and you will soon be well."

"A fever! and how did I get the fever?"

"Perhaps you caught cold, my child; but we must not talk too much."

"A fever! I never had a fever before. A fever is like a dream."

"Hush! sweet love. Indeed you must not speak."

"Give me your hand, mamma; I will not speak if you will let me hold your hand. I thought in the fever that we were parted."

"I have never left your side, my child, day or night," said Lady Annabel, not without agitation.

"All this time!—all these days and nights! No one would do that but you, mamma. You think only of me."

"You repay me by your love, Venetia," said Lady Annabel, feeling that her daughter ought not to speak, yet irresistibly impelled to lead out her thoughts.

"How can I help loving you, my dear mamma?"

"You do love me, you do love me very much; do you not, sweet child?"

"Better than all the world," replied Venetia to her enraptured parent. "And yet in the fever I seemed to love some one else: but fevers are like dreams; they are not true."

Lady Annabel pressed her lips gently to her daughter's and whispered her that she must speak no more.

When Mr. Hawkins returned he gave a very favourable report of Venetia. He said that all danger was now past, and that all that was required for her recovery were time, care, and repose. He repeated to Lady Annabel alone that the attack was solely to be ascribed to some great mental shock which her daughter had received, and which suddenly had affected her circulation; leaving it, after this formal intimation, entirely to the mother to take those steps in reference to the cause, whatever it might be, which she should deem expedient.

In the evening Lady Annabel stole down for a few moments to Dr. Masham, laden with joyful intelligence; assured of the safety of her child, and, what was still more precious, of her heart, and even voluntarily promising her friend that she should herself sleep this night in her daughter's chamber, on the sofa-bed. The doctor therefore now bade her adieu, and said that he should ride over from Marringhurst, every day, to hear how their patient was proceeding.

From this time the recovery of Venetia, though slow, was gradual. She experienced no relapse, and in a few weeks quitted her bed. She was rather surprised at her altered appearance when it first met her glance in the mirror, but scarcely made any observation on the loss of her locks. During this interval the mind of Venetia had been quite dormant; the rage of the fever, and the violent remedies to which it had been necessary to have recourse, had so exhausted her, that she had not energy enough to think. All that she felt was a strange indefinite conviction that some occurrence had taken place with which her memory could not grapple. But, as her strength returned, and as she gradually resumed her usual health, by proportionate though almost invisible degrees her memory returned to her, and her intelligence. She clearly recollected and comprehended what had taken place. She recalled the past, compared incidents, weighed circumstances, sifted and balanced the impressions that now crowded upon her consciousness. It is difficult to describe each link in the metaphysical chain which at length connected the mind of Venetia Herbert with her actual experience and precise situation. It was however at

length perfect, and gradually formed as she sat in an invalid chair, apparently listless, not yet venturing on any occupation, or occasionally amused for a moment by her mother reading to her. But when her mind had thus resumed its natural tone, and in time its accustomed vigour, the past demanded all her solicitude. At length the mystery of her birth was revealed to her. She was the daughter of Marmion Herbert—and who was Marmion Herbert? The portrait rose before her. How distinct was the form—how definite the countenance! No common personage was Marmion Herbert, even had he not won his wife, and celebrated his daughter in such witching strains. Genius was stamped on his lofty brow, and spoke in his brilliant eye; nobility was in all his form. This chivalric poet was her father. She had read, she had dreamed of such beings, she had never seen them. If she quitted the solitude in which she lived, would she see men like her father? No other could ever satisfy her imagination; all beneath that standard would rank but as imperfect creations in her fancy. And this father, he was dead. No doubt. Ah! was there indeed no doubt? Eager as was her curiosity on this all-absorbing subject, Venetia could never summon courage to speak upon it to her mother. Her first disobedience, or rather her first deception of her mother, in reference to this very subject, had brought, and brought so swiftly on its retributive wings, such disastrous consequences, that any allusion to Lady Annabel was restrained by a species of superstitious fear, against which Venetia could not contend. Then her father was either dead or living. That was certain. If dead, it was clear that his memory, however cherished by his relict, was associated with feelings too keenly to admit of any other but solitary indulgence. If living, there was a mystery connected with her parents, a mystery evidently of a painful character, and one which it was a prime object with her mother to conceal and to suppress. Could Venetia, then, in defiance of that mother, that fond devoted mother, that mother who had watched through long days and long nights over her sick bed, and who now, without a murmur, was a prisoner to this very room, only to comfort and console her child—could Venetia take any step which might occasion this matchless parent even a transient pang? No; it was impossible. To her mother she could never speak. And yet, to remain enveloped in the present mystery, she was sensible, was equally insufferable. All she asked, all she wanted to know,—was he alive? If he were alive, then, although she could not see him, though she might never see him, she could exist upon his idea; she could conjure up romances of future existence with him; she could live upon the fond hope of some day calling him father, and receiving from his hands the fervid blessing he had already breathed to her in song.

In the mean time, her remaining parent commanded all her affections. Even if he were no more, blessed was her lot with such a mother! Lady Annabel seemed only to exist to attend upon her daughter. No lover ever watched with such devotion the wants, or even the caprices, of his mistress. A thousand times every day Venetia found herself expressing her fondness and her gratitude. It seemed that the late dreadful contingency of losing her daughter had developed in

Lady Annabel's heart even additional powers of maternal devotion; and Venetia, the fond and grateful Venetia, ignorant of the strange past, which she believed she so perfectly comprehended, returned thanks to heaven that her mother was at least spared the mortification of knowing that her daughter, in her absence, had surreptitiously invaded the sanctuary of her secret sorrow.

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Venetia had so far recovered that, leaning on her mother's arm, she could resume her walks upon the terrace, Doctor Masham persuaded his friends, as a slight and not unpleasant change of scene, to pay him a visit at Marringhurst. Since the chamber scene, indeed, Lady Annabel's tie to Cherbury was much weakened. There were certain feelings of pain, and fear, and mortification, now associated with that place, which she could not bear to dwell upon, and which greatly balanced those sentiments of refuge and repose, of peace and love, with which the old hall, in her mind, was heretofore connected. Venetia ever adopted the slightest intimations of a wish on the part of her mother, and so she very readily agreed to fall into the arrangement.

It was rather a long and rough journey to Marringhurst, for they were obliged to use the old chariot; but Venetia forgot her fatigues in the cordial welcome of their host, whose sparkling countenance well expressed the extreme gratification their arrival occasioned him. All that the tenderest solicitude could devise for the agreeable accommodation of the invalid had been zealously concerted; and the constant influence of Doctor Masham's cheerful mind, was as beneficial to Lady Annabel as to her daughter. The season was very gay, the place was very pleasant; and although they were only a few miles from home, in a house with which they were so familiar, and their companion one whom they had known intimately all their lives, and of late almost daily seen, yet such is the magic of a change in our habits, however slight, and of the usual theatre of their custom, that this visit to Marringhurst assumed quite the air of an adventure, and seemed at first almost invested with the charm and novelty of travel.

The surrounding country, which, though verdant, was very flat, was well adapted to the limited exertions and still feeble footsteps of an invalid, and Venetia began to study botany with the doctor, who indeed was not very profound in his attainments in this respect, but knew quite enough to amuse his scholar. By degrees, also, as her strength daily increased, they extended their walks; and at length she even mounted her pony, and was fast recovering her elasticity both of body and mind. There were also many pleasant books with which she was unacquainted; a cabinet of classic coins, prints, and pictures. She became, too, interested in the doctor's rural pursuits; would watch him with his angle, and already meditated a revolution in his garden. So time, on the whole, flew cheerfully on, certainly without any weariness, and the day seldom passed that they did not allcongratulate themselves on the pleasant and profitable change.

In the mean time Venetia, when alone, still re

curred to that idea that was now so firmly rooted in her mind that it was quite out of the power of any social discipline to divert her attention from it. She was often the sole companion of the doctor, and she had long resolved to seize a favorable opportunity to appeal to him on the subject of her father. It so happened that she was walking alone with him one morning in the neighborhood of Marlinghurst, having gone to visit the remains of a Roman encampment in the immediate vicinity. When they had arrived at the spot, and the doctor had delivered his usual lecture on the locality, they sat down together on a mound, that Venetia might rest herself.

"Were you ever in Italy, Doctor Masham?" said Venetia.

"I never was out of my native country," said the doctor. "I once, indeed, was about making the grand tour with a pupil of mine at Oxford, but circumstances interfered which changed his plans, and so I remain a regular John Bull."

"Was my father at Oxford?" said Venetia, very quietly.

"He was," replied the doctor, looking very confused.

"I should like to see Oxford very much," said Venetia.

"It is a most interesting seat of learning," said the doctor, quite delighted to change the subject. "Whether we consider its antiquity, its learning, the influence it has exercised upon the history of the country, its magnificent endowments, its splendid buildings, its great colleges, libraries, and museums, or that it is one of the principal head-quarters of all the hope of England—our youth—it is not too much to affirm that there is scarcely a spot on the face of the globe of equal interest and importance."

"It is not for its colleges, or libraries, or museums, or all its splendid buildings," observed Venetia, "that I should wish to see it. I wish to see it because my father was once there. I should like to see a place where I was quite certain my father had been."

"Still harping of her father," thought the doctor to himself, and growing very uneasy; yet, from his very great anxiety to turn the subject, quite incapable of saying an appropriate word.

"Do you remember my father at Oxford, Doctor Masham?" said Venetia.

"Yes! no, yes!" said the doctor, rather colouring; that is, he must have been there in my time, I rather think."

"But you do not recollect him?" said Venetia, pressing the question.

"Why," rejoined the doctor, a little more collected, "when you remember that there are between two and three thousand young men at the university, you must not consider it very surprising that I might not recollect your father."

"No," said Venetia, "perhaps not: and yet I cannot help thinking that he must always have been a person who, if once seen, would not easily have been forgotten."

"Here is an Erica vagans," said the doctor, picking a flower; "it is rather uncommon about here," and handing it at the same time to Venetia.

"My father must have been very young when he died?" said Venetia, scarcely looking at the flower.

"Yes, your father was very young," he replied.

"Where did he die?"

"I cannot answer that question."

"Where was he buried?"

"You know, my dear young lady, that the subject is too tender for any one to converse with your poor mother upon it. It is not in my power to give you the information you desire. Be satisfied, my dear Miss Herbert, that a gracious Providence has spared to you one parent, and one so inestimable."

"I trust I know how to appreciate so great a blessing," replied Venetia; "but I should be sorry if the natural interest which all children must take in those who have given them birth should be looked upon as idle and unjustifiable curiosity."

"My dear young lady, you misapprehend me."

"No, Doctor Masham, indeed I do not," replied Venetia, with firmness. "I can easily conceive that the mention of my father may for various reasons be insupportable to my mother; it is enough for me that I am convinced such is the case: my lips are sealed to her for ever upon the subject; but I cannot recognise the necessity of this constraint to others. For a long time I was kept in ignorance whether I had a father or not. I have discovered, no matter how, who he was. I believe, pardon me, my dearest friend, I cannot help believing, that you were acquainted, or, at least, that you know something of him; and I entreat you! yes," repeated Venetia, with great emphasis, laying her hand upon his arm, and looking with earnestness in his face, "I entreat you, by all your kind feelings to my mother and myself,—by all that friendship we so prize,—by the urgent solicitation of a daughter who is influenced in her curiosity by no light or unworthy feeling,—yes! by all the claims of a child to information which ought not to be withheld from her,—tell me, tell me all, tell me something! Speak, Doctor Masham, do speak!"

"My dear young lady," said the doctor, with a glistering eye, "it is better that we should both be silent."

"No, indeed," replied Venetia, "it is not better, it is not well that we should be silent. Candour is a great virtue. There is a charm, a healthy charm, in frankness. Why this mystery? Why these secrets? Have they worked good? Have they benefited us? O! my friend, I would not say so to my mother, I would not be tempted by any sufferings to pain for an instant her pure and affectionate heart; but indeed, Dr. Masham, indeed, indeed, what I tell you is true, all my late illness, my present state, all, all are attributable but to one cause, this mystery about my father!"

"What can I tell you?" said the unhappy Masham.

"Tell me only one fact. I ask no more. Yes! I promise you, solemnly I promise you, I will ask no more. Tell me, does he live?"

"He does!" said the doctor. Venetia sank upon his shoulder.

"My dear young lady, my darling young lady!" said the doctor;—"she has fainted. What can I do?" The unfortunate doctor placed Venetia in a reclining posture, and hurried to a brook that was nigh, and brought water in his hand to sprinkle on her. She revived; she made a struggle to restore herself.

"It is nothing," she said, "I am resolved to be

well. I am well. I am myself again. He lives; my father lives! I was confident of it; I will ask no more. I am true to my word. O! Doctor Masham, you have always been my kind friend, but you have never yet conferred on me a favour like the one you have just bestowed."

"But it is well," said the doctor, "as you know so much, that you should know more."

"Yes! yes!"

"As we walk along," he continued, "we will converse, or at another time; there is no lack of opportunity."

"No, now, now!" eagerly exclaimed Venetia, "I am quite well. It was not pain or illness that overcame me. Now let us walk, now let us talk of these things. He lives?"

"I have little to add," said Dr. Masham, after a moment's thought; "but this, however painful, it is necessary for you to know, that your father is unworthy of your mother, utterly; they are separated; they never can be re-united."

"Never!" said Venetia.

"Never," replied Doctor Masham; "and I now warn you; if, indeed, as I cannot doubt, you love your mother; if her peace of mind and happiness are, as I hesitate not to believe, the principal objects of your life; upon this subject with her be for ever silent. Seek to penetrate no mysteries, spare all allusions, banish, if possible, the idea of your father from your memory. Enough, you know he lives. We know no more. Your mother labours to forget him; her only consolation for sorrows such as few women ever experienced, is her child, yourself, your love. Now be no niggard with it. Cling to this unrivalled parent, who has dedicated her life to you. Soothe her sufferings, endeavour to make her share your happiness; but of this be certain, that if you raise up the name and memory of your father between your mother and yourself, her life will be the forfeit!"

"His name shall never pass my lips," said Venetia; "solemnly I swear it. That his image shall be banished from my heart is too much to ask, and more than it is in my power to grant. But I am my mother's child. I will exist only for her; and, if my love can console her, she shall never be without solace. I thank you, doctor, for all your kindness. We will never talk again upon the subject; yet, believe me, you have acted wisely, you have done good."

CHAPTER XVII.

VENETIA observed her promise to Doctor Masham with strictness. She never alluded to her father, and his name never escaped her mother's lips. Whether Doctor Masham apprised Lady Annabel of the conversation that had taken place between himself and her daughter, it is not in our power to mention. The visit to Marringhurst was not a short one. It was a relief both to Lady Annabel and Venetia, after all that had occurred, to enjoy the constant society of their friend; and this change of life, though apparently so slight, proved highly beneficial to Venetia. She daily recovered her health, and a degree of mental composure, which she had not for some time enjoyed. On the whole she was greatly satisfied with the discoveries which she had made. She had ascer-

ained the name and the existence of her father: his very form and appearance were now no longer matter for conjecture; and in a degree she had even communicated with him. Time, she still believed, would develop even further wonders. She clung to an irresistible conviction that she should yet see him; that he might even again be united to her mother. She indulged in dreams as to his present pursuits and position: she repeated to herself his verses, and remembered his genius with pride and consolation.

They returned to Chisbury, they resumed the accustomed tenor of their lives, as if nothing had occurred to disturb it. The fondness between the mother and her daughter was unbroken and undiminished. They shared again the same studies and the same amusements. Lady Annabel perhaps indulged the conviction that Venetia had imbibed the belief that her father was no more, and yet in truth that father was the sole idea on which her child ever brooded. Venetia had her secret now; and often as she looked up at the windows of the uninhabited portion of the building, she remembered with concealed, but not less keen exultation, that she had penetrated their mystery. She could muse for hours over all that chamber had revealed to her, and indulge in a thousand visions, of which her father was the centre. She was his "own Venetia." Thus he had hailed her at her birth, and thus he might again yet acknowledge her. If she could only ascertain where he existed! What if she could, and she were to communicate with him? He must love her. Her heart assured her he must love her. She could not believe, if they were to meet, that his breast could resist the silent appeal which the sight merely of his only child would suffice to make. O! why had her parents parted! What could have been his fault? He was so young! But a few, a few years older than herself when her mother must have seen him for the last time. Yes! for the last time beheld that beautiful form, and that countenance which seemed breathing only with genius and love. He might have been imprudent, rash, violent; but she would not credit for an instant that a stain could attach to the honour or the spirit of Marmion Herbert.

The summer wore away. One morning, as Lady Annabel and Venetia were sitting together, Mistress Pouncefort bustled into the room with a countenance radiant with smiles and wonderment. Her ostensible business was to place upon the table a vase of flowers, but it was very evident that her presence was occasioned by affairs of far greater urgency. The vase was safely deposited; Mistress Pouncefort gave the last touch to the arrangement of the flowers; she lingered about Lady Annabel. At length she said, "I suppose you have heard the news, my lady?"

"Indeed, Pouncefort, I have not," replied Lady Annabel, very quietly. "What news?"

"My lord is coming to the abbey."

"Indeed!"

"O yes, my lady," said Mistress Pouncefort; "I am not at all surprised your ladyship should be so astonished. Never to write, too! Well, I must say he might have given us a line. But he is coming, I am certain sure of that, my lady. My lord's gentleman has been down these two days; and all his dogs and guns too, my lady. And the keeper is ordered to be quite ready, my lady, for

the first. I wonder if there is going to be a party. I should not be at all surprised."

"Plantagenet returned!" said Lady Annabel.

"Well, I shall be very glad to see him again."

"So shall I, my lady," said Mistress Pouncefort; "but I dare say we shall hardly know him again, he must be so grown. Trimmer has been over to the abbey, my lady, and saw my lord's valet. Quite the fine gentleman, Trimmer says. I was thinking of walking over myself, this afternoon, to see poor Mrs. Quin, my lady; I dare say we might be of use, and neighbours should be handy, as they say. She is a very respectable woman, poor Mrs. Quin, and I am sure for my part, if your ladyship has no objection, I should be very glad to be of service to her."

"I have of course no objection, Pouncefort, to your being of service to the house-keeper, but has she required your assistance?"

"Why no, my lady; but poor Mrs. Quin would hardly like to ask for any thing, my lady; but I am sure we might be of very great use, for my lords gentleman seems very dissatisfied at his reception, Trimmer says. He has his hot breakfast every morning, my lady, and poor Mrs. Quin says—"

"Well, Pouncefort, that will do," said Lady Annabel, and the functionary disappeared.

"We have almost forgotten Plantagenet, Venetia," added Lady Annabel, addressing herself to her daughter.

"He has forgotten us, I think, mamma," said Venetia.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

FIVE years had elapsed since Lord Cadurcis had quitted the seat of his fathers, nor did the fair inhabitants of Cherbury hear of his return without emotion. Although the intercourse between them during this interval had from the first been too slightly maintained, and of late years, had entirely died off, his return was, nevertheless, an event which recalled old times and revived old associations. His visit to the hall was looked forward to with interest. His lordship did not long keep his former friends in suspense; for, although he was not uninfluenced by some degree of embarrassment from the consciousness of neglect on his side, rendered more keen now that he again found himself in the scene endeared by the remembrance of their kindness, he was, nevertheless, both too well-bred and too warm-hearted to procrastinate the performance of a duty which the regulations of society and natural impulse alike assured him was indispensable. On the very morning, therefore, after his arrival, having sauntered awhile over the old abbey, and strolled over the park, mused over his mother's tomb with emotion, not the less deep because there was no outward and visible sign of its influence, he ordered his horses, and directed his way through the accustomed woods to Cherbury.

Five years had not passed away without their effects at least upon the exterior being of Cadurcis. Although still a youth, his appearance was manly. A thoughtful air had become habitual to a counte-

nance melancholy even in his childhood. Nor was its early promise of beauty unfulfilled; although its expression was peculiar, and less pleasing than impressive. His long dark locks shaded a pale and lofty brow, that well became a cast of features delicately moulded, yet reserved and haughty, and perhaps even somewhat scornful. His figure, always slender, had set into a form of remarkable slighthness and elegance, and distinguished for its symmetry. Altogether his general mien was calculated to attract attention and excite interest.

His vacations while at Eton had been spent by Lord Cadurcis in the family of his noble guardian, one of the king's ministers. Here he had been gradually initiated in the habits and manners of luxurious and refined society. Since he had quitted Eton he had passed a season, previous to his impending residence at Cambridge, in the same sphere. The opportunities thus offered had not been lost upon a disposition which, with all its native reserve, was singularly susceptible. Cadurcis had quickly imbibed the tone and adopted the usages of the circle in which he moved. Naturally impatient of control, he endeavored, by his precocious manhood, to secure the respect and independence which would scarcely have been paid or permitted to his years. From an early period he never permitted himself to be treated as a boy; and his guardian, a man whose whole soul was concentrated in the world, humoured a bent which he approved, and from which he augured the most complete success. Attracted, indeed, by the promising talents and the premature character of his ward, he had spared more time to assist in the development of his mind and the formation of his manners than might have been expected from a minister of state. His hopes, indeed, rested with confidence on his youthful relative, and he looked forward with no common emotion to the moment when he should have the honour of introducing to public life one calculated to confer so much credit on his tutor, and shed so much lustre on his party. The reader will, therefore, not be surprised if, at this then unrivalled period of political excitement, when the existence of our colonial empire was at stake, Cadurcis, with his impetuous feelings, had imbibed to their very fullest extent all the plans, prejudices, and passions of his political connexions. He was, indeed, what the circumstances of the times and his extreme youth might well excuse, if not justify, a most violent partisan. Bold, sanguine, resolute, and intolerant, it was difficult to persuade him that any opinions could be just which were opposed to those of the circle in which he lived; and out of that pale, it must be owned, he was as little inclined to recognise the existence of ability as of truth.

As Lord Cadurcis slowly directed his way through the woods and park of Cherbury, past years recurred to him like a faint, yet pleasing, dream. Among these meads and bowers had glided away the only happy hours of his boyhood—the only period of his early life to which he could look back without disgust. He recalled the sacred exultation with which, in company with his poor mother, he had first repaired to Cadurcis, about to take possession of what, to his inexperienced imagination, then appeared a vast and noble inheritance, and, for the first time in his life, to occupy a position not unworthy of his rank. For how many domestic mortifications did the first sight of

that old abbey compensate! How often, in pacing its venerable galleries and solemn cloisters, and musing over the memory of an ancient and illustrious ancestry, had he forgotten those bitter passages of daily existence, so humbling to his vanity, and so harassing to his heart! He had beheld that morn, after an interval of many years, the tomb of his mother. That simple and solitary monument had revived and impressed upon him a conviction that too easily escaped in the various life and busy scenes in which he had since moved—the conviction of his worldly desolation and utter loneliness. He had no parents, no relations; now that he was for a moment free from the artificial life in which he had of late mingled, he felt that he had no friends. The image of his mother came back to him, softened by the magical tint of years; after all, she was his mother, and a deep sharer in all his joys and woes. Transported to the old haunts of his innocent and warm-hearted childhood, he sighed for a finer and sweeter sympathy than was ever yielded by the roof which he had lately quitted—a habitation, but not a home. He conjured up the picture of his guardian, existing in a whirl of official bustle and social excitement. A dreamy reminiscence of finer impulses stole over the heart of Cadurcis. The dazzling pageant of metropolitan splendour faded away before the bright scene of nature that surrounded him. He felt the freshness of the fragrant breeze; he gazed with admiration on the still and ancient woods; and his pure and lively blood bubbled beneath the influence of the golden sunbeams. Before him rose the halls of Cherbury, that roof where he had been so happy, that roof to which he had appeared so ungrateful. The memory of a thousand acts of kindness, of a thousand soft and soothing traits of affection, recurred to him with a freshness which startled as much as it pleased him. Not to him only, but to his mother—that mother whose loss he had lived to deplore—had the inmates of Cherbury been ministering angels of peace and joy. O! that, indeed, had been a home; there, indeed, had been days of happiness; there, indeed, he had found sympathy, and solace, and succour! And now he was returning to them a stranger, to fulfil one of the formal duties of society, in paying them his cold respects—an attention which he could scarcely have avoided offering, had he been to them the merest acquaintance, instead of having found within those walls a home not merely in words, but friendship the most delicate, and love the most pure, a second parent, and the only being whom he had ever styled a sister!

The sight of Cadurcis became dim with emotion as the association of old scenes, and his impending interview with Venetia, brought back the past with a power which he had rarely experienced in the playing-fields of Eton, or the saloons of London. Five years! It was an awful chasm in their acquaintance.

He despaired of reviving the kindness which had been broken by such a dreary interval, and broken on his side so wilfully; and yet he began to feel that unless met with that kindness he should be very miserable. Sooth to say, he was not a little embarrassed, and scarcely knew which contingency he most desired, to meet, or to escape from her. He almost repented his return to Cadurcis; and yet to see Venetia again he felt must be exquisite pleasure. Influenced by these feel-

ings he arrived at the hall steps, and so dismounting, and giving his horse to his groom, Cadurcis, with a palpitating heart and faltering hand, formally rang the bell of that hall, which in old days he entered at all seasons without ceremony.

Never, perhaps, did a man feel more nervous; he grew pale, paler even than usual, and his whole frame trembled as the approaching footstep of the servant assured him the door was about to open. He longed now that the family might not be at home; that he might at least gain four-and-twenty hours to prepare himself. But the family were at home, and he was obliged to enter. He stopped for a moment in the hall, under the pretence of examining the old familiar scene, but it was merely to collect himself, for his sight was clouded; spoke to the old servant, to reassure himself by the sound of his own voice, but the husky words seemed to stick in his throat; ascended the staircase with tottering steps, and leaned against the bannister as he heard his name announced. The effort, however, must be made; it was too late to recede; and Lord Cadurcis, entering the terrace-room, extended his hand to Lady Annabel Herbert. She was not in the least changed, but looked as beautiful and serene as usual. Her salutation, though far from deficient in warmth, was perhaps a little more dignified than that which Plantagenet remembered; but still her presence reassured him; and, while he pressed her hand with earnestness, he contrived to murmur forth with pleasing emotion his delight at again meeting her. Strange to say, in the absorbing agitation of the moment, all thought of Venetia had vanished; and it was when he had turned, and beheld a young lady of the most exquisite beauty that his vision had ever lighted on, who had just risen from her seat, and was at the moment saluting him, that he entirely lost his presence of mind; he turned scarlet, was quite silent, made an awkward bow, and then stood perfectly fixed.

“My daughter,” said Lady Annabel, slightly pointing to Venetia; “will not your lordship be seated?”

Cadurcis fell into a chair in absolute confusion. The rare and surpassing beauty of Venetia, his own stupidity, his admiration of her, his contempt for himself, the sight of the old chamber, the recollection of the past, the minutest incidents of which seemed all suddenly to crowd upon his memory, the painful consciousness of the revolution which had occurred in his position in the family, proved by his first being obliged to be introduced to Venetia, and then being addressed so formally by his title by her mother; all these impressions united overcame him—he could not speak, he sat silent and confounded; and, had it not been for the imperturbable self-composure and delicate and amiable consideration of Lady Annabel, it would have been impossible for him to have remained in a room where he experienced the most agonising embarrassment.

Under cover, however, of a discharge of discreet inquiries as to when he arrived, how long he meant to stay, whether he found Cadurcis altered, and similar interrogations which required no extraordinary exertion of his lordship’s intellect to answer, but to which he nevertheless contrived to give the most inconsistent and contradictory responses, Cadurcis in time recovered himself sufficiently to maintain a fair, though not very

brilliant, conversation, and even ventured occasionally to address an observation to Venetia, who was seated at her work perfectly composed, but who replied to all his remarks with the same sweet voice and artless simplicity which had characterised her childhood, though time and thought had, by their blended influence, perhaps somewhat deprived her of that wild grace and sparkling gayety for which she was once so eminent.

These great disenchanters of humanity, if indeed they had stolen away some of the fascinating qualities of infancy, had amply recompensed Venetia Herbert for the loss by the additional and commanding charms which they had conferred on her. From a beautiful child she had expanded into a most beautiful woman. She had now entirely recovered from her illness, of which the only visible effect was the addition that it had made to her stature, already slightly above the middle height, but of the most exquisite symmetry. Like her mother she did not wear powder, then usual in society; but her auburn hair, which was of the finest texture, descended in long and luxuriant tresses far over her shoulders, braided with ribands, perfectly exposing her pellucid brow, here and there tinted with an undulating vein, for she had retained, if possible with an increased lustre, the dazzling complexion of her infancy. If the rose upon the cheek were less vivid than of yore, the dimples were certainly more developed; the clear gray eye was shadowed by long dark lashes; and every smile and movement of those ruby lips revealed teeth exquisitely small and regular, and fresh and brilliant as pearls just plucked by a diver.

Conversation proceeded and improved. Cadurcis became more easy and more fluent. His memory, which seemed suddenly to have returned to him with unusual vigour, wonderfully served him. There was scarcely an individual of whom he did not contrive to inquire, from Dr. Masham to Mistress Pauncefort; he was resolved to show that, if he had neglected, he had at least not forgotten them. Nor did he exhibit the slightest indication of terminating his visit; so that Lady Annabel, aware that he was alone at the abbey, and that he could have no engagement in the neighbourhood, could not refrain from inviting him to remain and dine with them. The invitation was accepted without hesitation. In due course of time Cadurcis attended the ladies in their walk; it was a delightful stroll in the park; though he felt some slight emotion when he found himself addressing Venetia by the title of "Miss Herbert." When he had exhausted all the topics of local interest, he had a great deal to say about himself, in answer to the inquiries of Lady Annabel. He spoke with so much feeling and simplicity of his first days at Eton, and the misery he experienced on first quitting Cherbury, that his details could not fail of being agreeable to those whose natural self-esteem they so agreeably flattered. Then he dwelt upon his casual acquaintance with London society, and Lady Annabel was gratified to observe, from many incidental observations, that his principles were, in every respect, of the right tone; and that he had zealously enlisted himself in the ranks of that national party who opposed themselves to the disorganising opinions then afloat. He spoke of his impending residence at the University with the affectionate anticipations which might have been expected from a devoted

child of the ancient and orthodox institutions of his country, and seemed perfectly impressed with the responsible duties for which he was destined, as an hereditary legislator of England. On the whole, his carriage and conversation afforded a delightful evidence of a pure, and earnest, and frank, and gifted mind, that had acquired, at a very early age, much of the mature and fixed character of manhood, without losing any thing of that boyish sincerity and simplicity that are too often the penalty of experience.

The dinner passed in pleasant conversation, and, if they were no longer familiar they were at least cordial. Cadurcis spoke of Dr. Masham with affectionate respect, and mentioned his intention of visiting Marringhurst on the following day. He ventured to hope that he might accompany Lady Annabel and Miss Herbert, and it was arranged that his wish should be gratified. The evening drew on apace, and Lady Annabel was greatly pleased when Lord Cadurcis expressed his wish to remain for their evening prayers. He was, indeed, sincerely religious; and as he knelt in the old chapel, that had been the hallowed scene of his boyish devotions, he offered his ardent thanksgivings to his Creator, who had mercifully kept his soul pure and true, and allowed him, after so long an estrangement from the sweet spot of his childhood, once more to mingle his supplications with his kind and virtuous friends.

Influenced by the solemn sounds still lingering in his ear, Cadurcis bade them farewell for the night, with an earnestness of manner and depth of feeling which he would scarcely have ventured to exhibit at their first meeting. "Good night, dear Lady Annabel," he said, as he pressed her hand; "you know not how happy, how grateful I feel, to be once more at Cherbury. Good night, Venetia!"

That last word lingered on his lips; it was uttered in a tone at once mournful and sweet, and her hand was unconsciously detained for a moment in his;—but for a moment; and yet in that brief instant a thousand thoughts seemed to course through his brain.

Before Venetia retired to rest, she remained a few minutes in her mother's room. "What do you think of him mamma?" she said; "is he not very changed?"

"He is, my love," replied Lady Annabel, "what I sometimes thought he might, what I always hoped he would be."

"He really seemed happy to meet us again, and yet how strange that for years he should never have communicated with us!"

"Not so very strange, my love! He was but a child when we parted, and he has felt embarrassment in resuming connections which for a long interval had been inevitably severed. Remember what a change his life had to endure; few, after such an interval, would have returned with feelings so kind and so pure!"

"He was always a favourite of yours, mamma!"

"I always fancied that I observed in him the seeds of great virtues and great talents; but I was not so sanguine that they would have flourished as they appear to have done."

In the mean time the subject of their observations strolled home on foot—for he had dismissed his horses—to the abbey. It was a brilliant night,

and the white beams of the moon fell full upon the old monastic pile, of which massy portions were in dark shade, while the light gracefully rested on the projecting ornaments of the building, and played, as it were, with the fretted and fantastic pinnacles. Behind were the savage hills, softened by the hour; and on the right extended the still and luminous lake. Cadureis rested for a moment, and gazed upon the fair, yet solemn, scene. The dreams of ambition, that occasionally distracted him, were dead. The surrounding scene harmonised with the thoughts of purity, repose, and beauty, that filled his soul. Why should he ever leave this spot, sacred to him by the finest emotions of his nature? Why should he not at once quit that world which he had just entered, while he could quit it without remorse? If ever there existed a being who was his own master,—who might mould his destiny at his will,—it seemed to be Cadureis. His lone, yet independent situation,—his impetuous, yet firm volition,—alike qualified him to achieve the career most grateful to his disposition. Let him, then, achieve it here: here let him find that solitude he had ever loved, softened by that affection for which he had ever sighed, and which here only he had ever found. It seemed to him that there was only one being in the world whom he had ever loved, and that was Venetia Herbert: it seemed to him that there was only one thing in this world worth living for, and that was the enjoyment of her sweet heart. The pure-minded, the rare, the gracious creature! Why should she ever quit these immaculate bowers, wherein she had been so mystically and delicately bred? Why should she ever quit the fond roof of Cherbury, but to shed grace and love amid the cloisters of Cadureis? Her life hitherto had been an enchanted tale; why should the spell ever break? Why should she enter that world where care, disappointment, mortification, misery, must await her? He, for a season, had left the magic circle of her life, and perhaps it was well. He was a man, and so he should know all. But he had returned, thank Heaven! he had returned, and never again would he quit her. Fool that he had been, ever to have neglected her! And for a reason that ought to have made him doubly her friend, her solace, her protector. O! to think of the sneers or taunts of the world calling for a moment the colour from that bright cheek, or dusking for an instant the radiance of that brilliant eye! His heart ached at the thought of her unhappiness, and he longed to press her to it, and cherish her like some innocent dove that had flown from the terrors of a pursuing hawk.

CHAPTER II.

"WELL, Pouncefort," said Lord Cadureis, smiling, as he renewed his acquaintance with his old friend, "I hope you have not forgotten my last words, and have taken care of your young lady."

"O! dear, my lord," said Mistress Pouncefort, blushing and simpering. "Well, to be sure, how your lordship has surprised us all! I thought we were never going to see you again."

"You know I told you I should return; and now I mean never to leave you again."

"Never is a long word, my lord," said Mistress Pouncefort, looking very archly.

"Ah! but I mean to settle, regularly to settle here," said Lord Cadureis.

"Marry and settle my lord," said Mistress Pouncefort, still more arch.

"And why not?" inquired Lord Cadureis, laughing.

"That is just what I said last night," exclaimed Mistress Pouncefort eagerly. "And why not? for I said, says I, his lordship must marry sooner or later, and the sooner the better, say I; and to be sure he is very young; but what of that? for, says I, no one can say he does not look quite a man. And really, my lord, saving your presence, you are grown, indeed."

"Pish!" said Lord Cadureis, turning away, and laughing, "I have left off growing, Pouncefort, and all those sort of things."

"You have not forgotten our last visit to Marriehurst?" said Lord Cadureis to Venetia, as the comfortable mansion of the worthy doctor appeared in sight.

"I have forgotten nothing," replied Venetia with a faint smile; "I do not know what it is to forget. My life has been so uneventful, that every past incident, however slight, is as fresh in my memory as if it occurred yesterday."

"Then you remember the strawberries and cream?" said Lord Cadureis.

"And other circumstances, less agreeable," he fancied Venetia observed, but her voice was low.

"Do you know, Lady Annabel," said Lord Cadureis, "that I was very nearly riding my pony to-day? I wish to bring back old times with the utmost possible completeness; I wish for a moment to believe that I have never quitted Cherbury."

"Let us think only of the present now," said Lady Annabel in a cheerful voice, "for it is very agreeable. I see the good doctor; he has discovered us."

"I wonder whom he fancies Lord Cadureis to be," said Venetia.

"Have you no occasional cavalier for whom at a distance I may be mistaken?" inquired his lordship, in a tone of affected carelessness, though, in truth, it was an inquiry that he made not without anxiety.

"Every thing remains here exactly as you left it," replied Lady Annabel, with some quickness, yet in a lively tone.

"Happy Cherbury!" exclaimed Lord Cadureis "May it, indeed, never change!"

They rode briskly on; the doctor was standing at his gate. He saluted Lady Annabel and Venetia with his accustomed cordiality, and then stared at their companion, as if waiting for an introduction.

"You forget an old friend, my dear doctor," said his lordship.

"Lord Cadureis!" exclaimed Dr. Masham. His lordship had by this time dismounted, and eagerly extended his hand to his old tutor.

Having quitted their horses, they all entered the house, nor was there naturally any want of conversation. Cadureis had much information to give, and many questions to answer. He was in the

highest spirits and the most amiable mood, gay, amusing, and overflowing with kind-heartedness. The doctor seldom required any inspiration to be joyous, and Lady Annabel was unusually lively. Venetia alone, though cheerful, was calmer than pleased Cadurcis. Time, he sorrowfully observed, had occasioned a greater change in her manner than he could have expected. Youthful as she still was, indeed but on the threshold of womanhood, and exempted, as it seemed she had been, from any thing to disturb the clearness of her mind, that enchanting play of fancy, which had once characterised her, and which he recalled with a sigh, appeared in a great degree to have deserted her. He watched her countenance with emotion, and, supremely beautiful as it undeniably was, there was a cast of thoughtfulness or suffering impressed upon the features, which rendered him mournful he knew not why, and caused him to feel as if a cloud had stolen unexpectedly over the sun, and made him shiver.

But there was no time or opportunity for sad reflections; he had to renew his acquaintance with all the sights and curiosities of the rectory, to sing to the canaries, and visit the gold-fish, admire the stuffed fox, and wonder that, in the space of five years, the voracious otter had not yet contrived to devour its prey. Then they refreshed themselves after their ride with a stroll in the doctor's garden; Cadurcis persisted in attaching himself to Venetia, as in old days, and nothing would prevent him from leading her to the grotto. Lady Annabel walked behind, leaning on the doctor's arm, narrating, with no fear of being heard, all the history of their friend's return."

"I never was so surprised in my life," said the doctor; "he is vastly improved; he is quite a man; his carriage is very finished."

"And his principles," said Lady Annabel. "You have no idea, my dear doctor, how right his opinions seem to be on every subject. He has been brought up in a good school; he does his guardian great credit. He is quite loyal and orthodox in his opinions; ready to risk his life for our blessed constitution in Church and State. He requested, as a favour, that he might remain at our prayers last night. It is delightful for me to see him turn out so well!"

In the meantime Cadurcis and Venetia entered the grotto.

"The dear doctor!" said his lordship, "five years have brought no visible change even to him; perhaps he may be a degree less agile, but I will not believe it. And Lady Annabel; it seems to me your mother is more youthful and beautiful than ever. There is a spell in our air," continued his lordship, with a laughing eye, "for if we have changed Venetia, ours is, at least, an alteration that bears no sign of decay. We are advancing, but they have not declined; we are all enchanted."

"I feel changed," said Venetia, gravely.

"I left you a child, and I find you a woman," said Lord Cadurcis—"a change which who can regret?"

"I would I were a child again," said Venetia.

"We were happy," said Lord Cadurcis, in a thoughtful tone; and then, in an inquiring voice, he added, "and so we are now."

Venetia shook her head.

"Can you be unhappy?" said Lord Cadurcis.

"To be unhappy would be wicked," said Venetia, "but my mind has lost its spring."

"Ah! say not so, Venetia, or you will make even me gloomy. I am happy, positively happy. There must not be a cloud upon your brow."

"You are joyous," said Venetia, "because you are excited. It is the novelty of return that animates you. It will wear off; you will grow weary, and, when you go to the university, you will think yourself happy again."

"I do not intend to go to the university," said Lord Cadurcis.

"I understood from you that you were going there immediately."

"My plans are changed," said Lord Cadurcis; "I do not intend ever to leave home again."

"My lord!" said Dr. Masham, who just then reached him, "when you go to Cambridge, I shall trouble you with a letter to an old friend of mine, whose acquaintance you may find valuable."

Venetia smiled; Lord Cadurcis bowed, expressed his thanks, and muttered something about talking over the subject with the doctor.

After this the conversation became general, and at length they all returned to the house to partake of the doctor's hospitality, who promised to dine at the hall on the morrow. The ride home was agreeable and animated; but the conversation, on the part of the ladies, was principally maintained by Lady Annabel, who seemed every moment more delighted with the society of Lord Cadurcis, and to sympathise every instant more completely with his frank exposition of his opinions on all subjects. When they returned to Cherbury, Cadurcis remained with them as a matter of course. An invitation was neither expected nor given. Not an allusion was made to the sports of the field, to enjoy which was the original purpose of his visit to the abbey; and he spoke of to-morrow as of a period which, as usual, was to be spent entirely in their society. He remained with them, as on the previous night, to the latest possible moment. Although reserved in society, no one could be more fluent with those with whom he was perfectly unembarrassed. He was, indeed, exceedingly entertaining, and Lady Annabel relaxed into conversation beyond her custom. As for Venetia, she did not speak often, but she listened with interest, and was evidently amused. When Cadurcis bade them good night, Lady Annabel begged him to breakfast with them; while Venetia, serene, though kind, neither seconded the invitation, nor seemed interested, one way or the other, in its result.

CHAPTER III.

EXCEPT returning to sleep at the abbey, Lord Cadurcis was now as much an habitual inmate of Cherbury Hall as in the days of his childhood. He was there almost with the lark, and never quitted its roof till its inmates were about to retire for the night. His guns and dogs, which had been sent down from London with so much pomp of preparation, were unused and unnoticed; and he passed his days in reading Richardson's novels, which he had brought with him from town, to the

ladies, and then in riding with them about the country, for he loved to visit all his old haunts, and trace even the very green sward where he first met the gipsies, and he fancied that he had achieved his emancipation from all the coming cares and annoyances of the world. In this pleasant life several weeks had glided away: Cadurcis had entirely resumed his old footing in the family, nor did he attempt to conceal the homage he was paying to the charms of Venetia. She, indeed, seemed utterly unconscious that such projects had entered, or indeed could enter, the brain of her old play-fellow, with whom, now that she was habituated to his presence, and revived by his inspiring society, she had resumed all her old familiar intimacy; even addressing him in his Christian name, as if he had never ceased to be her brother. But Lady Annabel was not so blind as her daughter, and had indeed her vision been as clouded, her faithful minister, Mistress Pauncefort, would have taken care quickly to couch it; for a very short time had elapsed before that vigilant gentlewoman resolved to convince her mistress that nothing could escape her sleepless scrutiny, and that it was equally in vain for her mistress, to hope to possess any secrets without her participation, seized a convenient opportunity, before she bid her lady good night, just to inquire "when it might be expected to take place?" and in reply to the very evident astonishment which Lady Annabel testified at this question, and the expression of her extreme displeasure at any conversation on a circumstance for which there was not the slightest foundation, Mistress Pauncefort, after duly flouncing about with every possible symptom of pettish agitation and mortified curiosity, her cheek pale with hesitating impertinence, and her nose quivering with inquisitiveness, condescended to admit, with a sceptical sneer, that of course, no doubt, her ladyship knew more of such a subject than she could; it was not her place to know any thing of such business; for her part she said nothing; it was not her place, but, if it were, she certainly must say that she could not help believing that my lord was looking remarkably sweet on Miss Venetia, and, what was more, every body in the house thought the same, though, for her part, whenever they mentioned the circumstance to her, she said nothing, or bid them hold their tongues, for what was it to them? it was not their business, and they could know nothing; and that nothing would displease her ladyship more than chattering on such subjects, and many's the match, as good as finished, that's gone off by no worse means than the chitter-chatter of those who should hold their tongues. Therefore she should say no more; but, if her ladyship wished her to contradict it, why she could, and the sooner, perhaps, the better.

Lady Annabel observed to her that she wished no such thing; but she desired that Pauncefort would make no more observations on the subject, either to her or to any one else. And then Pauncefort bade her ladyship good night in a huff, catching up her candle with a rather impertinent jerk, and gently slamming the door, as if she had meant to close it quietly, only it had escaped out of her fingers.

Whatever might be the tone, whether of surprise or displeasure, which Lady Annabel thought fit to assume to her attendant on her noticing

Lord Cadurcis' attentions to her daughter, there is no doubt that his lordship's conduct had early and long engaged her ladyship's remark, her consideration, and her approval. Without meditating indeed an immediate union between Cadurcis and Venetia, Lady Annabel pleased herself with the prospect of her daughter's eventual marriage with one whom she had known so early, and so intimately; who was by nature of a gentle, sincere, and affectionate disposition, and in whom education had carefully instilled the most sound and laudable principles and opinions; one apparently with simple tastes, moderate desires, fair talents, a mind intelligent, if not brilliant, and passions which at the worst had been rather ill-regulated than violent; attached also to Venetia from her childhood, and always visibly affected by her influence. All these moral considerations seemed to offer a fair security for happiness; and the material ones were neither less promising, nor altogether disregarded by the mother. It was a union which would join broad lands and fair estates; which would place on the brow of her daughter one of the most ancient coronets in England; and, which indeed was the chief of these considerations, would, without exposing Venetia to that contaminating contact with the world from which Lady Annabel recoiled, establish her, without this initiatory and sorrowful experience, in a position superior to which even the blood of the Herberts, though it might flow in as fair and gifted a form as that of Venetia, need not aspire.

Lord Cadurcis had not returned to Cherbury a week before this scheme entered into the head of Lady Annabel. She had always liked him; had always given him credit for good qualities; had always believed that his early defects were the consequence of his mother's injudicious treatment; and that at heart he was an amiable, generous, and trustworthy being, one who might be depended on, with a naturally good judgment, and substantial and sufficient talents, which only required cultivation. When she met him again after so long an interval, and found her early prognostics so fairly, so completely fulfilled, and watched his conduct and conversation, exhibiting alike a well-informed mind, an obliging temper, and, what Lady Annabel valued even above all gifts and blessings, a profound conviction of the truth of all her own opinions, moral, political, and religious, she was quite charmed; she was moved to unusual animation; she grew excited in his praise; his presence delighted her; she entertained for him the warmest affection, and reposed in him the most unbounded confidence. All her hopes became concentrated in the wish of seeing him her son-in-law; and she detected with the most lively satisfaction the immediate impression which Venetia had made upon his heart; for indeed it should not be forgotten, that although Lady Annabel was still young, and although her frame and temperament were alike promising of a long life, it was natural when she reflected upon the otherwise lone condition of her daughter, that she should tremble at the thought of quitting this world without leaving her child a protector. To Dr. Masham, from whom, indeed, Lady Annabel had no secrets, she confided in time these happy but covert hopes, and he was not less anxious than herself for their fulfilment. Since the return of Cadurcis the doctor contrived to be

more frequent visitor at the hall than usual, and he lost no opportunity of silently advancing the object of his friend.

As for Cadureis himself, it was impossible for him not quickly to discover that no obstacle to his heart's dearest wish would arise on the part of the parent. The demeanour of the daughter somewhat more perplexed him. Venetia, indeed, had entirely fallen into her old habits of intimacy and frankness with Plantagenet; she was as affectionate and as unembarrassed as in former days, and almost as gay; for his presence and companionship had in a great degree insensibly removed that stillness and gravity which had gradually influenced her mind and conduct. But in that conduct there was, and he observed it with some degree of mortification, a total absence of the consciousness of being the object of the passionate admiration of another. She treated Lord Cadureis as a brother she much loved, who had returned to his home after a long absence. She liked to listen to his conversation, to hear of his adventures, to consult over his plans. His arrival called a smile to her face; and his departure for the night was always alleviated by some allusion to their meeting on the morrow. But many an ardent gaze on the part of Cadureis, and many a phrase of emotion, passed unnoticed and unappreciated. His gallantry was entirely thrown away, or, if observed, only occasioned a pretty stare at the unnecessary trouble he gave himself, or the strange ceremony which she supposed an acquaintance with society had taught him. Cadureis attributed this reception of his veiled and delicate overtures to her ignorance of the world; and, though he sighed for as passionate a return to his strong feelings as the sentiments which animated himself, he was on the whole not displeased, but rather interested, by these indications of a pure and unsophisticated spirit.

CHAPTER IV.

CADUREIS had proposed, and Lady Annabel had seconded the proposition with eager satisfaction, that they should seek some day at the abbey whatever hospitality it might offer; Dr. Masham was to be of the party, which was, indeed, one of those fanciful expeditions where the same companions, though they meet at all times without restraint, and with every convenience of life, seek increased amusement in the novelty of a slight change of habits. With the aid of the neighbouring town of Southport, Cadureis had made preparations for his friends not entirely unworthy of them, though he affected to the last all the air of a conductor of a wild expedition of discovery, and laughingly impressed upon them the necessity of steeling their minds and bodies to the experience and endurance of the roughest treatment and the most severe hardships.

The morning of this eventful day broke as beautiful as the preceding ones. Autumn had seldom been more gorgeous than this year. Although he was to play the host, Cadureis would not deprive himself of his usual visit to the hall; and he appeared there at an early hour to accompany his guests, who were to ride over to the abbey, to husband all their energies for their long rambles through the demesne.

Cadureis was in high spirits, and Lady Annabel scarcely less joyous. Venetia smiled, with her usual sweetness and serenity. They congratulated each other on the charming season; and Mistress Pauncefort received a formal invitation to join the party, and go a-nutting with one of her fellow-servants and his lordship's valet. The good doctor was rather late, but he arrived, at last, on his stout steed, in his accustomed cheerful mood. Here was a party of pleasure, which all agreed must be pleasant; no strangers to amuse, or to be amusing; but formed merely of four human beings who spent every day of their lives in each other's society, between whom there was the most complete sympathy, and the most cordial good-will.

By noon they were all mounted on their steeds; and, though the air was warmed by a meridian sun shining in a clear sky, there was a gentle breeze abroad, sweet and grateful; and, moreover, they soon entered the wood, and enjoyed the shelter of its verdant shade. The abbey looked most picturesque when they first burst upon it; the nearer and wooded hills, which formed its immediate background, just tinted by the golden pencil of autumn, while the meads of the valley were still emerald green; and the stream, now lost, now winding, glittered here and there in the sun, and gave a life and sprightliness to the landscape which exceeded even the effect of the more distant and expansive lake.

They were received at the abbey by Mistress Pauncefort, who had preceded them, and who welcomed them with a complacent smile. Cadureis hastened to assist Lady Annabel to dismount, and was a little confused, but very pleased, when she assured him she needed no assistance, but requested him to take care of Venetia. He was just in time to receive her in his arms, where she found herself without the slightest embarrassment. The coolness of the cloisters was most grateful after their ride; and they lingered, and looked upon the old fountain, and felt the freshness of its fall with satisfaction which all alike expressed. Lady Annabel and Venetia then retired for a while to free themselves from their riding habits; and Cadureis, affectionately taking the arm of Dr. Masham, led him a few paces, and then almost involuntarily exclaimed, "My dear doctor, I think I am the happiest fellow that ever lived!"

"That I trust you may always be, my dear boy," said Doctor Masham, "but what has called forth this particular exclamation?"

"To feel that I am once more at Cadureis; to feel that I am here once more with you all; to feel that I never shall leave you again."

"Not again?"

"Never!" said Cadureis. "The experience of these last few weeks, which yet have seemed an age in my existence, has made me resolve never to quit a society where I am persuaded I may obtain a degree of happiness which what is called the world can never afford me."

"What will your guardian say?"

"What care I?"

"A dutiful ward!"

"Poh! the relations between us were formed only to secure my welfare. It is secured; it will be secured by my own resolution."

"And what is that?" inquired Dr. Masham.

"To marry Venetia, if she will accept me."

"And that you do not doubt!"

"We doubt every thing, when every thing is at stake," replied Lord Cadurcis. "I know that her consent would ensure my happiness; and, when I reflect, I cannot help being equally persuaded that it would secure hers. Her mother, I think, would not be adverse to our union. And you, my dear sir, what do you think?"

"I think," said Doctor Masham, "that whoever marries Venetia will marry the most beautiful and the most gifted of God's creatures; I hope you may marry her; I wish you to marry her; I believe you will marry her; but not yet; you are too young, Lord Cadurcis."

"O no, my dear doctor, not too young to marry Venetia. Remember I have known her all my life, at least as long as I have been able to form an opinion. How few are the men, my dear doctor, who are so fortunate as to unite themselves with women whom they have known, as I have known Venetia, for more than seven long years!"

"During five of which you have never seen or heard of her."

"Mine was the fault! And yet I cannot help thinking, as it may probably turn out, as you yourself believe it will turn out, that it is as well that we have been separated for this interval. It has afforded me opportunities for observation which I should never have enjoyed at Cadurcis; and, although my lot either way could not have altered the nature of things, I might have been discontented, I might have sighed for a world which now I do not value. It is true I have not seen Venetia for five years, but I find her the same, or changed only by nature, and fulfilling all the rich promise which her childhood intimated. No, my dear doctor, I respect your opinion more than that of any man living; but nobody, nothing, can persuade me that I am not as intimately acquainted with Venetia's character, with all her rare virtues, as if we had never separated."

"I do not doubt it," said the doctor, "high as you may pitch your estimate, you cannot overvalue her."

"And why should we not marry?"

"Because, my dear friend, although you may be perfectly acquainted with Venetia, you cannot be perfectly acquainted with yourself."

"How so!" exclaimed Lord Cadurcis, in a tone of surprise, perhaps a little indignant.

"Because it is impossible. No young man of eighteen ever possessed such precious knowledge. I esteem and admire you; I give you every credit for a good heart and a sound head; but it is impossible, at your time of life, that your character can be formed; and, until it be, you may marry Venetia, and yet be a very miserable man."

"It is formed," said his lordship, firmly; "there is not a subject important to a human being on which my opinions are not settled."

"You may live to change them all," said the doctor, "and that very speedily."

"Impossible!" said Lord Cadurcis. "My dear doctor, I cannot understand you; you say that you hope—that you wish—even that you believe that I shall marry Venetia; and yet you permit me to infer that our union will only make us miserable. What do you wish me to do?"

"Go to college for a term or two."

"Without Venetia! I should die."

"Well, if you be in a dying state, you can return."

"You joke, my dear doctor."

"My dear boy, I am perfectly serious."

"But she may marry somebody else."

"I am your only rival," said the doctor, with a smile; "and, though even friends can scarcely be trusted under such circumstances, I promise you not to betray you."

"Your advice is not very pleasant," said his lordship.

"Advice seldom is," said the doctor.

"My dear doctor, I have made up my mind to marry her—and marry her at once. I know her well, you admit that yourself. I do not believe that there ever was a woman like her, that there ever will be a woman like her. Nature has marked her out from other women, and her education has not been less peculiar. Her mystic breeding pleases me. It is something to marry a wife so fair, so pure, so refined, so accomplished, who is, nevertheless, perfectly ignorant of the world. I have dreamed of such things; I have paced these old cloisters when a boy, and when I was miserable at home; and I have had visions, and this was one. I have sighed to live alone, with a fair spirit for my minister. Venetia has descended from heaven for me, and for me alone. I am resolved I will pluck this fair flower with the dew upon its leaves."

"I did not know I was reasoning with a poet," said the doctor, with a smile. "Had I been conscious of it, I would not have been so rash."

"I have not a grain of poetry in my composition," said his lordship. "I never could write a verse; I was notorious at Eton for begging all their old manuscripts from boys when they left school, to crib from; but I have a heart, and I can feel. I love Venetia—I have always loved her—and, if possible, I will marry her, and marry her at once."

CHAPTER V.

THE re-appearance of the ladies at the end of the cloister terminated this conversation, the result of which was rather to confirm Lord Cadurcis in his resolution of instantly urging his suit than the reverse. He ran forward to greet his friends with a smile, and took his place by the side of Venetia, whom, a little to her surprise, he congratulated in glowing phrase on her charming costume. Indeed, she looked very captivating, with a pastoral hat, then much in fashion, and a dress as simple and as sylvan, both showing to admirable advantage her long descending hair, and her agile and springy figure.

Cadurcis proposed that they should ramble over the abbey; he talked of projected alterations, as if he really had the power immediately to effect them, and was desirous of obtaining their opinions before any change was made. So they ascended the staircase, which many years before Venetia had mounted for the first time with her mother, and entered that series of small and ill-furnished rooms in which Mrs. Cadurcis had principally resided, and which had undergone no change. The old pictures were examined; these, all agreed, never must move; and the new furniture, it was settled, must be in character with the building. Lady Annabel entered into all the details with an interest and animation which rather amused Doctor Masham.

Venetia listened, and suggested, and responded to the frequent appeals of Cadurcis to her judgment, with an unconscious equanimity not less diverting.

"Now here we really can do something," said his lordship, as they entered the saloon, or rather refectory; "here I think we may effect wonders.—The tapestry must always remain. Is it not magnificent, Venetia!—But what hangings shall we have!—We must keep the old chairs, I think.—Do you approve of the old chairs, Venetia?—And what shall we cover them with?—Shall it be damask?—What do you think, Venetia?—Do you like damask?—And what colour shall it be!—Shall it be crimson?—Shall it be crimson damask, Lady Annabel!—Do you think Venetia would like crimson damask?—Now, Venetia, do give us the benefit of your opinion."

Then they entered the old gallery; here was to be a great transformation. Marvels were to be effected in the old gallery; and many and multiplied were the appeals to the taste and fancy of Venetia.

"I think," said Lord Cadurcis, "I shall leave the gallery to be arranged when I am settled. The rooms and the saloon shall be done at once. I shall give orders for them to begin instantly. Whom do you recommend, Lady Annabel? Do you think there is any person at Southport who could manage to do it, superintended by our taste? Venetia, what do you think?"

Venetia was standing at the window, rather apart from her companions, looking at the old garden. Lord Cadurcis joined her. "Ah! it has been sadly neglected since my poor mother's time. We could not do much in those days, but still she loved this garden. I must depend on you entirely to arrange my garden, Venetia. This spot is sacred to you. You have not forgotten our labours here, have you, Venetia? Ah! those were happy days, and these shall be more happy still. This is your garden; it shall always be called Venetia's garden!"

"I would have taken care of it, when you were away, but—"

"But what?" inquired Lord Cadurcis, anxiously.

"We hardly felt authorised," replied Venetia, very calmly. "We came at first, when you left Cadurcis, but at last it did not seem that our presence was very acceptable."

"The brutes!" exclaimed Lord Cadurcis.

"No, no; good simple people, they were not used to orders from strange masters, and they were perplexed. Besides, we had no right to interfere."

"No right to interfere! Venetia, my little fellow-labourer, no right to interfere! Why all is yours! Fancy you have no right to interfere at Cadurcis!"

Then they proceeded to the park, and wandered to the margin of the lake. There was not a spot, not an object, which did not recall some adventure or incident of childhood. Every moment Lord Cadurcis exclaimed, "Venetia! do you remember this?"—"Venetia! have you forgotten that?"—and every time Venetia smiled, and proved how faithful was her memory, by adding some little unmentioned trait to the lively reminiscences of her companion.

"Well, after all," said Lord Cadurcis with a sigh, "my poor mother was a strange woman, and,

God bless her! used sometimes to worry me out of my senses; but still she always loved you. No one can deny that. Cherbury was a magic name with her. She loved Lady Annabel, and she loved you, Venetia. It ran in the blood, you see. She would be happy, quite happy, if she saw us all here together, and if she knew—"

"Plantagenet," said Lady Annabel, "you must build a lodge at this end of the park. I cannot conceive any thing more effective than an entrance from the Southport road in this quarter."

"Certainly, Lady Annabel, certainly, we must build a lodge. Do not you think so, Venetia?"

"Indeed, I think it would be a great improvement," replied Venetia; "but you must take care to have a lodge in character with the abbey."

"You shall make a drawing for it," said Lord Cadurcis; "it shall be built directly, and it shall be called Venetia Lodge."

The hours flew away, loitering in the park, roaming in the woods. They met Mistress Pauncefort and her friends loaded with plunder, and they offered to Venetia a trophy of their success; but when Venetia, merely to please their kind hearts, accepted their tribute with cordiality, and declared there was nothing she liked better, Lord Cadurcis would not be satisfied unless he immediately commenced nutting, and each in moment he bore to Venetia the produce of his sport, till in time she could scarcely sustain the rich and increasing burden. At length they bent their steps towards home, sufficiently wearied to look forward with welcome to rest and their repast, yet not fatigued, and exhilarated by the atmosphere, for the sun was now in its decline, though in this favoured season there were yet hours enough remaining of enchanting light.

In the refectory they found, to the surprise of all but their host, a banquet. It was just one of those occasions where nothing is expected and every thing is welcome and surprising; when, from the unpremeditated air generally assumed, all preparation startles and pleases; when even ladies are not ashamed to eat, and formality appears quite banished. Game of all kinds, teal from the lake, and piles of beautiful fruit, made the table alike tempting and picturesque. Then there were stray bottles of rare wine disinterred from venerable cellars; and, more inspiring even than the choice wine, a host under the influence of every emotion, and swayed by every circumstance, that can make a man happy and delightful. O! they were very gay, and it seemed difficult to believe that care, or sorrow, or the dominion of dark or ungracious passions, could ever disturb sympathies so complete, and countenances so radiant.

At the urgent request of Cadurcis, Venetia sang to them; and, while she sang, the expression of her countenance and voice harmonising with the arch hilarity of the subject, Plantagenet for a moment believed that he beheld the little Venetia of his youth, that sunny child, so full of mirth and grace, the very recollection of whose lively and bright existence might enliven the gloomiest hour and lighten the heaviest heart.

Enchanted by all that surrounded him,—full of hope, and joy, and plans of future felicity,—emboldened by the kindness of the daughter,—Cadurcis now ventured to urge a request to Lady Annabel, and the request was granted,—for all

seemed to feel that it was a day on which nothing was to be refused to their friend. Happy Cadurcis! The child had a holiday, and it fancied itself a man, enjoying a triumph. In compliance, therefore, with his wish, it was settled that they should all walk back to the hall; even Dr. Masham declared he was competent to the exertion, but perhaps was half entrapped into the declaration by the promise of a bed at Cherbury. This consent enchanted Cadurcis, who looked forward with exquisite pleasure to the evening walk with Venetia.

CHAPTER VI

ALTHOUGH the sun had not set, it had sunk behind the hills leading to Cherbury when our friends quitted the abbey. Cadurcis, without hesitation, offered his arm to Venetia, and, whether from a secret sympathy with his wishes, or merely from some fortunate accident, Lady Annabel and Doctor Masham strolled on before without busying themselves too earnestly with their companions.

"And how do you think our expedition to Cadurcis has turned out?" inquired the young lord of Venetia. "Has it been successful?"

"It has been one of the most agreeable days I ever passed," was the reply.

"Then it has been successful," rejoined his lordship; "for my only wish was to amuse you."

"I think we have all been equally amused," said Venetia. "I never knew mamma in such good spirits. I think, ever since you returned, she has been unusually light-hearted."

"And you—has my return lightened only her heart, Venetia?"

"Indeed it has contributed to the happiness of every one."

"And yet, when I first returned, I heard you utter a complaint; the first that to my knowledge ever escaped your lips."

"Ah! we cannot be always equally gay."

"Once you were, dear Venetia."

"I was a child then."

"And I, I too was a child; yet I am happy, at least now that I am with you."

"Well, we are both happy now."

"O! say that again, say that again, Venetia; for, indeed, you made me miserable when you told me that you had changed. I cannot bear that you, Venetia, should ever change."

"It is the course of nature, Plantagenet; we all change, every thing changes. This day, that was so bright is changing fast."

"The stars are as beautiful as the sun, Venetia."

"And what do you infer?"

"That Venetia, a woman, is as beautiful as Venetia, a little girl; and should be as happy."

"Is beauty happiness, Plantagenet?"

"It makes others happy, Venetia; and, when we make others happy, we should be happy ourselves."

"Few depend upon my influence, and I trust all of them are happy."

"No one depends upon your influence more than I do."

"Well, then, be happy always."

"Would that I might! Ah! Venetia, can I ever forget old days! You were the solace of my dark childhood; you were the charm that first taught me existence was enjoyment. Before I came to Cherbury I never was happy, and since that hour—Ah! Venetia, dear, dearest Venetia, who is like to you!"

"Dear Plantagenet, you were always too kind to me. Would we were children once more!"

"Nay! my own Venetia, you tell me every thing changes, and we must not murmur at the course of nature. I would not have our childhood back again, even with all its joys, for there are others yet in store for us, not less pure, not less beautiful. We loved each other then, Venetia, and we love each other now."

"My feelings towards you have never changed, Plantagenet; I heard of you always with interest, and I met you again with heartfelt pleasure."

"O! that morning! Have you forgotten that morning! Do you know, you will smile very much, but I really believe that I expected to see my Venetia still a little girl, the very same who greeted me when I first arrived with my mother, and behaved so naughtily! And, when I saw you, and found what you had become, and what I ought always to have known you must become, I was so confused, I entirely lost my presence of mind. You must have thought me very awkward, very stupid?"

"Indeed, I was rather gratified by observing that you could not meet us again without emotion. I thought it told well for your heart, which I always believed to be most kind, at least, I am sure, to us."

"Kind! O! Venetia, that word but ill describes what my heart ever was, what it now is, to you. Venetia! dearest, sweetest Venetia, can you doubt for a moment my feelings towards your home, and what influence must principally impel them? Am I so dull, or you so blind, Venetia? Can I not express, can you not discover, how much, how ardently, how fondly, how devotedly, I—I—I—love you?"

"I am sure we always loved each other, Plantagenet."

"Yes! but not with this love; not as I love you now!"

Venetia stared.

"I thought we could not love each other more than we did, Plantagenet," at length she said. "Do you remember the jewel that you gave me? I always wore it, until you seemed to forget us, and then I thought it looked so foolish! You remember what was inscribed on it:—'TO VENETIA, FROM HER AFFECTIONATE BROTHER, PLANTAGENET.' And as a brother I always loved you; had I indeed been your sister, I could not have loved you more warmly and more truly."

"I am not your brother, Venetia, I wish not to be loved as a brother; and yet I must be loved by you, or I shall die."

"What then do you wish?" inquired Venetia, with great simplicity.

"I wish you to marry me," replied Lord Cadurcis.

"Marry!" exclaimed Venetia, with a face of wonder. "Marry! Marry you! Marry you, Plantagenet!"

"Ay! is that so wonderful? I love you, and, if you love me, why should we not marry?"

Venetia was silent, and looked upon the ground, not from agitation, for she was quite calm, but in thought; and then she said, "I never thought of marriage in my life, Plantagenet; I have no intention, no wish to marry; I mean to live always with mamma."

"And you shall always live with mamma, but that need not prevent you from marrying me," he replied. "Do not we all live together now? What will it signify if you dwell at Cadurcis and Lady Annabel at Cherbury? Is it not one home? But, at any rate, this point shall not be an obstacle; for, if it please you, we will all live at Cherbury."

"You say that we are happy now, Plantagenet; O, let us remain as we are!"

"My own sweet girl, my sister, if you please, any title so it be one of fondness, your sweet simplicity charms me; but, believe me, it cannot be as you wish; we cannot remain as we are, unless we marry."

"Why not?"

"Because I shall be wretched, and must live elsewhere, if indeed I can live at all."

"O! Plantagenet, indeed I thought you were my brother; when I found you after so long a separation as kind as in old days, and kinder still, I was so glad; I was so sure you loved me; I thought I had the kindest brother in the world. Let us not talk of any other love. It will, indeed it will, make mamma so miserable!"

"I am greatly mistaken," replied Lord Cadurcis, who saw no obstacles to his hopes in their conversation hitherto, "if on the contrary, our union would not prove far from disagreeable to your mother, Venetia; I will say our mother, for indeed to me she has been one."

"Plantagenet," said Venetia, in a very earnest tone, "I love you very much; but, if you love me, press me on this subject no more at present. You have surprised, indeed you have bewildered me. There are thoughts, there are feelings, there are considerations, that must be respected, that must influence me. Nay! do not look so sorrowful, Plantagenet. Let us be happy now. To-morrow—only to-morrow—and to-morrow we are sure to meet, we will speak further of all this; but now—now—for a moment let us forget it, if we can forget any thing so strange. Nay! you shall smile!"

He did. Who could resist that mild and winning glance! And indeed Lord Cadurcis was scarcely disappointed, and not at all mortified, at the reception, or, as he esteemed it, the progress of his suit. The conduct of Venetia he attributed entirely to her unsophisticated nature, and the timidity of a virgin soul. It made him prize even more dearly the treasure that he believed awaited him. Silent, then—though for a time they both struggled to speak on indifferent subjects—silent, and almost content, Cadurcis proceeded, with the arm of Venetia locked in his, and ever and anon unobscurely pressing it to his heart. The rosy twilight had faded away, the stars were stealing forth, and the moon again glittered. With a soul softer than the tinted shades of eve, and glowing like the heavens, Cadurcis joined his companions as they entered the gardens of Cherbury. When they had arrived home, it seemed that exhaustion

had suddenly succeeded all the excitement of the day. The doctor, who was wearied, retired immediately. Lady Annabel pressed Cadurcis to remain and take tea, or, at least, to ride home; but his lordship, protesting that he was not in the slightest degree fatigued, and anticipating their speedy union on the morrow, bade her good night, and, pressing with fondness the hand of Venetia, retraced his steps to the now solitary abbey.

CHAPTER VII.

CADURCIS returned to the abbey, but not to slumber. That love of loneliness which had haunted him from his boyhood, and which ever asserted its sway when under the influence of his passions, came over him now with irresistible power. A day of enjoyment had terminated, and it left him melancholy. Hour after hour he paced the moon-lit cloisters of his abbey, where not a sound disturbed him, save the monotonous fall of the fountain, that seems by some inexplicable association always to blend with, and never to disturb, our feelings; gay when we are joyful, and sad amid our sorrow.

Yet was he sorrowful! He was gloomy, and fell into a reverie about himself, a subject to him ever perplexing and distressing. His conversation of the morning with Doctor Masham recurred to him. What did the doctor mean by his character not being formed, and that he might yet live to change all his opinions? Character! what was character? It must be will; and his will was violent and firm. Young as he was, he had early habituated himself to reflection, and the result of his musings had been a desire to live away from the world, with those he loved. The world, as other men viewed it, had no charms for him. Its pursuits and passions seemed to him on the whole paltry and faint. He could sympathise with great deeds, but not with bustling life. That which was common did not please him. He loved things that were rare and strange; and the spell that bound him so strongly to Venetia Herbert was her unusual life, and the singular circumstances of her destiny that were not unknown to him. True he was young; but, lord of himself, youth was associated with none of those mortifications which make the juvenile pant for manhood. Cadurcis valued his youth, and treasured it. He could not conceive love, and the romantic life that love should lead, without the circumambient charm of youth adding fresh lustre to all that was bright and fair, and a keener relish to every combination of enjoyment. The moonbeam fell upon his mother's monument—the tablet on the cloister wall that recorded the birth and death of KATHERINE CADURCIS. His thoughts flew to his ancestry. They had conquered in France and Palestine, and left a memorable name to the annalist of his country. Those days were past, and yet Cadurcis felt within him the desire, perhaps the power, of emulating them; but what remained? What career was open in this mechanical age to the chivalric genius of his race? Was he misplaced then in life? The applause of nations—there was something grand and exciting in such a possession. To be the marvel of mankind, what would he not

hazard? Dreams, dreams! If his ancestors were valiant and celebrated, it remained for him to rival, to excel them, at least in one respect. Their coronet had never rested on a brow fairer than the one for which he destined it. Venetia, then, independent of his passionate love, was the only apparent object worth his pursuit—the only thing in this world that had realised his dreams—dreams sacred to his own musing soul, that even she had never shared or guessed. And she, she was to be his. He could not doubt it; but to-morrow would decide; to-morrow would seal his triumph.

His sleep was short and restless; he had almost outwatched the stars, and yet he rose with the early morn. His first thought was of Venetia; he was impatient for the interview—the interview she promised, and even proposed. The fresh air was grateful to him; he bounded along to Cherbury, and brushed the dew in his progress from the tall grass and shrubs. In sight of the hall, he for a moment paused. He was before his accustomed hour; and yet he was always too soon. Not to-day, though, not to-day; suddenly he rushes forward, and springs down the green vista, for Venetia is on the terrace, and alone!

“Always kind, this morning she greeted him with unusual affection. Never had she seemed to him so exquisitely beautiful. Perhaps her countenance to-day was more pale than wont. There seemed a softness in her eyes unusually so brilliant, and even dazzling; and the accents of her salutation were suppressed and tender.

“I thought you would be here early,” she remarked, and therefore I rose to meet you.”

Was he to infer from this artless confession that his image had haunted her in her dreams, or only that she would not delay the conversation on which his happiness depended? He could scarcely doubt which version to adopt when she took his arm and led him from the terrace, to walk where they could not be disturbed.

“Dear Plantagenet,” she said—“for indeed you are very dear to me—I told you last night that I would speak to you to-day on your wishes, that are so kind to me, and so much intended for my happiness. I do not love suspense; but indeed, last night, I was too much surprised, too much overcome, by what occurred, that, exhausted as I naturally was by all our pleasure, I could not tell you what I wished; indeed I could not, dear Plantagenet.”

“My own Venetia!”

“So I hope you will always deem me; for I should be very unhappy if you did not love me, Plantagenet—more unhappy than I have even been these last two years; and I have been very unhappy, very unhappy indeed, Plantagenet.”

“Unhappy! Venetia; my Venetia unhappy?”

“Listen! I will not weep. I can control my feelings. I have learned to do this; it is very sad, and very different to what my life once was; but I can do it.”

“You amaze me!”

Venetia sighed and then resumed, but in a tone mournful and low, and yet to a degree firm.

“You have been away five years, Plantagenet.”

“But you have pardoned that.”

“I never blamed you; I had nothing to pardon. It was well for you to be away; and I rejoice your absence has been so profitable to you.”

“But it was wicked to have been so silent.”

“Oh! no, no, no. Such ideas never entered into my head, nor even mamma’s. You were very young; you did as all would, as all must do. Harbour not such thoughts. Enough you have returned, and love us yet.”

“Love! I adore!”

“Five years are a long space of time, Plantagenet. Events will happen in five years, even at Cherbury. I told you I was changed.”

“Yes!” said Lord Cadurcis, in a voice of some anxiety, with a scrutinising eye.

“You left me a happy child; you find me a woman,—and a miserable one.”

“Good God! Venetia, this suspense is awful. Be brief, I pray you. Has any one—”

Venetia looked at him with an air of perplexity. She could not comprehend the idea that impelled his interruption.

“Go on,” Lord Cadurcis added, after a short pause; “I am, indeed, all anxiety.”

“You remember that Christmas which you passed at the hall, and walking at night in the gallery, and—”

“Well! Your mother—I shall never forget it.

“You found her weeping when you were once at Marringhurst. You told me of it.”

“Ay! ay!”

“There is a wing of our house shut up. We often talked of it.”

“Often, Venetia; it is a mystery.”

“I have penetrated it,” replied Venetia, in a solemn tone; “and I never have known what happiness is since.”

“Yes, yes!” said Lord Cadurcis, very pale, and speaking in a whisper.

“Plantagenet, I have a father.”

Lord Cadurcis started, and for an instant his arm quitted Venetia’s. At length he said, in a gloomy voice, “I know it.”

“Know it!” exclaimed Venetia with astonishment. “Who could have told you the secret?”

“It is no secret,” replied Cadurcis; “would that it were!”

“Would that it were! How strange you speak, how strange you look, Plantagenet! If it be no secret that I have a father, why this concealment then? I know that I am not the child of shame!” she added, after a moment’s pause, with an air of pride. A tear stole down the cheek of Cadurcis.

“Plantagenet! dear, good Plantagenet! my brother! my own brother!—see, I kneel to you; Venetia kneels to you! your own Venetia!—Venetia that you love! O! if you knew the load that is on my spirit, bearing me down to a grave which I would almost welcome, you would speak to me; you would tell me all.—I have sighed for this; I have longed for this; I have prayed for this. To meet some one who would speak to me of my father—who had heard of him, who knew him—has been for years the only thought of my being, the only object for which I existed. And now here comes Plantagenet, my brother! my own brother! and he knows all,—and he will tell me; yes, that he will; he will tell his Venetia all—all!”

“Is there not your mother?” said Lord Cadurcis, in a broken tone.

“Forbidden, utterly forbidden. If I speak, they tell me her heart will break; and therefore mine is breaking.”

"Have you no friend?"

"Are not you my friend?"

"Dr. Masham?"

"I have applied to him; he tells me that he lives, and then he shakes his head."

"You never saw your father; think not of him."

"Not think of him!" exclaimed Venetia, with extraordinary energy. "Of what else? For what do I live but to think of him? What object have I in life but to see him? I have seen him—once."

"Ah!"

"I know his form by heart, and yet it was but a shade. O! what a shade!—what a glorious, what an immortal shade! If gods were upon earth, they would be like my father!"

"His deeds, at least, are not godlike," observed Lord Cadurcis dryly, and with some bitterness.

"I deny it!" said Venetia, her eyes sparkling with fire, her form dilated with enthusiasm, and involuntarily withdrawing her arm from her companion. Lord Cadurcis looked exceedingly astonished.

"You deny it!" he exclaimed. "And what should you know about it?"

"Nature whispers to me that nothing but what is grand and noble could be breathed by those lips, or fulfilled by that form."

"I am glad you have not read his works," said Lord Cadurcis, with increased bitterness. "As for his conduct, your mother is a living evidence of his honour, his generosity, and his virtue."

"My mother!" said Venetia, in a softened voice; "and yet he loved my mother!"

"She was his victim, as a thousand others may have been."

"She is his wife!" replied Venetia, with some anxiety.

"Yes, a deserted wife; is that preferable to being a cherished mistress? More honourable, but scarcely less humiliating."

"She must have misunderstood him," said Venetia. "I have perused the secret vows of his passion, I have read his praises of her beauty, I have pored over the music of his emotions when he first became a father;—yes, he has gazed on me—even though but for a moment—with love! Over me he has breathed forth the hallowed blessing of a parent! That transcendent form has pressed his lips to mine, and held me with fondness to his heart! And shall I credit aught to his dishonour? Is there a being in existence who can persuade me he is heartless or abandoned? No! I love him! I adore him! I am devoted to him with all the energies of my being! I live only on the memory that he lives, and, were he to die, I should pray to my God that I might join him, without delay, in a world where it cannot be justice to separate a child from a father."

And this was Venetia!—the fair, the serene Venetia! the young, the inexperienced Venetia! pausing, as it were, on the parting threshold of girlhood, whom, but a few hours since, he had fancied could scarcely have proved a passion; who appeared to him barely to comprehend the meaning of his advances; for whose calmness or whose coldness he had consoled himself by the flattering conviction of her unknowing innocence. Before him stood a beautiful and inspired *Menad*, her eye flashing supernatural fire, her form elevated

above her accustomed stature, defiance on her swelling brow, and passion on her quivering lip!

Gentle and sensitive as Cadurcis ever appeared to those he loved, there was in his soul a deep and unfathomed well of passions that had been never stirred, and a bitter and mocking spirit in his brain, of which he was himself unconscious. He had repaired this hopeful morn to Chelbury, to receive, as he believed, the plighted faith of a simple and affectionate, perhaps grateful, girl. That her unsophisticated and untutored spirit might not receive the advances of his heart with an equal and corresponding ardour, he was prepared. It pleased him that he should watch the gradual development of this bud of sweet affections, waiting, with proud anxiety, her fragrant and her full-blown love. But now it appeared that her coldness, or her indifference, might be ascribed to any other cause than the one to which he had attributed it,—the innocence of an inexperienced mind. This girl was no stranger to powerful passions; she could love, and love with fervency, with devotion, with enthusiasm. This child of joy was a woman of deep and thoughtful sorrows, brooding in solitude over high resolves and passionate aspirations. Why were not the emotions of such a tumultuous soul excited by himself? To him she was calm and imperturbable; she called him brother—she treated him as a child. But a picture, a fantastic shade, could raise in her a tempestuous swell of sentiment, that transformed her whole mind, and changed the colour of all her hopes and thoughts. Deeply prejudiced against her father, Cadurcis now hated him, and with a fell and ferocious earnestness that few bosoms but his could prove. Pale with rage, he ground his teeth, and watched her with a glance of sarcastic aversion.

"You led me here to listen to a communication which interested me," he at length said; "have I heard it?"

His altered tone, the air of haughtiness which he assumed, were not lost upon Venetia. She endeavoured to collect herself, but she hesitated to reply.

"I repeat my inquiry," said Cadurcis. "Have you brought me here only to inform me that you have a father, and that you adore him, or his picture?"

"I led you here," replied Venetia, in a subdued tone, and looking on the ground, "to thank you for your love, and to confess to you that I love another."

"Love another!" exclaimed Cadurcis in a tone of derision. "Simpleton! The best thing your mother can do is to lock you up in the chamber with the picture that has produced such marvellous effects."

"I am no simpleton, Plantagenet," rejoined Venetia, very quietly, "but one who is acting as she thinks right; and not only as her mind, but as her heart, prompts her."

They had stopped in the earlier part of this conversation on a little plot of turf surrounded by shrubs; Cadurcis walked up and down this area with angry steps, occasionally glancing at Venetia with a look of mortification and displeasure.

"I tell you, Venetia," he at length said, "that you are a little fool. What do you mean by saying that you cannot marry me, because you love another? Is not that other, by your own account, your father? Love him as much as you like. Is

that to prevent you from loving your husband also ?”

“Plantagenet, you are rude, and unnecessarily so,” said Venetia. “I repeat to you again, and for the last time, that all my heart is my father’s. It would be wicked in me to marry you, because I cannot love you as a husband should be loved. I can never love you as I love my father. However, it is useless to talk upon this subject. I have not even the power of marrying you if I wished, for I have dedicated myself to my father in the name of God; and I have offered a vow, to be registered in Heaven, that thenceforth I would exist only for the purpose of being restored to his heart.”

“I congratulate you on your parent, Miss Herbert.”

“I feel that I ought to be proud of him, though, alas! I can only feel it. But, whatever your opinion may be of my father, I beg you to remember that you are speaking to his child.”

“I shall state my opinion respecting your father, madam, with the most perfect unreserve, wherever and whenever I choose; quite convinced that, however you esteem that opinion, it will not be widely different from the real sentiments of the only parent whom you ought to respect, and whom you are bound to obey.”

“And I can tell, you, sir, that, whatever your opinion is on any subject, it will never influence mine. If, indeed, I were the mistress of my own destiny—which I am not—it would have been equally out of my power to have acted as you have so singularly proposed. I do not wish to marry, and marry I never will; but were it in my power, or in accordance with my wish, to unite my fate for ever with another’s, it should at least be with one to whom I could look up with reverence, and even with admiration. He should be at least a man, and a great man; one with whose name the world rung; perhaps, like my father, a genius and a poet.”

“A genius and a poet!” exclaimed Lord Cadurcis, in a fury, stamping with passion; “are these fit terms to use, when speaking of the most abandoned profligate of his age?—A man whose name is synonymous with infamy, and which no one dares to breathe in civilised life;—whose very blood is pollution, as you will some day feel;—who has violated every tie, and derided every principle, by which society is maintained;—whose life is a living illustration of his own shameless doctrines; who is, at the same time, a traitor to his King and an apostate from his God!”

Curiosity, overpowering even indignation, had permitted Venetia to listen even to this tirade. Pale as her companion, but with a glance of withering scorn, she exclaimed, “Passionate and ill-mannered boy! words cannot express the disgust and the contempt with which you inspire me.” She spoke, and she disappeared. Cadurcis was neither able nor desirous to arrest her flight. He remained rooted to the ground, muttering to himself the word “boy!” Suddenly raising his arm, and looking up to the sky, he exclaimed, “The illusion is vanished! Farewell, Cherbury!—farewell, Cadurcis! a wider theatre awaits me! I have been the slave too long of soft affections!—I root them out of my heart for ever!” and, fitting the action to the phrase, it seemed that he lurled upon the earth all the tender emotions of his soul.

“Woman! henceforth you shall be my sport! I have now no feelings but for myself. When she spoke, I might have been a boy;—I am a boy no longer. What I shall do I know not; but this I know, the world shall ring with my name; I will be a man, and a great man!”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE agitation of Venetia on her return was not unnoticed by her mother; but Lady Annabel ascribed it to a far different cause than the real one. She was rather surprised when the breakfast passed, and Lord Cadurcis did not appear; somewhat perplexed when her daughter seized the earliest opportunity of retiring to her own chamber; but, with that self-restraint of which she was so complete a mistress, Lady Annabel uttered no remark.

Once more alone, Venetia could only repeat to herself the wild words that had burst from Plantagenet’s lips in reference to her father. What could they mean? His morals might be misrepresented, his opinions might be misunderstood; stupidity might not comprehend his doctrines—malignity might torture them; the purest sages have been accused of immorality—the most pious philosophers have been denounced as blasphemous; but, “a traitor to his king”—that was a tangible, an intelligible proposition—one with which all might grapple—which could be easily disproved if false, scarcely propounded were it not true. “False to his king!” How false? Where? When? What mystery involved her life? Unhappy girl! in vain she struggled with the overwhelming burden of her sorrows. Now she regretted that she had quarrelled with Cadurcis; it was evident that he knew every thing, and would have told her all. And then she blamed him for his harsh and unfeeling demeanour, and his total want of sympathy with her cruel and perplexing situation. She had intended, she had struggled to be so kind to him; she thought she had such a plain tale to tell, that he would have listened to it in considerate silence, and bowed to her necessary and inevitable decision without a murmur. Amid all these harassing emotions her mind tossed about like a ship without a rudder, until, in her despair, she almost resolved to confess every thing to her mother, and to request her to soothe and enlighten her agitated and confounded mind. But what hope was there of solace or information from such a quarter? Lady Annabel’s was not a mind to be diverted from her purpose. Whatever might have been the conduct of her husband, it was evident that Lady Annabel had traced out a course from which she had resolved not to depart. She remembered the earnest and repeated advice of Doctor Masham, that virtuous and intelligent man, who never advised any thing but for their benefit. How solemnly had he enjoined upon her never to speak to her mother upon the subject, unless she wished to produce misery and distress! And what could her mother tell her? Her father lived—he had abandoned her—he was looked upon as a criminal, and shunned by the society whose laws and prejudices he had alike outraged. Why should she revive, amid the comparative happiness and serenity in which her mother now lived, the bitter

recollection of the almost intolerable misfortune of her existence? No! Venetia was resolved to be a solitary victim. In spite of her passionate and romantic devotion to her father, she loved her mother with perfect affection—the mother who had dedicated her life to her child, and at least hoped she had spared her any share in their common unhappiness. And this father, whose image haunted her dreams—whose unknown voice seemed sometimes to float to her quick ear upon the wind—could he be that abandoned being that Cadurcis had described, and that all around her, and all the circumstances of her life, would seem to indicate? Alas! it might be truth; alas! it seemed like truth: and for one so lost, so utterly irredeemable, was she to murmur against that pure and benevolent parent who had cherished her with such devotion, and snatched her perhaps from disgrace, dishonour, and despair!

And Cadurcis—would he return? With all his violence, the kind Cadurcis! Never did she need a brother more than now; and now he was absent, and she had parted with him in anger, deep, almost deadly: she, too, who had never before uttered a harsh word to a human being, who had been involved in only one quarrel in her life, and that almost unconsciously, and which had nearly broken her heart. She wept, bitterly she wept, this poor Venetia!

By one of those mental efforts which her strange lot often forced her to practise, Venetia at length composed herself, and returned to the room where she believed she would meet her mother, and hoped she should see Cadurcis. He was not there; but Lady Annabel was seated as calm and busied as usual; the doctor had departed. Even his presence would have proved a relief, however slight, to Venetia, who dreaded at this moment to be alone with her mother. She had no cause, however, for alarm; Lord Cadurcis never appeared, and was absent even from dinner; the day died away, and still he was wanting; and at length Venetia bade her usual good night to Lady Annabel, and received her usual blessing and embrace, without his name having been even mentioned.

Venetia passed a disturbed night, haunted by painful dreams, in which her father and Cadurcis were both mixed up, and with images of pain, confusion, disgrace, and misery; but the morrow, at least, did not prolong her suspense; for, just as she joined her mother at the breakfast, Mistress Pauncefort, who had been despatched on some domestic mission by her mistress, entered, with a face of wonder, and began as usual—"Only think, my lady; well to be sure, who would have thought it? I am quite confident for my own part I was quite taken aback when I heard it; and I could not have believed my ears, if John had not told me himself, and he had it from his lordship's own man."

"Well, Pauncefort, what have you to say?" inquired Lady Annabel, very calmly.

"And never to send no note, my lady; at least I have not seen one come up. That makes it so very strange."

"Makes what, Pauncefort?"

"Why, my lady, doesn't your la'ship know his lordship left the abbey yesterday, and never said nothing to nobody; rode off without a word, by your leave, or with your leave? To be sure, he

always was the oddest young gentlemen as ever I met with; and, as I said to John; John, says I, I hope his lordship has not gone to join the gipsies again."

Venetia looked into a teacup, and then touched an egg, and then twirled a spoon; but Lady Annabel seemed quite imperturbable, and only observed, "Probably his guardian is ill, and he has been suddenly summoned to town. I wish you would bring my knitting-needles, Pauncefort."

The autumn passed, and Lord Cadurcis never returned to the abbey, and never wrote to any of his late companions. Lady Annabel never mentioned his name; and, although she seemed to have no other object in life but the pleasure and happiness of her child, this strange mother never once consulted Venetia on the probable occasion of his sudden departure and his strange conduct.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

PARTY feeling perhaps never ran higher in England than during the period immediately subsequent to the expulsion of the Coalition Ministry. After the indefatigable faction of the American war, and the flagrant union with Lord North, the Whig party, and especially Charles Fox, then in the full vigour of his bold and ready mind, were stung to the quick that all their remorseless efforts to obtain and preserve the government of the country, should terminate in the preferment, and apparent permanent power, of a mere boy.

Next to Charles Fox, perhaps the most eminent and influential member of the Whig party was Lady Montague. The daughter of one of the oldest and most powerful Peers in the kingdom, possessing very lively talents and many fascinating accomplishments, the mistress of a great establishment, very beautiful, and although she had been married some years, still young, the celebrated wife of Lord Montague found herself the centre of a circle alike powerful, brilliant, and refined. She was the Muse of the Whig party, at whose shrine every man of wit and fashion was proud to offer his flattering incense; and her house became not merely the favourite scene of their social pleasures, but the sacred temple of their political rites: here many a manœuvre was planned, and many a scheme suggested; many a convert enrolled, and many a votary initiated.

Reclining on a couch in a boudoir, which she was assured was the exact fac-simile of that of Marie Antoinette, Lady Montague, with an eye sparkling with excitement, and a cheek flushed with emotion, appeared deeply interested in a volume, from which she raised her head as her husband entered the room.

"Gertrude, my love," said his lordship, I have asked the new bishop to dine with us to-day."

"My dear Henry," replied her ladyship, "what could induce you to do any thing so strange?"

"I suppose I have made a mistake, as usual," said his lordship, shrugging his shoulders, with a smile.

"My dear Henry, you know you may ask whomever you like to your house. I never find fault with what you do. But what could induce

you to ask a Tory bishop to meet a dozen of our own people?"

"I thought I had done wrong directly I had asked him," rejoined his lordship; "and yet he would not come if I had not made such a point of it. I think I will put him off."

"No my love, that would be wrong; you cannot do that."

"I cannot think how it came into my head. The fact is, I lost my presence of mind. You know he was my tutor at Christchurch, when poor dear Herbert and I were such friends, and very kind he was to us both; and so, the moment I saw him, I walked across the house, introduced myself, and asked him to dinner."

"Well, never mind," said Lady Montecagle, smiling. "It is rather ridiculous; but I hope nothing will be said to offend him."

"O! do not be alarmed about that: he is quite a man of the world, and, although he has his opinions, not at all a partisan. I assure you poor dear Herbert loved him to the last, and, to this very moment, has the greatest respect and affection for him."

"How very strange that not only your tutor, but Herbert's, should be a bishop," remarked the lady, smiling.

"It is very strange," said his lordship, "and it only shows that it is quite useless in this world to lay plans or reckon on any thing. You know how it happened?"

"Not I, indeed; I have never given a thought to the business; I only remember being very vexed that that stupid old Bangerford should not have died when we were in office, and then, at any rate, we should have got another vote."

"Well, you know," said his lordship, "dear old Masham, that is his name, was at Weymouth this year; with whom do you think, of all people in the world?"

"How should I know! Why should I think about it, Henry?"

"Why, with Herbert's wife."

"What, that horrid woman!"

"Yes, Lady Annabel."

"And where was his daughter? Was she there?"

"Of course. She has grown up, and a most beautiful creature they say she is: exactly like her father."

"Ah! I shall always regret I never saw him," said her ladyship.

"Well, the daughter is in bad health; and so, after keeping her shut up all her life, the mother was obliged to take her to Weymouth; and Masham, who has a living in their neighbourhood, which, by-the-by, Herbert gave him, and is their chaplain and counsellor, and friend of the family, and all that sort of thing, though I really believe he has always acted for the best, he was with them. Well, the King took the greatest fancy to these Herberts; and the Queen, too, quite singled them out; and, in short, they were always with the royal family. It ended by his Majesty making Masham a chaplain; and now he has made him a bishop."

"Very droll, indeed," said her ladyship; "and the drollest thing of all is, that he is now coming to dine here."

"Have you seen Cadurcis to-day?" said Lord Montecagle.

"Of course," said her ladyship.

"He dines here?"

"To be sure. I am reading his new poem; it will not be published till to-morrow."

"Is it good?"

"Good! What crude questions you do always ask, Henry!" exclaimed Lady Montecagle. "Good! Of course it is good. It is something better than good."

"But I mean is it as good as his other things! Will it make as much noise as his last thing?"

"Thing! Now, Henry, you know very well that, if there be any thing I dislike in the world, it is calling a poem a thing."

"Well, my dear, you know I am no judge of poetry. But, if you are pleased, I am quite content. There is a knock. Some of your friends. I am off. I say, Gertrude, be kind to old Masham, that is a dear creature!"

Her ladyship extended her hand, to which his lordship pressed his lips, and just effected his escape as the servant announced a visiter, in the person of Mr. Horace Pole.

"O! my dear Mr. Pole, I am quite exhausted," said her ladyship; "I am reading Cadurcis' new poem; it will not be published till to-morrow, and it really has destroyed my nerves. I have got people to dinner to-day, and I am sure I shall not be able to encounter them."

"Something outrageous, I suppose," said Mr. Pole with a sneer. "I wish Cadurcis would study Pope."

"Study Pope! My dear Mr. Pole, you have no imagination."

"No, I have not, thank Heaven," drawled out Mr. Pole.

"Well do not let us have a quarrel about Cadurcis," said Montecagle. "All you men are jealous of him."

"And some of you women, I think, too," said Mr. Pole.

Lady Montecagle faintly smiled.

"Poor Cadurcis!" she exclaimed; "he has a very hard life of it. He complains bitterly that so many women are in love with him. But then he is such an interesting creature, what can he expect?"

"Interesting!" exclaimed Mr. Pole. "Now I hold he is the most conceited, affected fellow, that I ever met," he continued with unusual energy.

"Ah! you men do not understand him," said Lady Montecagle, shaking her head. "You cannot," she added, with a look of pity.

"I cannot, certainly," said Mr. Pole, "or his writings either. For my part, I think the town has gone mad."

"Well you must confess," said her ladyship, with a glance of triumph, "that it was very lucky for us that I made him a Whig."

"I cannot agree with you at all on that head," said Mr. Pole. "We certainly are not very popular at this moment, and I feel convinced that a connexion with a person who attracts so much notice as Cadurcis unfortunately does at this moment, and whose opinions on morals and religion must be so offensive to the vast majority of the English public, must ultimately prove any thing but advantageous to our party."

"O! my dear Mr. Pole," said her ladyship, in a tone of affected deprecation, "think what a genius he is!"

"We have different ideas of genius, Lady Montea-
gle, I suspect," said her visitor.

"You cannot deny," replied her ladyship, rising
from her recumbent posture, with some animation,
"that he is a poet?"

"It is difficult to decide upon our contempora-
ries," said Mr. Pole, dryly.

"Charles Fox thinks he is the greatest poet
that ever existed," said her ladyship, as if she were
determined to settle the question.

"Because he has written a lampoon on the royal
family," rejoined Mr. Pole.

"You are a very provoking person," said Lady
Montea-
gle; "but you do not provoke me; do not
flatter yourself you do."

"That I feel to be an achievement alike beyond
my power and my ambition," replied Mr. Pole,
slightly bowing, but with a sneer.

"Well, read this," said Lady Montea-
gle, "and then decide upon the merits of Cadurcis."

Mr. Pole took the extended volume, but with no
great willingness, and turned over a page or two,
and read a passage here and there.

"Much the same as his last effusion, I think,"
he observed, "as far as I can judge from so cursory
a review. Exaggerated passion, bombastic lan-
guage, egotism to excess, and which, perhaps, is
the only portion that is genuine, mixed with com-
mon-place scepticism, and impossible morals, and
a sort of vague dreamy philosophy, which, if it
mean any thing, means atheism, borrowed from
his idol, Herbert, and which he himself evidently
does not comprehend."

"Monster!" exclaimed Lady Montea-
gle, with
a mock assumption of indignation, "and you are
going to dine with him here to day. You do not
deserve it."

"It is a reward which is unfortunately too often
obtained by me," replied Mr. Pole. "One of the
most annoying consequences of your friend's po-
pularity, Lady Montea-
gle, is that there is not a
dinner party where one can escape him. I met
him yesterday at Fanshawe's. He amused him-
self by eating only biscuits, and calling for soda
water, while we quaffed our Burgundy. How
very original! What a thing it is to be a great
poet!"

"Perverse, provoking mortal!" exclaimed Lady
Montea-
gle. "And on what should a poet live! On
coarse food, like you coarse mortals! Cadurcis is
all spirit, and in my opinion his diet only makes
him more interesting."

"I understand," said Mr. Pole, "that he cannot
endure a woman to eat at all. But you are all
spirit, Lady Montea-
gle, and therefore of course
are not in the least inconvenienced. By-the-by,
do you mean to give us any of those charming
little suppers this season?"

"I shall not invite you," replied her ladyship;
"none but admirers of Lord Cadurcis enter this
house."

"Your menace effects my instant conversion,"
replied Mr. Pole. "I will admire him as much as
you desire only do not insist upon my reading his
works."

"I have not the slightest doubt you know them
by heart," rejoined her ladyship.

Mr. Pole smiled, bowed and disappeared; and
Lady Montea-
gle sat down to write a billet to Lord
Cadurcis, to entreat him to be with her at five
o'clock, which was at least half an hour before the

other guests were expected. The Montea-
gles were
considered to dine ridiculously late.

CHAPTER II.

THE readers of this work will infer, from the
preceding chapter, that a very considerable change
had occurred in the lives and situations of all, and
the views and opinions also of some, of those indi-
viduals in whose conduct and destiny it has
hitherto been the attempt of the writer to interest
them. The time likewise has arrived when they
should perhaps be formally and particularly ap-
prised of those passages in the early lives of the
parents of our heroine involved in our preceding
volume in so much mystery; a mystery, however,
which has been gradually clearing away. They
should learn, therefore, that Marmion Herbert,
sprung from one of the most illustrious families in
England, became at a very early age the inheritor
of a great estate, to which however he did not
succeed with the prejudices or opinions usually
imbibed or professed by the class to which he
belonged. While yet a boy, Marmion Herbert
afforded many indications of possessing a mind
alike visionary and inquisitive, and both—although
not in an equal degree—sceptical and creative.
Nature had gifted him with very precocious talents;
and with a temperament essentially poetic, he was
nevertheless a great student. His early reading,
originally by accident, and afterwards by an ir-
resistible inclination,—had fallen among the works
of the English free-thinkers,—with all their errors,
a profound and vigorous race, and much superior
to the French philosophers, who were, after all,
only their pupils and their imitators. While his
juvenile studies, and in some degree the predis-
position of his mind, had thus prepared him to doubt,
and finally to challenge, the propriety of all that
was established and received, the poetical and
stronger bias of his mind enabled him quickly to
supply the place of every thing he would remove
and destroy; and far from being the victim of
those frigid and indifferent feelings which must
ever be the portion of the mere doubter, Herbert,
on the contrary, looked forward with ardent and
sanguine enthusiasm to a glorious and ameliorat-
ing future, which should amply compensate and
console a misguided and unhappy race for the
miserable past and the painful and dreary present.
To those therefore who could not sympathise with
his views, it will be seen that Herbert, in attempt-
ing to fulfil them, became not merely passively
noxious from his example, but actively mischievous
from his exertions. A mere sceptic, he would have
been perhaps merely pitied; a sceptic with a pec-
uliar faith of his own, which he was resolved to
promulgate, Herbert became odious. A solitary
votary of obnoxious opinions, Herbert would have
been looked upon only as a madman; but the
moment he attempted to make proselytes, he rose
into a conspirator against society.

Young, irresistibly prepossessing in his appear-
ance, with great eloquence, crude but considerable
knowledge, an ardent imagination and a subtle
mind, and a generous and passionate soul,—under
any circumstances he must have obtained and
exercised influence, even if his Creator had not

also bestowed upon him a spirit of indomitable courage: but these great gifts of nature being combined with accidents of fortune scarcely less qualified to move mankind,—high rank, vast wealth, and a name of traditionary glory,—it will not be esteemed surprising that Marmion Herbert, at a very early period, should have attracted around him many enthusiastic disciples.

At Chritchurch, whither he repaired at an unusually early age, his tutor was Dr. Masham; and the profound respect and singular affection with which that able, learned, and amiable man early inspired his pupil, for a time controlled the spirit of Herbert; or rather confined its workings to so limited a sphere, that the results were neither dangerous to society nor himself. Perfectly comprehending and appreciating the genius of the youth intrusted to his charge, deeply interested in his spiritual as well as worldly welfare, and strongly impressed with the importance of enlisting his pupil's energies in favour of that existing order, both moral and religious, in the truth and indispensableness of which he was a sincere believer, Dr. Masham omitted no opportunity of combating the heresies of the young inquirer; and as the tutor, equally by talent, experience, and learning, was a competent champion of the great cause to which he was devoted, his zeal and ability for a time checked the development of those opinions of which he witnessed the menacing influence over Herbert with so much fear and anxiety. The college life of Marmion Herbert therefore passed in ceaseless controversy with his tutor; and as he possessed, among many other noble qualities, a high and philosophic sense of justice, he did not consider himself authorised, while a doubt remained on his own mind, actively to promulgate those opinions, of the propriety and necessity of which he scarcely ever ceased to be persuaded. To this cause it must be mainly attributed that Herbert was not expelled the university; for had he pursued there the course of which his cruder career at Eton had given promise, there can be little doubt that some flagrant outrage of the opinions held sacred in that great seat of orthodoxy would have quickly removed him from the salutary sphere of their control.

Herbert quitted Oxford in his nineteenth year, yet inferior to few that he left there, even among the most eminent, in classical attainments, and, with a mind naturally profound, practised in all the arts of ratiocination. His general knowledge also was considerable, and he was a proficient in those scientific pursuits which were then rare. Notwithstanding his great fortune and position, his departure from the university was not a signal with him for that abandonment to the world, and that unbounded self-enjoyment, naturally so tempting to youth. On the contrary, Herbert shut himself up in his magnificent castle, devoted to solitude and study. In his splendid library he consulted the sages of antiquity, and conferred with them on the nature of existence, and of the social duties; while in his laboratory or his dissecting-room he occasionally flattered himself he might discover the great secret which had perplexed generations. The consequence of a year passed in this severe discipline and during which he scarcely allowed time even for the necessities of life, was unfortunately a complete recurrence to those opinions that he had early imbibed, and which now seemed

fixed in his conviction beyond the hope or chance of again faltering. In politics a violent republican, and an advocate—certainly a disinterested one—of a complete equality of property and conditions, utterly objecting to the very foundation of our moral system, and especially a strenuous antagonist of marriage, which he taught himself to esteem not only as a most unnatural tie, but as eminently unjust towards that softer sex, who had been so long the victims of man; discarding as a mockery the received revelation of the divine will; and, if no longer an atheist, substituting merely for such an outrageous dogma a subtle and shadowy Platonism; doctrines, however, which Herbert at least had acquired by a profound study of the works of their great founder; the pupil of Dr. Masham at length deemed himself qualified to enter that world which he was resolved to regenerate; prepared for persecution, and steeled even to martyrdom.

But while the doctrines of the philosopher had been forming, the spirit of the poet had not been inactive. Loneliness—after all, the best of Muses—had stimulated the creative faculty of his being. Wandering amid his solitary woods and glades at all hours and seasons, the wild and beautiful apparitions of nature had appealed to a sympathetic soul. The stars and winds, the pensive sunset and the sanguine break of morn, the sweet solemnity of night, the ancient trees and the light and evanescent flowers,—all signs and sights and sounds of loveliness and power,—fell on a ready eye and a responsive ear. Gazing on the beautiful, he longed to create it. Then it was that the two passions, which seemed to share the being of Herbert, appeared simultaneously to assert their sway, and he resolved to call in his Muse to the assistance of his philosophy.

Herbert celebrated that fond world of his imagination, which he wished to teach men to love. In stanzas glittering with the most refined images, and resonant with the most subtle symphony, he called into creation that society of immaculate purity and unbounded enjoyment, which he believed was the natural inheritance of unshackled man. In the hero he pictured a philosopher, young and gifted as himself: in the heroine, his idea of a perfect woman. Although all those peculiar doctrines of Herbert,—which, undisguised, must have excited so much odium,—were more or less developed and inculcated in this work; nevertheless they were necessarily so veiled by the highly spiritual and metaphorical language of the poet, that it required some previous acquaintance with the system enforced, to be able to detect and recognise the esoteric spirit of his Muse. The public read only the history of an ideal world, and of creatures of exquisite beauty, told in language that alike dazzled their fancy and captivated their ear. They were lost in a delicious maze of metaphor and music, and were proud to acknowledge an addition to the glorious catalogue of their poets in a young and interesting member of their aristocracy.

In the mean while Herbert entered that great world that had long expected him, and hailed his advent with triumph. How long might have elapsed before they were roused by the conduct of Herbert to the error under which they were labouring as to his character, it is not difficult to conjecture; but before he could commence those philan

thropic exertions which apparently absorbed him, he encountered an individual who most unconsciously put his philosophy not merely to the test, but partially even to the rout; and this was Lady Annabel Sydney. Almost as new to the world as himself, and not less admired, her unrivalled beauty, her unusual accomplishments, and her pure and dignified mind,—combined, it must be confessed, with the most flattering admiration of his genius,—entirely captivated the philosophical antagonist of marriage. It is not surprising that Marmion Herbert—scarcely of age, and with a heart of extreme susceptibility—resolved, after a struggle, to be the first exception to his system, and, as he faintly flattered himself, the last victim of prejudice. He wooed and won the Lady Annabel.

The marriage ceremony was performed by Doctor Masham, who had read his pupil's poem, and had been a little frightened by its indications; but this happy union had dissipated all his fears. He would not believe in any other than a future career for him alike honourable and happy; and he trusted that, if any wild thoughts still lingered in Herbert's mind, they would clear off by the same literary process; so that the utmost ill consequences of his immature opinions might be an occasional line that the wise would have liked to blot, and yet which the unlettered might scarcely be competent to comprehend. Mr. and Lady Annabel Herbert departed after the ceremony to his castle, and Doctor Masham to Marringhurst, a valuable living in another county, to which his pupil had just presented him.

Some months after this memorable event, rumours reached the ear of the good doctor that all was not as satisfactory as he could desire in that establishment, in the welfare of which he naturally took so lively an interest. Herbert was in the habit of corresponding with the rector of Marringhurst, and his first letters were full of details as to his happy life and his perfect content; but, gradually, these details had been considerably abridged, and the correspondence assumed chiefly a literary or philosophical character. Lady Annabel, however, was always mentioned with regard, and an intimation had been duly given to the doctor that she was in a delicate and promising situation, and that they were both alike anxious that he should christen their child. It did not seem very surprising to the good doctor, who was a man of the world, that a husband, six months after marriage, should not speak of the memorable event with all the fulness and fondness of the honeymoon; and, being one of those happy tempers that always anticipate the best, he dismissed from his mind, as vain gossip and idle exaggerations, the ominous whispers that occasionally reached him.

Immediately after the Christmas ensuing his marriage, the Herberts returned to London, and the doctor, who happened to be a short time in the metropolis, paid them a visit. His observations were far from unsatisfactory; it was certainly too evident that Marmion was no longer in love with Lady Annabel, but he treated her apparently with courtesy, and even cordiality. The presence of Dr. Masham, tended, perhaps, a little to revive old feelings, for he was as much a favourite with the wife as with the husband; but, on the whole, the doctor quitted them with an easy heart, and sanguine that the interesting and impending event would, in all probability, revive affection on the

part of Herbert, or at least afford Lady Annabel the only substitute for a husband's heart.

In due time the doctor heard from Herbert that his wife had gone down into the country to lie-in; but was sorry to observe that Herbert did not accompany her. Even this disagreeable impression was removed by a letter, shortly after received from Herbert, dated from the castle, and written in high spirits, informing him that Lady Annabel had been safely delivered of the most beautiful little girl in the world. During the ensuing three months Mr. Herbert, though he resumed his residence in London, paid frequent visits to the castle, where Lady Annabel remained; and his occasional correspondence, though couched in a careless vein, still, on the whole, indicated a cheerful spirit; though ever and anon were sarcastic observations as to the felicity of the married state, which, he said, was an undoubted blessing, as it kept a man out of all scrapes, though unfortunately under the penalty of total idleness and inutility in life. On the whole, however, the reader may judge of the astonishment of Dr. Masham when, in common with the world, very shortly after the receipt of this letter—Mr. Herbert having previously proceeded to London, and awaiting, as was said, the daily arrival of his wife and child—his former tutor learned that Lady Annabel, accompanied only by Pouncefort and Venetia, had sought her father's roof; declaring that circumstances had occurred which rendered it quite impossible that she could live with Mr. Herbert any longer, and entreating his succour and parental protection.

Never was such a hubbub in the world! In vain Herbert claimed his wife, and expressed his astonishment; declaring that he had parted from her with the expression of perfect kind feeling on both sides. No answer was given to his letter, and no explanation of any kind conceded him. The world universally declared Lady Annabel an injured woman, and trusted that she would eventually have the good sense and kindness to gratify them by revealing the mystery; while Herbert, on the contrary, was universally abused and shunned,—avoided by his acquaintances, and denounced as the most depraved of men.

In this extraordinary state of affairs Herbert acted in a manner the best calculated to secure his happiness, and the very worst to preserve his character. Having ostentatiously shown himself in every public place, and courted notice and inquiry by every means in his power, to prove that he was not anxious to conceal himself or avoid any inquiry, he left the country, free at last to pursue that career to which he had always aspired, and in which he had been checked by a blunder, from the consequences of which he little expected that he should so speedily and strangely emancipate himself. It was in a beautiful villa on the lake of Geneva that he finally established himself, and there for many years he employed himself in the publication of a series of works, which whether they were poetry or prose, imaginative or investigative, all tended to the same consistent purpose, namely, the fearless and unqualified promulgation of those opinions, on the adoption of which he sincerely believed the happiness of mankind depended; and the opposite principles to which, in his own case, had been productive of so much mortification and misery. His works, which were

published in England, were little read, and universally decried. The critics were always hard at work, proving that he was no poet, and demonstrating in the most logical manner that he was quite incapable of reasoning on the commonest topic. In addition to all this, his ignorance was self-evident; and though he was very fond of quoting Greek, they doubted whether he was capable of reading the original authors. The general impression of the English public, after the lapse of some years, was, that Herbert was an abandoned being, of the most profligate habits, opposed to all the institutions of society that kept his infamy in check, and an avowed atheist; and as scarcely any one but a sympathetic spirit ever read a line he wrote—for indeed the very sight of his works was pollution—it is not very wonderful that this opinion was so generally prevalent. A calm inquirer might, perhaps, have suspected that abandoned profligacy is not very compatible with severe study, and that an author is seldom loose in his life, even if he be licentious in his writings. A calm inquirer might, perhaps, have been of opinion that a solitary sage may be the antagonist of a priesthood, without absolutely denying the existence of a God; but there never are calm inquirers. The world, on every subject, however unequally, is divided into parties; and even in the case of Herbert and his writings, those who admired his genius, and the generosity of his soul, were not content without advocating, principally out of pique to his adversaries, his extreme opinions on every subject—moral, political, and religious.

Besides, it must be confessed, there was another circumstance which was almost as fatal to Herbert's character in England as his loose and heretical opinions. The travelling English, during their visits to Geneva, found out that their countryman solaced or enlivened his solitude by a mistress. It is a habit which very young men, who are separated from, or deserted by, their wives, occasionally have recourse to. Wrong no doubt, as most things are, but it is to be hoped, venial; at least in the case of any man who is not also an atheist. This unfortunate mistress of Herbert was magnified into a seraglio; the most extraordinary tales of the voluptuous life of one who generally at his studies outwatched the stars, were rife in English society; and

“Hoary Marquisses and stripling Dukes,”

who were either protecting opera dancers, or, still worse, making love to their neighbours' wives, either looked grave when the name of Herbert was mentioned in female society, or affectedly confused, as if they could a tale unfold, if they were not convinced that the sense of propriety among all present was infinitely superior to their sense of curiosity.

The only person to whom Herbert communicated in England was Dr. Masham. He wrote to him immediately on his establishment at Geneva, in a calm, yet sincere and serious tone, as if it were useless to dwell too fully on the past. Yet he declared, although now that it was all over he avowed his joy at the interposition of his destiny, and the opportunity which he at length possessed of pursuing the career for which he was adapted, that he had to his knowledge given his wife no cause of offence which could authorise her conduct. As for his daughter, he said he should not be so

cruel as to tear her from her mother's breast though, if any thing could induce him to such behaviour, it would be the malignant and ungenerous menace of his wife's relatives, that they would oppose his preferred claim to the guardianship of his child, on the plea of his immoral life and atheistical opinions. With reference to pecuniary arrangements, as his chief seat was entailed on male heirs, he proposed that his wife should take up her abode at Cherbury, an estate which had been settled on her and her children at her marriage, and which, therefore, would descend to Venetia. Finally, he expressed his satisfaction that the neighbourhood of Marringhurst would permit his good and still faithful friend to cultivate the society and guard over the welfare of his wife and daughter.

During the first ten year's of Herbert's exile, for such indeed it might be considered, the doctor maintained with him a rare, yet regular correspondence; but after that time a public event occurred, and a revolution took place in Herbert's life which terminated all communication between them; a termination occasioned, however, by such a simultaneous conviction of its absolute necessity, that it was not attended by any of those painful communications which are too often the harrowing forerunners of a formal disruption of ancient ties.

This event was the revolt of the American colonies; and this revolution in Herbert's career, his junction with the rebels against his native country. Doubtless it was not without a struggle, perhaps a pang, that Herbert resolved upon a line of conduct, to which it must assuredly have required the strongest throb of his cosmopolitan sympathy, and his amplest definition of philanthropy to have impelled him. But without any vindictive feelings towards England, for he ever professed and exercised charity towards his enemies, attributing their conduct entirely to their ignorance and prejudice, upon this step he nevertheless felt it his duty to decide. There seemed in the opening prospects of America, in a world still new, which had borrowed from the old as it were only so much civilisation as was necessary to create and maintain order; there seemed in the circumstances of its boundless territory, and the total absence of feudal institutions and prejudices, so fair a field for the practical introduction of those regenerating principles to which Herbert had devoted all the thought and labour of his life, that he resolved, after long and perhaps painful meditation, to sacrifice every feeling and future interest to its fulfilment. All idea of ever returning to his native country, even were it only to mix his ashes with the generations of his ancestors; all hope of reconciliation with his wife, or of pressing to his heart that daughter, often present to his tender fancy, and to whose affections he had feelingly appealed in an out-burst of passionate poetry—all these chances, chances which, in spite of his philosophy, had yet a lingering charm, must be discarded for ever. They were discarded. Assigning his estate to his heir upon conditions, in order to prevent its forfeiture, with such resources as he could command, and which were considerable, Marmion Herbert arrived at Boston, where his rank, his wealth, his distinguished name, his great talents, and his undoubted zeal for the cause of liberty, procured him an eminent and gratifying reception

He offered to raise a regiment for the republic, and the offer was accepted; and he was enrolled among the citizens. All this occurred about the time that the Cadureis' family first settled at the abbey, and this narrative will probably throw light upon several slight incidents which heretofore may have attracted the perplexed attention of the reader: such as the newspaper brought by Dr. Masham at the Christmas visit; the tears shed at a subsequent period at Marringhurst, when he related to her the last intelligence that had been received from America. For, indeed, it is impossible to express the misery and mortification which this last conduct of her husband occasioned Lady Annabel, brought up, as she had been, with feelings of romantic loyalty and unswerving patriotism. To be a traitor seemed the only blot that remained for his sullied scutcheon, and she had never dreamed of that. An infidel, a profligate, a deserter from his home, an apostate from his God! one infamy alone remained, and now he had attained it;—a traitor to his King! Why, every peasant would despise him!

General Herbert, however, for such he speedily became, at the head of his division, soon arrested the attention, and commanded the respect, of Europe. To his exertions the successful result of the struggle was, in a great measure, attributed; and he received the thanks of the Congress, of which he became a member. His military and political reputation exercised a beneficial influence upon his literary fame. His works were reprinted in America, and translated into French, and published at Geneva and Basle, whence they were surreptitiously introduced into France. The Whigs, who had become very factious, and nearly revolutionary, during the American war, suddenly became proud of their countryman, whom a new world hailed as a deliverer, and Paris declared to be a great poet and an illustrious philosopher. His writings became fashionable, especially among the young; numerous editions of them appeared; and in time it was discovered that Herbert was now not only openly read, and enthusiastically admired, but had founded a school.

The struggle with America ceased about the time of Lord Cadureis' last visit to Cherbury, when from his indignant lips Venetia first learned the enormities of her father's career. Since that period some three years had elapsed until we introduced our readers to the boudoir of Lady Montcagle. During this period, among the Whigs and their partisans the literary fame of Herbert had arisen and become established. How they have passed in regard to Lady Annabel Herbert and her daughter, on the one hand, and Lord Cadureis himself on the other, we will endeavour to ascertain in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

FROM the last departure of Lord Cadureis from Cherbury, the health of Venetia again declined. The truth is, she brooded in solitude over her strange lot, until her nerves became relaxed by intense revery and suppressed feeling. The attention of a mother, so wrapped up in her child as Lady Annabel, was soon attracted to the increasing languor of our heroine, whose eye each day seemed to grow less bright, and her graceful form less lithe

and active. No longer fond of the sun and breeze, as a beautiful bird, was Venetia seen, as heretofore, glancing in the garden, or bounding over the lawns; too often might she be found reclining on the couch, in spite of all the temptations of the spring; while her temper, once so singularly sweet, that it seemed there was not in the world a word that could ruffle it, and which required so keenly and responded so quickly to sympathy, became reserved, if not absolutely sullen, or at times even captious and fretful.

This change in the appearance and demeanour of her daughter filled Lady Annabel with anxiety and alarm. In vain she expressed to Venetia her conviction of her indisposition; but Venetia, though her altered habits confirmed the suspicion, and authorised the inquiry of her parent, persisted ever in asserting that she had no ailment. Her old medical attendant was, however, consulted, and, being perplexed with the case, he recommended change of air. Lady Annabel then consulted Dr. Masham, and he gave his opinion in favour of change of air for one reason; and that was, that it would bring with it what he had long considered Venetia to stand in need of, and that was change of life.

Dr. Masham was right; but then to guide him in forming his judgment, he had the advantage of some psychological knowledge of the case, which, in a great degree, was a sealed book to the poor puzzled physician. We laugh very often at the errors of medical men; but if we would only, when we consult them, have strength of mind enough to extend to them something better than a half-confidence, we might be cured the sooner. How often, when the unhappy disciple of Esculapius is perplexing himself about the state of our bodies, we might throw light upon his obscure labours by simply detailing to him the state of our minds!

The result of these consultations in the Herbert family was a final resolution on the part of Lady Annabel, to quit Cherbury for a while. As the sea air was especially recommended to Venetia, and as Lady Annabel shrank with a morbid apprehension from society, to which nothing could persuade her she was not an object either of odium or impertinent curiosity, she finally resolved to visit Weymouth, then a very small and secluded watering-place, and whither she arrived and settled herself, it not being even the season when its few customary visitors were in the habit of gathering.

This residence at Weymouth quite repaid Lady Annabel for all the trouble of her new settlement, and for the change in her life, very painful to her confirmed habits, which she experienced in leaving, for the first time for such a long series of years, her old hall; for the rose soon returned to the cheek of her daughter, and the western breezes, joined with the influence of the new objects that surrounded her, and especially of that ocean, and its strange and inexhaustible variety, on which she gazed for the first time, gradually, but surely, completed the restoration of Venetia to health, and with it to much of her old vivacity.

When Lady Annabel had resided about a year at Weymouth, in the society of which she had invariably made the indisposition of Venetia a reason for not entering, a great revolution suddenly occurred at this little quiet watering-place; for it was fixed upon as the summer residence of the English

court. The celebrated name, the distinguished appearance, and the secluded habits of Lady Annabel and her daughter, had rendered them the objects of very general interest. Occasionally they were met in a sea-side walk, by some fellow wanderer over the sands, or toiler over the shingles; and romantic reports of the dignity of the mother, and the daughter's beauty, were repeated by the fortunate observers to the lounging circle of the public library or the baths.

The moment that Lady Annabel was assured that the royal family had positively fixed upon Weymouth for their residence, and were even daily expected, she resolved instantly to retire. Her stern sense of duty assured her that it was neither delicate nor loyal to obtrude before the presence of an outraged monarch the wife and daughter of a traitor; her haughty, though wounded spirit shrank from the revival of her husband's history, which must be the consequence of such a conjunction, and from the startling and painful remarks which might reach the shrouded ear of her daughter. With her characteristic decision, and with her usual stern volition, Lady Annabel quitted Weymouth instantly, but she was in some degree consoled for the regret and apprehensiveness which she felt at thus leaving a place that had otherwise so happily fulfilled all her hopes and wishes, and that seemed to agree so entirely with Venetia, by finding unexpectedly a marine villa, some few miles further up the coast, which was untenanted, and which offered to Lady Annabel all the accommodation she could desire.

It so happened this summer that Dr. Masham paid the Herberts a visit, and it was his habit occasionally to ride into Weymouth to read the newspaper, or pass an hour in that easy lounging chat, which is, perhaps, one of the principal diversions of a watering-place. A great dignitary of the church, who was about the king, and to whom Dr. Masham was known not merely by reputation, mentioned his presence to his majesty; and the king, who was fond of the society of eminent divines, desired that Dr. Masham should be presented to him. Now, so favourable was the impression that the rector of Marringhurst made upon his sovereign, that from that moment the king was scarcely ever content unless he was in attendance. His majesty, who was happy in asking questions, and much too acute to be baffled when he sought information, finally elicited from the doctor, all that, in order to please Lady Annabel, he long struggled to conceal; but when the king found that the deserted wife and daughter of Herbert were really living in the neighbourhood, and that they had quitted Weymouth on his arrival, from a feeling of delicate loyalty, nothing would satisfy the kind-hearted monarch, but personally assuring them of the interest he took in their welfare; and, accordingly, the next day, without giving Lady Annabel even the preparation of a notice, his majesty and his royal consort, attended only by a lord in waiting, called at the marine villa, and fairly introduced themselves.

An acquaintance, occasioned by a sentiment of generous and condescending sympathy, was established and strengthened into intimacy, by the personal qualities of those thus delicately honoured. The King and Queen were equally delighted with the wife and daughter of the terrible rebel; and although, of course, not an allusion was made to

his existence, Lady Annabel felt not the less acutely the cause to which she was indebted for a notice so gratifying, but which she afterwards secured by her own merits. How strange are the accidents of life! Venetia Herbert, who had been bred up in unbroken solitude, and whose converse had been confined to two or three beings, suddenly found herself the guest of a King, and a visitor to a court! She stepped at once from solitude into the most august circle of society; yet, though she had enjoyed none of that initiatory experience which is usually held so indispensable to the votaries of fashion, her happy nature qualified her to play her part without effort and with success. Serene and graceful, she mingled in the strange and novel scene, as if it had been forever her lot to dazzle and to charm. Ere the royal family returned to London, they extracted from Lady Annabel a compliance with their earnest wishes, that she should fix her residence, during the ensuing season, in the metropolis, and that she should herself present Venetia at St. James's. The wishes of kings are commands; and Lady Annabel, who thus unexpectedly perceived some of the most painful anticipations of her solitude at once dissipated, and that her child, instead of being subjected, on her entrance into life, to all the mortifications she had imagined, would, on the contrary, find her first introduction under auspices the most flattering and advantageous, bowed a dutiful assent to the condescending injunctions.

Such were the memorable consequences of this visit to Weymouth! The return of Lady Annabel to the world, and her intended residence in the metropolis, while the good Masham preceded their arrival to receive a mitre. Strange events, and yet not improbable!

In the mean time, Lord Cadurcis had repaired to the university, where his rank and his eccentric qualities quickly gathered round him a choice circle of intimates, chiefly culled from his old schoolfellows. Of these, the great majority were his seniors, for whose society the maturity of his mind qualified him. It so happened that these companions were in general influenced by those liberal opinions which had become in vogue during the American war, and from which Lord Cadurcis had hitherto been preserved by the society in which he had previously mingled in the house of his guardian. With the characteristic caprice and impetuosity of youth, Cadurcis rapidly and ardently imbibed all these doctrines, captivated alike by their boldness and their novelty. Hitherto the child of prejudice, he flattered himself that he was now the creature of reason, and, determined to take nothing for granted, he soon learned to question every thing that was received. A friend introduced him to the writings of Herbert,—that very Herbert whom he had been taught to look upon with so much terror and odium. Their perusal operated a complete revolution of his mind; and in a little more than a year from his flight from Cherbury, he had become an enthusiastic votary of the great master, for his violent abuse of whom he had been banished from those happy bowers. The courage, the boldness, the eloquence, the imagination, the strange and romantic career of Herbert, carried the spirit of Cadurcis captive. The sympathetic companions studied his works, and smiled with scorn at the prejudice of which their great model had been the victim, and of

which they had been so long the dupes. As for Cadureis, he resolved to emulate him, and he commenced his noble rivalry by a systematic neglect of all the duties and the studies of his college life. His irregular habits procured him constant reprimands, in which he gloried; he revenged himself on the authorities by writing epigrams, and by keeping a bear, which he declared should stand for a fellowship. At length, having willfully outraged the most important regulations, he was expelled; and he made his expulsion the subject of a satire equally personal and philosophic, and which obtained applause for the great talent which it displayed, even from those who lamented its want of judgment and the misconduct of its writer. Flushed with success, Cadureis at length found, to his astonishment, that Nature had intended him for a poet. He repaired to London, where he was received with open arms by the Whigs, whose party he immediately embraced, and where he published a poem, in which he painted his own character as the hero, and of which—in spite of all the exaggeration and extravagance of youth—the genius was undeniable. Society sympathised with a young and noble poet; his poem was read by all parties with enthusiasm; Cadureis became the fashion. To use his own expression, “One morning he awoke, and found himself famous.” Young, singularly handsome, with every gift of nature and fortune, and with an inordinate vanity that raged in his soul, Cadureis soon forgot the high philosophy that had for a moment attracted him, and delivered himself up to the absorbing egotism which had ever been latent in his passionate and ambitious mind. Gifted with energies that few have ever equalled, and fooled to the bent by the excited sympathies of society, he poured forth his creative and daring spirit with a license that conquered all obstacles, from the very audacity with which he assailed them. In a word, the young, the reserved, and unknown Cadureis—who, but three years back, was to have lived in the domestic solitude for which he alone felt himself fitted—filled every heart and glittered in every eye. The men envied, the women loved, all admired him. His life was a perpetual triumph; a brilliant and applauding stage, on which he ever played a dazzling and heroic part. So sudden and so startling had been his apparition, so vigorous and unceasing the efforts by which he had maintained his first overwhelming impression, and not merely by his writings, but by his unusual manners and eccentric life, that no one had yet found time to draw his breath, to observe, to inquire, and to criticise. He had risen, and still flamed, like a comet; as wild as it was beautiful, and strange as it was brilliant.

CHAPTER IV.

WE must now return to the dinner party at Lord Montegle's. When the Bishop of — entered the room, he found nearly all the expected guests assembled, and was immediately presented by his host to the lady of the house, who received him with all that fascinating address for which she was celebrated, expressing the extreme delight which she felt at thus becoming formally acquainted with one whom her husband had long taught her to

admire and reverence. Utterly unconscious who had just joined the circle, while Lord Montegle was introducing his newly arrived guest to many present, and to all of whom he was unknown except by reputation, Lord Cadureis was standing apart, apparently wrapt in his own thoughts; but the truth is, in spite of all the excitement in which he lived, he had difficulty in overcoming the natural reserve of his disposition.

“Watch Cadureis,” said Mr. Horace Pole to a very fine lady. “Does not he look sublime?”

“Show me him,” said the lady, very eagerly; “I have never seen him yet; I am actually dying to know him. You know we have just come to town?”

“And have caught the raging epidemic, I see,” said Mr. Pole, with a sneer. “However, there is the marvellous young gentleman! ‘Alone in a crowd,’ as he says in his last poem. Very interesting!”

“Wonderful creature!” exclaimed the dame.

“Charming!” said Mr. Pole. “If you ask Lady Montegle, she will introduce him to you, and then, perhaps, you will be fortunate enough to be handed to dinner by him.”

“O! how I should like it!”

“You must take care, however, not to eat; he cannot endure a woman who eats.”

“I never do,” said the lady, very simply; “at least at dinner.”

“Ah! then you will quite suit him; I dare say he will write a sonnet to you, and call you Thyra.”

“I wish I could get him to write some lines in my book,” said the lady; “Charles Fox has written some; he was staying with us in the autumn, and he has written an ode to my little dog.”

“How very amiable!” said Mr. Pole; “I dare say they are as good as his elegy on Mrs. Crewe's cat. But you must not talk of cats and dogs to Cadureis. He is too exalted to commemorate any animal less sublime than a tiger or a barb.”

“You forget his beautiful lines on his Newfoundland,” said the lady.

“Very complimentary to us all,” said Mr. Horace Pole. “The interesting misanthrope!”

“He looks very unhappy.”

“Very,” said Mr. Pole. “Evidently something on his conscience.”

“They do whisper very odd things,” said the lady with great curiosity. “Do you think there is any thing in them?”

“O! no doubt,” said Mr. Pole; “look at him; you can detect crime in every glance.”

“Dear me, how shocking! I think he must be the most interesting person that ever lived. I should like to know him! They say he is so very odd.”

“Very,” said Mr. Pole. “He must be a man of genius; he is so unlike every body; the very tie of his cravat proves it. And his hair, so savage and dishevelled; none but a man of genius would not wear powder. Watch him to-day, and you will observe that he will not condescend to perform the slightest act like an ordinary mortal. I met him at dinner yesterday at Fanshawe's, and he touched nothing but biscuits and soda water. Fanshawe, you know, is famous for his cook. Very complimentary and gratifying, was it not?”

“Dear me!” said the lady, “I am delighted to

see him; and yet I hope I shall not sit by him at dinner. I am quite afraid of him."

"He is really very awful!" said Mr. Pole.

In the mean time, the subject of these observations slowly withdrew to the further end of the saloon, apart from every one, and threw himself upon a couch, with a somewhat discontented air. Lady Monteaule, whose eye had never left him for a moment, although her attentions had been necessarily commanded by her guests, and who dreaded the silent rages in which Cadurecis constantly indulged, and which when once assumed for the day, were with great difficulty dissipated, seized the first opportunity to join and soothe him.

"Dear Cadurecis," she said, "why do you sit here? You know I am obliged to speak to all these odious people, and it is very cruel of you."

"You seem to me to be extremely happy," replied his lordship, in a sarcastic tone.

"Now, Cadurecis, for heaven's sake, do not play with my feelings," exclaimed Lady Monteaule, in a deprecating tone. "Pray be amiable. If I think you are in one of your dark humours, it is quite impossible for me to attend to these people; and you know it is the only point on which Monteaule ever has an opinion; he insists upon my attending to his guests."

"If you prefer his guests to me, attend to them."

"Now, Cadurecis! I ask you as a favour, a favour to me, only for to-day. Be kind, be amiable, you can if you like; no person can be more amiable; now, do!"

"I am very amiable," said his lordship, "I am perfectly satisfied, if you are. You made me dine here."

"Now, Cadurecis!"

"Have I not dined here to satisfy you?"

"Yes! It was very kind."

"But, really, that I should be wearied with all the common-places of these creatures who come to eat your husband's cutlets, is too much," said his lordship. "And you, Gertrude, what necessity can there be in your troubling yourself to amuse people whom you meet every day of your life, and who, from the vulgar perversity of society, value you in exact proportion as you neglect them?"

"Yes, but to-day I must be attentive; for Henry, with his usual thoughtlessness, has asked this new bishop to dine with us."

"The Bishop of ——" inquired Lord Cadurecis, eagerly. "Is he coming?"

"He has been in the room this quarter of an hour."

"What, Masham! Doctor Masham!" continued Lord Cadurecis.

"Assuredly."

Lord Cadurecis changed colour, and even sighed. He rose rather quickly, and said, "I must go and speak to him."

So, quitting Lady Monteaule, he crossed the room, and with all the simplicity of old days, which instantly returned on him, those melancholy eyes sparkling with animation, and that languid form quick with excitement, he caught the doctor's glance, and shook his extended hand with a heartiness which astonished the surrounding spectators, accustomed to the elaborate listlessness of his usual manner.

"My dear doctor! my dear lord! I am glad to say," said Cadurecis, "this is the greatest and the most unexpected pleasure I ever received. Of all persons in the world, you are the one whom I was most anxious to meet."

The good bishop appeared not less gratified with the rencounter than Cadurecis himself; but, in the midst of their mutual congratulations, dinner was announced and served; and, in due order, Lord Cadurecis found himself attending that very fine lady whom Mr. Horace Pole had, in jest, suggested should be the object of his services; while Mr. Pole himself was seated opposite to him at table.

The lady, remembering all Mr. Pole's intimations, was really very much frightened; she at first could scarcely reply to the casual observations of her neighbour, and quite resolved not to eat any thing. But his lively and valuable conversation, his perfectly unaffected manner, and the nonchalance with which he helped himself to every dish that was offered him, soon reassured her. Her voice became a little firmer, her manner less embarrassed, and she even began meditating a delicate assault upon a friecasse.

"Are you going to Ranelagh to-night?" inquired Lord Cadurecis; "I think I shall take a round. There is nothing like amusement; it is the only thing worth living for; and I thank my destiny I am easily amused. We must persuade Lady Monteaule to go with us. Let us make a party, and return and sup. I like a supper; nothing in the world more charming than a supper—

"A lobster salad, and champagne and chat."

That is life, and very delightful. Why, really, my dear madam, you eat nothing. You will never be able to endure the fatigues of a Ranelagh campaign on the sustenance of a pâté. Pole, my good fellow, will you take a glass of wine? We had a pleasant party, yesterday, at Fanshave's, and apparently a capital dinner. I was sorry that I could not play my part; but I have led rather a raking life lately. We must go and dine with him again; I long to sweat his Burgundy."

Lord Cadurecis' neighbour and Mr. Pole exchanged looks; and the lady, emboldened by the unexpected conduct of her cavalier, and the exceeding good friends which he seemed resolved to be with her and every one else, began to flatter herself that she might yet obtain the much-desired inscription in her volume. So, after making the usual approaches, of having a great favour to request, which, however, she could not flatter herself would be granted, and which she even was afraid to mention; encouraged by the ready declaration of Lord Cadurecis, that he should think it would be quite impossible for any one to deny her any thing, the lady ventured to state that Mr. Fox had written something in her book, and she should be the most honoured and happiest lady in the land if—

"O! I shall be most happy," said Lord Cadurecis; "I really esteem your request quite an honour: you know I am only a literary amateur, and cannot pretend to vie with your real authors. If you want them, you must go to Mrs. Montagu. I would not write a line for her, and so the blues have quite excommunicated me. Never mind; I

leave them to Miss Hannah More: but you—you are quite a different sort of person. What shall I write?"

"I must leave the subject to you," said his gratified friend.

"Well, then," said his lordship, "I dare say you have got a lapdog or a broken fan; I don't think I could soar above them. I think that is about my tether."

This lady, though a very great person, was not a beauty, and very little of a wit, and not calculated in any respect to excite the jealousy of Lady Montegle. In the mean time that lady was quite delighted with the unusual animation of Lord Cadurcis, who was much the most entertaining member of the party. Every one present would circulate throughout the world that it was only at the Montegles' that Lord Cadurcis condescended to be amusing. As the bishop was seated on her right hand, Lady Montegle seized the opportunity of making inquiries as to their acquaintance; but she only obtained from the good Masham that he had once resided in his lordship's neighbourhood, and had known him as a child, and was greatly attached to him. Her ladyship was anxious to obtain some juvenile anecdotes of her hero; but the bishop contrived to be amusing without degenerating into gossip. She did not glean much, except that all his early friends were more astonished at his present career than the bishop himself, who was about to add that he always had some misgivings, but, recollecting where he was, he converted the word into a more gracious term. But if Lady Montegle were not as successful as she could wish in her inquiries, she contrived still to speak on the, to her, ever-interesting subject, and consoled herself by the communications which she poured into a guarded yet not unwilling ear, respecting the present life and conduct of the bishop's former pupil. The worthy dignitary had been prepared by public fame for much that was dazzling and eccentric; but it must be confessed that he was not a little astonished by a great deal to which he listened. One thing, however, was clear,—that whatever might be the demeanour of Cadurcis to the circle in which he now moved, time, and the strange revolutions of his life, had not affected his carriage to his old friend. It gratified the bishop when he listened to Lady Montegle's details of the haughty, reserved, and melancholy demeanour of Cadurcis, which impressed every one with an idea that some superior being had, as a punishment, been obliged to visit their humble globe, to recall the apparently heartfelt cordiality with which he had resumed his old acquaintance with the former Rector of Marringhurst.

And indeed, to speak truth, the amiable and unpretending behaviour of Cadurcis this day was entirely attributable to the unexpected meeting with this old friend. In the hurry of society he could scarcely dwell upon the associations which it was calculated to call up; yet more than once he found himself quite absent, dwelling on sweet recollections of that Cherbury that he had so loved. And ever and anon the tones of a familiar voice caught his ear, so that they almost made him start: they were not the less striking, because, as Masham was seated on the same side of the table as Cadurcis, his eye had not become habituated to the

bishop's presence, which sometimes he had almost doubted.

He seized the first opportunity after dinner of engaging his old tutor in conversation. He took him affectionately by the arm, and led him, as if unintentionally to a sofa, apart from the rest of the company, and seated himself by his side. Cadurcis was agitated, for he was about to inquire of some whom he could not mention without emotion.

"Is it long since you have seen our friends?" said his lordship, "if indeed I may call them mine."

"Lady Annabel Herbert?" said the bishop.

Cadurcis bowed.

"I parted from her about two months back," continued the bishop.

"And Cherbury, dear Cherbury, is it unchanged?"

"They have not resided there for more than two years."

"Indeed!"

"They have lived, of late, at Weymouth, for the benefit of the sea air."

"I hope neither Lady Annabel nor her daughter needs it!" said Lord Cadurcis, in a tone of great feeling.

"Neither now, God be praised," replied Masham; "but Miss Herbert has been a great invalid."

There was a rather awkward silence. At length, Lord Cadurcis said, "We meet rather unexpectedly, my dear sir."

"Why, you have become a great man," said the bishop, with a smile; "and one must expect to meet you."

"Ah! my dear friend," exclaimed Lord Cadurcis, with a sigh, "I would willingly give a whole existence of a life like this, for one year of happiness at Cherbury."

"Nay!" said the bishop, with a look of good-natured mockery, "this melancholy is all very well in poetry; but I always half suspected, and I am quite sure now, that Cherbury was not particularly adapted to you."

"You mistake me," said Cadurcis, mournfully shaking his head.

"Hitherto, I have not been so very wrong in my judgment respecting Lord Cadurcis, that I am inclined very easily to give up my opinion," replied the Bishop.

"I have often thought of the conversation to which you allude," replied Lord Cadurcis; "nevertheless, there is one opinion I never changed, one sentiment that still reigns paramount in my heart."

"You think so," said his companion; "but, perhaps, were it more than a sentiment, it would cease to flourish."

"No," said Lord Cadurcis, firmly, "the only circumstance in the world of which I venture to feel certain is my love for Venetia."

"It raged certainly during your last visit to Cherbury," said the Bishop, "after an interval of five years: it has been revived slightly to-day, after an interval of three more, by the sight of a mutual acquaintance, who has reminded you of her. But what have been your feelings in the mean time, my Lord? Confess the truth, and admit you have very rarely spared a thought to

the person to whom you fancy yourself at this moment so passionately devoted."

"You do not do me justice," said Lord Cadurcis; "you are prejudiced against me."

"Nay! prejudice is not my humour, my good Lord. I decide only from what I myself observe; I give my opinion to you at this moment as freely as I did when you last conversed with me at the abbey, and when I a little displeased you, by speaking what you will acknowledge has since turned out to be the truth."

"You mean, then, to say," said his lordship, with some excitement, "that you do not believe that I love Venetia?"

"I think you do, at this moment, very much," replied Masham; "and I think," he continued, smiling, "that you may probably continue very much in love with her, even during the rest of the week."

"You mock me?"

"Nay! I am most sincerely serious."

"What, then, do you mean?"

"I mean that your imagination, my Lord, dwelling for the moment with great power upon the idea of Venetia, becomes inflamed, and your whole mind is filled with her image."

"A metaphysical description of being in love," said Lord Cadurcis rather dryly.

"Nay!" said Masham, "I think the heart has something to do with that."

"But the imagination acts upon the heart," rejoined his companion.

"But it is in the nature of its influence not to endure. At this moment, I repeat, your lordship may, perhaps, love Miss Herbert; you may go home and muse over her memory, and even deplore in passionate verses your misery in being separated from her; but, in the course of a few days, she will be again forgotten."

"But were she mine?" urged Lord Cadurcis, eagerly.

"Why, you would probably part from her in a year, as her father parted from Lady Annabel."

"Impossible! for my imagination could not conceive any thing more exquisite than she is."

"Then it would conceive something less exquisite," said the Bishop. "It is a restless quality, and is ever creative, either of good or of evil."

"Ah! my dear doctor—excuse me for again calling you doctor, it is so natural," said Cadurcis, in a tone of affliction.

"Call me what you will, my dear Lord," said the good Bishop, whose heart was moved; "I can never forget old days."

"Believe me, then," continued Cadurcis, "that you misjudge me in respect of Venetia. I feel assured that, had we married three years ago, I should have been a much happier man."

"Why, you have every thing to make you happy," said the Bishop; "if you are not happy, who should be? You are young, and you are famous: all that is now wanted is to be wise."

Lord Cadurcis shrugged his shoulders. "I am tired of this life," he said; "I am wearied of the same hollow bustle, and the same false glitter day after day. Ah! my dear friend, when I remember the happy hours when I used to roam through the woods of Cherbury with Venetia, and ramble in

that delicious park—both young, both innocent—lit by the sunset and guided by the stars, and then remember that it has all ended in this, and that this is success, glory, fame, or whatever be the proper title to baptise the bubble, the burthen of existence is too great for me."

"Hush, hush!" said his friend, rising from the sofa; "you will be happy if you be wise."

"But what is wisdom?" said Lord Cadurcis.

"One quality of it, in your situation, my Lord, is to keep your head as calm as you can. Now, I must bid you good night."

The Bishop disappeared, and Lord Cadurcis was immediately surrounded by several fine ladies, who were encouraged by the flattering bulletin that his neighbour at dinner, who was among them, had given of his lordship's temper. They were rather disappointed to find him sullen, sarcastic, and even morose. As for going to Ranelagh, he declared that, if he had the power of awarding the punishment of his bitterest enemy, it would be to consign him for an hour to the barbarous infliction of a promenade in the temple of ennui; and as for the owner of the album, who, anxious about her verses, ventured to express a hope that his lordship would call upon her, the contemptuous bard gave her what he was in the habit of styling "a look," and quitted the room, without deigning otherwise to acknowledge her hopes and her courtesy.

CHAPTER V.

WE must now return to our friends the Herberts, who, having quitted Weymouth, without even revisiting Cherbury, are now on their journey to the metropolis. It was not without considerable emotion that Lady Annabel, after an absence of nearly nineteen years, contemplated her return to the scene of some of the most extraordinary and painful occurrences of her life. As for Venetia, who knew nothing of towns and cities, save from the hasty observations she had made in travelling, the idea of London, formed only from books and her imagination, was invested with even awful attributes. Mistress Pouncefort alone looked forward to their future residence simply with feelings of self-congratulation at her return, after so long an interval, to the theatre of former triumphs and pleasures, and where she conceived herself so eminently qualified to shine and to enjoy.

The travellers entered town towards nightfall, by Hyde Park Corner, and proceeded to an hotel in St. James' Street, where Lady Annabel's man of business had engaged them apartments. London, with its pallid parish lamps, scattered at long intervals, would have presented but a gloomy appearance to the modern eye, habituated to all the splendour of gas; but to Venetia it seemed difficult to conceive a scene of more brilliant bustle; and she leaned back in the carriage, distracted with the lights and the confusion of the crowded streets. When they were once safely lodged in their new residence, the tumult of unpacking the carriages had subsided, and the ceaseless tongue of Pouncefort had in some degree refrained from its wearying and worrying chatter, a feeling of loneliness, after all this agitation and excitement, simultane

ously came over the feelings of both mother and daughter, though they alike repressed its expression. Lady Annabel was lost in many sad thoughts, and Venetia felt mournful, though she could scarcely define the cause. Both were silent, and they soon sought refuge from fatigue and melancholy in sleep.

The next morning, it being now April, was fortunately bright and clear. It certainly was a happy fortune that the fair Venetia was not greeted with a fog. She rose refreshed and cheerful, and joined her mother, who was, however, not a little agitated by an impending visit, of which Venetia had been long apprised. This was from Lady Annabel's brother, the former ambassador, who had of late returned to his native country. The brother and sister had been warmly attached in youth, but the awful interval of time that had elapsed since they parted, filled Venetia's mother with many sad and serious reflections. The earl and his family had been duly informed of Lady Annabel's visit to the metropolis, and had hastened to offer her the hospitality of their home; but the offer had been declined, with feelings, however, not a little gratified by the earnestness with which it had been professed.

Venetia was now, for the first time in her life, to see a relative. The anticipated meeting excited in her mind rather curiosity than sentiment. She could not share the agitation of her mother, and yet she looked forward to the arrival of her uncle with extreme inquisitiveness. She was not long kept in suspense. Their breakfast was scarcely finished when he was announced. Lady Annabel turned very pale; and Venetia, who felt herself as it were a stranger to her blood, would have retired, had not her mother requested her to remain; so she only withdrew to the background of the apartment.

Her uncle was ten years the senior of his sister, but not unlike her. Tall, graceful, with those bland and sympathising manners that easily win hearts, he entered the room with a smile of affection, yet with a composure of deportment that expressed at the same time how sincerely delighted he was at the meeting, and how considerably determined at the same time not to indulge in a scene. He embraced his sister with tenderness, assured her that she looked as young as ever, softly chided her for not making his house her home, and hoped that they should never part again; and he then turned to his niece. A fine observer, one less interested in the scene than the only witnesses, might have detected in the earl, notwithstanding his experienced breeding, no ordinary surprise and gratification at the sight of the individual whose relationship he was now to claim for the first time.

"I must claim an uncle's privilege," he said, in a tone of great sweetness and some emotion, as he pressed with his own the beautiful lips of Venetia. "I ought to be proud of my niece. Why! Annabel, if only for the honour of our family, you should not have kept this jewel so long enshrined in the casket of Cherbury."

The earl remained with them some hours; and his visits were really prolonged by the unexpected pleasure which he found in the society of his relations. He would not leave them until they promised to dine with him that day, and mentioned that he had prevented his wife from calling with

him that morning, because he thought, after so long a separation, it might be better to meet thus quietly. Then they parted with affectionate cordiality on both sides; the earl enchanted to find delightful companions where he was half afraid he might only meet tiresome relatives; Lady Annabel proud of her brother, and gratified by his kindness; and Venetia anxious to ascertain whether all her relations were as charming as her uncle.

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Lady Annabel and her daughter returned from their morning drive, they found the visiting ticket of the Countess on the table, who had also left a note, with which she had provided herself in case she was not so fortunate as to meet her relations. The note was very affectionate, and expressed the great delight of the writer at again meeting her dear sister and forming an acquaintance with her charming niece.

"More relations!" said Venetia, with a somewhat droll expression of countenance.

At this moment the Bishop of —, who had already called twice upon them unsuccessfully, entered the room. The sight of this old and dear friend gave great joy. He came to engage them to dine with him the next day, having already ineffectually endeavoured to obtain them for permanent guests. They sat chatting so long with him, that they were obliged at last to bid him an abrupt adieu, and hasten and make their toilets for their dinner.

Their hostess received her relations with a warmth which her husband's praises of her sister-in-law and niece had originally prompted, but which their appearance and manners instantly confirmed. As all the Earl's children were married, their party consisted to-day only of themselves; but it was a very happy and agreeable meeting for every one was desirous of being amiable. To be sure they had not many recollections or associations in common, and no one recurred to the past; but London, and the history of its fleeting hours, was an inexhaustible source of amusing conversation and the Countess seemed resolved that Venetia should have a very brilliant season; that she should be very much amused and very much admired. Lady Annabel, however, put in a plea for moderation, at least until Venetia was presented; but that the Countess declared must be at the next drawing-room, which was early in the ensuing week. Venetia listened to glittering narratives of balls and routs, operas and theatres, breakfasts and masquerades, Ranelagh and the Pantheon, with the same smiling composure as if she had been accustomed to them all her life, instead of having been shut up in a garden, with no livelier or brighter companions than birds and flowers.

After dinner, as her aunt and uncle and Lady Annabel sat round the fire, talking of her maternal grandfather, a subject which did not at all interest her, Venetia stole from her chair to a table in a distant part of the room, and turned over some books and music that were lying upon it. Among these was a literary journal, which she touched almost by accident, and which opened, with the name of Lord Cadurcis on the top of its page.

This, of course, instantly attracted her attention. Her eye passed hastily over some sentences which greatly astonished her, and, extending her arm for a chair without quitting the book, she was soon deeply absorbed by the marvels which rapidly unfolded themselves to her. The article in question was an elaborate criticism as well of the career as the works of the noble poet; for, indeed, as Venetia now learned, they were inseparably blended. She gathered from these pages a faint and hasty, yet not altogether unfaithful, conception of the strange revolution that had occurred in the character, pursuits, and position of her former companion. In that mighty metropolis, whose wealth and luxury and power had that morning so vividly impressed themselves upon her consciousness, and to the history of whose pleasures and brilliant and fantastic dissipation she had recently been listening with a lively and diverted ear, it seemed that, by some rapid and magical vicissitude, her little Plantagenet, the faithful and affectionate companion of her childhood, whose sorrows she had so often soothed, and who in her pure and devoted love had always found consolation and happiness, had become the "observed of all observers,"—the most remarkable where all was striking, and dazzling where all were brilliant!

His last visit to Cherbury, and its strange consequences, then occurred to her; his passionate addresses, and their bitter parting. Here was surely matter enough for a maiden's revery, and into a revery Venetia certainly fell, from which she was roused by the voice of her uncle, who could not conceive what book his charming niece could find so interesting, and led her to feel what a very ill compliment she was paying to all present. Venetia hastily closed the volume, and rose rather confused from her seat; her radiant smile was the best apology to her uncle; and she compensated for her previous inattention, by playing to him on the harpsichord. All the time, however, the image of Cadurcis flitted across her vision, and she was glad when her mother moved to retire, that she might enjoy the opportunity of pondering in silence and unobserved over the strange history that she had read.

London is a wonderful place! Four-and-twenty hours back, with a feeling of loneliness and depression amounting to pain, Venetia had fled to sleep as her only refuge; now only a day had passed, and she had both seen and heard many things that had alike startled and pleased her; had found powerful and charming friends; and laid her head upon her pillow in a tumult of emotion that long banished slumber from her beautiful eyes.

CHAPTER VII.

VENETIA soon found that she must bid adieu forever, in London, to her old habits of solitude. She soon discovered that she was never to be alone. Her aunt called upon them very early in the morning, and said that the whole day must be devoted to their court dresses; and, in a few minutes, they were all whirled off to a celebrated milliners. After innumerable consultations and experiments, the dress of Venetia was decided on; her aunt and Lady Annabel were both assured that it would exceed in splendour and propriety

any dress at the drawing-room. Indeed, as the great artist added, with such a model to work from it would reflect but little credit on the establishment, if any approached Miss Herbert in the effect she must inevitably produce.

While her mother was undergoing some of those attentions to which Venetia had recently submitted, and had retired for a few minutes into an adjoining apartment, our little lady of Cherbury strolled about the saloon in which she had been left, until her attention was attracted by a portrait of a young man, in an oriental dress, standing very sublimely amid the ruins of some desert city; a palm tree in the distance, and by his side a crouching camel, and some recumbent followers slumbering amid the fallen columns.

"That is Lord Cadurcis, my love," said her aunt, who at the moment joined her, "the famous poet. All the young ladies are in love with him. I dare say you know his works by heart."

"No, indeed, aunt," said Venetia; "I never even read them; but I should like very much."

"Not read Lord Cadurcis' poems! O! we must go and get them directly for you. Every body reads them. You will be looked upon quite as a little barbarian. We will stop the carriage at Stockdale's, and get them for you."

At this moment Lady Annabel rejoined them; and, having made all their arrangements, they re-entered the Countess's carriage.

"Stop at Stockdale's," said her ladyship to the servant; "I must get Cadurcis' last poem, for Venetia. She will be quite back in her learning, Annabel."

"Cadurcis' last poem!" said Lady Annabel; "do you mean Lord Cadurcis? Is he a poet?"

"To be sure! Well, you are countryfied not to know Lord Cadurcis!"

"I know him very well," said Lady Annabel, gravely; "but I did not know he was a poet."

The Countess laughed, the carriage stopped, the book was bought; Lady Annabel looked very uneasy, and tried to catch her daughter's countenance, but, strange to say, for the first time in her life was quite unsuccessful. The Countess took the book, and immediately gave it Venetia. "There, my dear," said her aunt, "there never was any thing so charming. I am so provoked that Cadurcis is a Whig."

"A Whig!" said Lady Annabel, "he was not a Whig when I knew him."

"O! my dear, I am afraid he is worse than a Whig. He is almost a rebel! But then he is such a genius! Every thing is allowed, you know, to a genius!" said the thoughtless Countess.

Lady Annabel was silent; but the stillness of her emotion must not be judged from the stillness of her tongue. Her astonishment at all she had heard was only equalled by what we may justly term her horror. It was impossible that she could have listened to any communication at the same time so astounding, and to her so fearful.

"We knew Lord Cadurcis when he was very young, aunt," said Venetia, in a very quiet tone. "He lived near mamma, in the country."

"O! my dear Annabel, if you see him in town, bring him to me," said the Countess; "he is the most difficult person in the world to get to one's house, and I would give any thing if he would come and dine with me."

The Countess at last set her relations down at

their hotel. When Lady Annabel was once more alone with her daughter, she said—"Venetia, dearest, give me that book your aunt lent you."

Venetia immediately handed it to her, but her mother did not open it; but saying—"The Bishop dines at four, darling, I think it is time for us to dress," Lady Annabel left the room.

To say the truth, Venetia was less surprised than disappointed by this conduct of her mother's; but she was not apt to murmur, and she tried to dismiss the subject from her thoughts.

It was with unfeigned delight that the kind-hearted Masham welcomed under his own roof his two best and dearest friends. He had asked nobody to meet them; it was settled that they were to be quite alone, and to talk of nothing but Cherbury and Marringhurst. When they were seated at table, the Bishop, who had been detained at the House of Lords, and had been rather hurried to be in time to receive his guests, turned to his servant, and inquired whether any one had called.

"Yes, my Lord, Lord Cadurecis," was the reply.

"Our old companion," said the Bishop to Lady Annabel, with a smile. "He has called upon me twice, and I have on both occasions unfortunately been absent."

Lady Annabel merely bowed an assent to the Bishop's remark. Venetia longed to speak, but found it impossible. "What is it that represses me?" she asked herself. "Is there to be another forbidden subject insensibly to arise between us? I must struggle against this indefinable despotism that seems to pervade my life."

"Have you met Lord Cadurecis, Sir?" at length asked Venetia.

"Once; we resumed our acquaintance at a dinner party one day; but I shall soon see a great deal of him, for he has just taken his seat. He is of age, you know."

"I hope he has come to years of discretion in every sense," said Lady Annabel, "but I fear not."

"O! my dear lady," said the Bishop, "he has become a great man; he is our star. I assure you there is nobody in London talked of but Lord Cadurecis. He asked me a great deal after you and Cherbury. He will be delighted to see you."

"I cannot say," replied Lady Annabel, "that the desire of meeting is at all mutual. From all I hear, our connexions and opinions are very different, and I dare say our habits likewise."

"My aunt lent us his new poem to-day," said Venetia, very boldly.

"Have you read it?" asked the Bishop.

"I am no admirer of modern poetry," said Lady Annabel, somewhat tartly.

"Poetry of any kind is not much in my way," said the Bishop, "but if you like to read his poems, I will lend them to you, for he gave me a copy; esteemed a great honour, I assure you."

"Thank you, my Lord," said Lady Annabel, "both Venetia and myself are very much engaged now; and I do not wish her to read while she is in London. When we return to Cherbury she will have abundance of time, if desirable."

Both Venetia and her worthy host felt that the present subject of conversation was not very agreeable to Lady Annabel, and it was immediately changed. They fell upon more gracious topics, and, in spite of this somewhat sullen commence-

ment, the meeting was quite as delightful as they anticipated. Lady Annabel particularly exerted herself to please, and, as was invariably the case under such circumstances with this lady, she was eminently successful; she apparently endeavoured, by her remarkable kindness to her daughter, to atone for any unpleasant feeling which her previous manner might for an instant have occasioned. Venetia watched her beautiful and affectionate parent, as Lady Annabel now dwelt with delight upon the remembrance of their happy home, and now returned to the anxiety she naturally felt about her daughter's approaching presentation, with feelings of love and admiration, which made her accuse herself for the recent rebellion of her heart. She thought only of her mother's sorrows, and her devotion to her child; and, grateful for the unexpected course of circumstances which seemed to be leading every member of their former little society to honour and happiness, she resolved to persist in that career of duty and devotion to her mother, from which it seemed to her she had never deviated for a moment, but to experience sorrow, misfortune, and remorse. Never did Venetia receive her mother's accustomed embrace and blessing with more responsive tenderness and gratitude than this night. She banished Cadurecis and his poems from her thoughts, confident that, as long as her mother approved neither of her continuing his acquaintance nor perusing his writings, it was well that the one should be a forgotten tie, and the other a sealed book.

CHAPTER VIII

AMONG the most intimate acquaintances of Lady Annabel's brother was the nobleman who had been a minister during the American war, and who had also been the guardian of Lord Cadurecis, of whom, indeed, he was likewise a distant relative. He had called with his lady on Lady Annabel, after meeting her and her daughter at her brother's, and had cultivated her acquaintance with great kindness and assiduity, so that Lady Annabel had found it impossible to refuse his invitation to dinner.

This dinner occurred a few days after the visit of the Herberts to the Bishop, and that excellent personage, her own family, and some others equally distinguished, but all of the ministerial party, were invited to meet her. Lady Annabel found herself placed at table between a very pompous courtier, who, being a gourmand, was not very prompt to disturb his enjoyment by conversation, and a young man, whom she found very agreeable, and who at first, indeed, attracted her attention by his resemblance to some face with which she felt she was familiar, and yet which she was not successful in recalling. His manners were remarkably frank and ingenuous, yet soft and refined. Without having any peculiar brilliancy of expression, he was apt and fluent, and his whole demeanour characterised by a gentle modesty that was highly engaging. Apparently he had travelled a great deal, for he more than once alluded to his experience of foreign countries, but this was afterwards explained by Lady Annabel discovering, from an observation he let fall, that he was a sailor. A passing question from an opposite guest also told her that he was a member of parliament. While she was

rather anxiously wishing to know who he might be, and congratulating herself that one in whose favour she was so much prepossessed, should be on the right side, their host saluted him from the top of the table, and said, "Captain Cadureis, a glass of wine."

The countenance was now explained. It was, indeed, Lord Cadureis whom he resembled, though his eyes were dark blue, and his hair light brown. This then was that cousin who had been sent to sea to make his fortune, and whom Lady Annabel had a faint recollection of poor Mrs. Cadureis once mentioning. George Cadureis had not exactly made his fortune, but he had distinguished himself in his profession, and especially in Rodney's victory, and had fought his way up to the command of a frigate. The frigate had recently been paid off, and he had called to pay his respects to his noble relative, with the hope of obtaining his interest for a new command. The guardian of his cousin, very much mortified with the conduct of his hopeful ward, was not very favourably impressed towards any one who bore the name of Cadureis, yet George, with no pretence, had a winning, honest manner that made friends; his lordship took a fancy to him, and, as he could not at the moment obtain him a ship, he did the next best thing for him in his power; a borough was vacant, and he put him into parliament.

"Do you know," said Lady Annabel to her neighbour, "I have been fancying all dinner time, that we had met before; but I find it is that you only resemble one with whom I was once acquainted."

"My cousin!" said the Captain, "he will be very mortified when I go home, if I tell him your ladyship speaks of his acquaintance as one that is past."

"It is some years since we met," said Lady Annabel, in a more reserved tone.

"Plantagenet can never forget what he owes to you," said Captain Cadureis. "How often has he spoken to me of you and Miss Herbert! It was only the other night—yes! not a week ago—that he made me sit up with him all night, while he was telling stories of Cherbury; you see I am quite familiar with the spot," he added, smiling.

"You are very intimate with your cousin, I see," said Lady Annabel.

"I live a great deal with him," said George Cadureis. "You know we had never met or communicated; and it was not Plantagenet's fault, I am sure; for of all the generous, amiable, loveable beings, Cadureis is the best I ever met with in this world. Ever since we knew each other, he has been a brother to me; and, though our politics and opinions are so opposed, and we naturally live in such a different circle, he would have insisted even upon my having apartments in his house, nor is it possible for me to give you the slightest idea of the delicate and unceasing kindness I experience from him. If we had lived together all our lives, it would be impossible to be more united."

This eulogium rather softened Lady Annabel's heart; she even observed, "I always thought Lord Cadureis naturally well disposed; I always hoped he would turn out well; but I was afraid, from what I heard, he was very much changed. He shows, however, his sense and good feeling in selecting you for his friend; for you are his natural one," she added, after a momentary pause.

"And, then, you know," he continued, "it is so purely kind of him; for of course I am not fit to be a companion for Cadureis, and perhaps, as far as that, no one is. Of course we have not a thought in common. I know nothing but what I have picked up in a rough life; and he, you know, is the cleverest person that ever lived—at least I think so."

Lady Annabel smiled.

"Well, he is very young," she observed, "much your junior, Captain Cadureis; and I hope he will yet prove a faithful steward of the great gifts that God has given him."

"I would stake all I hold dear," said the Captain, with great animation, "that Cadureis turns out well. He has such a good heart. Ah! Lady Annabel, if he be now and then a little irregular, only think of the temptations that assail him. Only one-and-twenty—his own master—and all London at his feet. It is too much for any one's head. But say or think what the world may, I know him better than they do; and I know there is not a finer creature in existence. I hope his old friends will not desert him," added Captain Cadureis, with a smile which seemed to deprecate the severity of Lady Annabel, "for, in spite of all his fame and prosperity, perhaps, after all, this is the time when he most needs them."

"Very possibly," said her ladyship, rather dryly.

While the mother was engaged in this conversation with her neighbour respecting her former interesting acquaintance, such was the fame of Lord Cadureis then in the metropolis that he also formed the topic of conversation at another part of the table, to which the daughter was an attentive listener. The tone in which he was spoken of, however, was of a very different character. While no one disputed his genius; his principles, temper, and habits of life were submitted to the severest scrutiny; and it was with blended feelings of interest and astonishment that Venetia listened to the detail of wild opinions, capricious conduct, and extravagant and eccentric behaviour ascribed to the companion of her childhood, who had now become the spoiled child of society. A very shrewd gentleman, who had taken an extremely active part in this discussion, inquired of Venetia, next to whom he was seated, whether she had read his lordship's last poem. He was extremely surprised when Venetia answered in the negative; but he seized the opportunity of giving her an elaborate criticism on the poetical genius of Cadureis. "As for his style," said the critic, "no one can deny that is his own, and he will last by his style; as for his philosophy, and all these wild opinions of his, they will pass away, because they are not genuine, they are not his own, they are borrowed. He will outwrite them; depend upon it, he will. The fact is, as a friend of mine observed the other day, Herbert's writings have turned his head. Of course you know nothing about them, but there are wonderful things in them, I can tell you that."

"I believe it most sincerely," said Venetia.

The critic stared at his neighbour. "Hush!" said he, "his wife and daughter are here. We must not talk of these things. You know Lady Annabel Herbert? There she is; a very fine woman too. And that is his daughter there, I believe, that girl with a turned-up nose. I can

not say she warrants the poetical address to her:—

My precious pearl the false and glittering world
Has ne'er polluted with its garish light ?

"She does not look much like a pearl, does she ? She should keep in solitude, eh ?"

The ladies rose and relieved Venetia from her embarrassment.

After dinner Lady Annabel introduced George Cadurcis to her daughter; and, seated by them both, he contrived without effort and without the slightest consciousness of success, to confirm the pleasing impression in his favour, which he had already made, and when they parted, it was even with a mutual wish that they might meet again.

CHAPTER IX.

It was the night after the drawing-room. Lord Cadurcis was at Brookes' dining at midnight, having risen since only a few hours. Being a mal-content, he had ceased to attend the court, where his original reception had been most gracious, which he had returned by some very factious votes, and a very caustic lampoon.

A party of young men entered from the Court Ball; which in those days always terminated at midnight, whence the guests generally proceeded to Ranelagh; one or two of them seated themselves at the table at which Cadurcis was sitting. They were full of a new beauty who had been presented. Their violent and even extravagant encomiums excited his curiosity. Such a creature had never been seen, she was peerless, the most radiant of acknowledged charms had been dimmed before her. Their Majesties had accorded to her the most marked reception. A prince of the blood had honoured her with his hand. Then they began to expatiate with fresh enthusiasm on her unparalleled loveliness.

"O! Cadurcis," said a young noble, who was one of his extreme admirers, "she is the only creature I ever beheld worthy of being one of your heroines."

"Who are you talking about?" asked Cadurcis in a rather listless tone.

"The new beauty, of course."

"And who may she be?"

"Miss Herbert, to be sure. Who speaks or thinks of any one else?"

"What, Vc—, I mean Miss Herbert?" exclaimed Cadurcis with no little energy.

"Yes. Do you know her?"

"Do you mean to say —" and Cadurcis stopped and rose from the table, and joined the party round the fire. "What Miss Herbert is it?" he added after a short pause.

"Why *the* Miss Herbert; Herbert's daughter, to be sure. She was presented to-day by her mother."

"Lady Annabel?"

"The same."

"Presented to-day!" said Cadurcis audibly, yet speaking as it were to himself. "Presented to-day! Presented! how strange!"

"So every one thinks; one of the strangest

things that ever happened," remarked a bystander.

"And I did not even know they were in town," continued Cadurcis, for, from his irregular hours, he had not seen his cousin since the party of yesterday. He began walking up and down the room, muttering, "Masham, Weymouth, London, presented at court, and I know nothing. How life changes! Venetia at court, my Venetia!" Then turning round and addressing the young nobleman who had first spoken to him, he asked "if the ball were over."

"Yes; all the world are going to Ranelagh. Are you inclined to take a round?"

"I have a strange fancy," said Cadurcis, "and if you will go with me, I will take you in my vis-a-vis. It is here."

This was an irresistible invitation, and in a few minutes the companions were on their way. Cadurcis, apparently with no peculiar interest in the subject, leading the conversation very artfully to the presentation of Miss Herbert. His friend was heartily inclined to gratify his curiosity. He gave him the most ample details of Miss Herbert's person. Even her costume, and the sensation both produced; how she was presented by her mother, who, after so long an estrangement from the world, scarcely excited less impression, and the remarkable cordiality with which both mother and daughter were greeted by the sovereign and his royal consort.

The two young noblemen found Ranelagh very crowded, but the presence of Lord Cadurcis occasioned a great sensation the moment he was recognised. Every where the whisper went round, and many parties crowded near to catch a glimpse of the hero of the day. "Which is he? That fair, tall young man? No, the other to be sure. Is it really he? How very distinguished! How very melancholy! Quite the poet. Do you think he is really as unhappy as he looks? I would sooner see him than the king and queen. He seems very young, but then he has seen so much of the world! Fine eyes, beautiful hair! I wonder who is his friend? How proud he must be! Who is that lady he bowed to? That is the duke of — speaking to him." Such were the remarks that might be caught in the vicinity of Lord Cadurcis as he took his round, gazed at by the assembled crowd, of whom many knew him only by fame, for the charm of Ranelagh was that it was rather a popular than a mere fashionable assembly. Society at large blended with the court, which maintained and renewed its influence by being witnessed under the most graceful auspices. The personal authority of the aristocracy has decreased with the disappearance of Ranelagh and similar places of amusement, where rank was not exclusive, and luxury by the gratification it occasioned others seemed robbed of half its selfishness.

In his second round, Lord Cadurcis recognised the approach of the Herberts. They formed a portion of a very large party. Lady Annabel was leaning on her brother, whom Cadurcis knew by sight; Venetia was at the side of her aunt, and several gentlemen were hovering about them; among them, to his surprise, his cousin, George Cadurcis, in his uniform, for he had been to court and to the Court Ball. Venetia was talking with animation. She was in her court dress and in

powder. Her appearance was strange to him. He could scarcely recognise the friend of his childhood; but without any doubt in all that assembly, unrivalled in the whole world for beauty, grace, and splendour, she was without a parallel; a cynosure on which all eyes were fixed.

So occupied were the ladies of the Herbert party by the conversation of their numerous and brilliant attendants, that the approach of any one else but Lord Cadureis might have been unnoticed by them, but a hundred tongues before he drew nigh, had prepared Venetia for his appearance. She was indeed most anxious to behold him, and though she was aware that her heart fluttered not slightly as the moment was at hand, she commanded her gaze, and her eyes met his although she was very doubtful whether he might choose or care to recognise her. He bowed almost to the ground; and when Venetia had raised her responsive head he had passed by.

"Why, Cadureis, you know Miss Herbert?" said his friend in a tone of some astonishment.

"Well; but it is a long time since I have seen her."

"Is she not beautiful?"

"I never doubted on that subject; I tell you, Scroops, we must contrive to join her party. I wish we had some of our friends among them. Here comes the Monteagle; aid me to escape her."

The most fascinating smile failed in arresting the progress of Cadureis; fortunately, the lady was the centre of a most brilliant band;—all that he had to do, therefore, was boldly to proceed.

"Do you think my cousin is altered since you knew him?" inquired George Cadureis of Venetia.

"I scarcely had time to observe him," she replied.

"I wish you would let me bring him to you. He did not know until this moment you were in town. I have not seen him since we met yesterday."

"O, no," said Venetia. "Do not disturb him."

In time, however, Lord Cadureis was again in sight; and now, without any hesitation, he stopped, and falling into the line by Miss Herbert, he addressed her: "I am proud of being remembered by Miss Herbert," he said.

"I am most happy to meet you," replied Venetia, with unaffected sincerity.

"And Lady Annabel, I have not been able to catch her eye—is she quite well? I was ignorant that you were in London until I heard of your triumph this night."

The countess whispered her niece, and Venetia accordingly presented Lord Cadureis to her aunt. This was a most gratifying circumstance to him. He was anxious, by some means or other, to effect his entrance into her circle; and he had an irresistible suspicion that Lady Annabel no longer looked upon him with eyes of favour. So he resolved to enlist the aunt as his friend. Few persons could be more winning than Cadureis, when he willed it; and every attempt to please from one whom all emulated to gratify and honour, was sure to be successful. The countess, who, in spite of politics, was a secret votary of his, was quite prepared to be enchanted. She congratulated herself on forming, as she had long wished, an acquaintance with one so celebrated. She longed to pass Lady Monteagle in triumph. Cadureis

improved his opportunity to the utmost. It was impossible for any one to be more engaging; lively, yet at the same time gentle, and deferential with all his originality. He spoke, indeed, more to the aunt than to Venetia; but when he addressed the latter, there was a melting, almost a mournful, tenderness in his tones, that alike affected her heart and charmed her imagination. Nor could she be insensible to the gratification she experienced as she witnessed, every instant, the emotion his presence excited among the passers by, and of which Cadureis himself seemed so properly and so utterly unconscious. And this was Plantagenet!

Lord Cadureis spoke of his cousin, who, on his joining the party, had assisted the arrangement by moving to the other side; and he spoke of him with a regard which pleased Venetia, though his lordship envied him his good fortune in having the advantage of a prior acquaintance with Miss Herbert in town; "but then we are old acquaintances in the country," he added, half in a playful, half in a melancholy tone, "are we not?"

"It is a long time that we have known each other, and it is a long time since we have met," replied Venetia.

"A delicate reproach," said his lordship; "but perhaps rather my misfortune than my fault. My thoughts have been often, I might say ever, at Cherbury."

"And the abbey; have you forgotten the abbey?"

"I have never been near it since a morning you perhaps remember," said his lordship in a low voice. "Ah! Miss Herbert," he continued, with a sigh, "I was young then; I have lived to change many opinions, and some of which you then disapproved."

The party stopped at a box just vacant, and in which the ladies seated themselves while their carriages were inquired for. Lord Cadureis, with a faltering heart, went up to pay his respects to Venetia's mother. Lady Annabel received him with a courtesy, that however was scarcely cordial, but the Countess instantly presented him to her husband with an unction which a little astonished her sister-in-law. Then a whisper, but unobserved, passed between the Earl and his lady, and in a minute Lord Cadureis had been invited to dine with them on the next day, and meet his old friends from the country. Cadureis was previously engaged, but hesitated not a moment in accepting the invitation. The Monteagle party now passed by; the lady looked a little surprised at the company in which she found her favourite, and not a little mortified by his neglect. What business had Cadureis to be speaking to that Miss Herbert? Was it not enough that the whole day not another name had scarcely crossed her ear, but the night must even witness the conquest of Lord Cadureis by the new beauty? It was such bad ton, it was so unlike him, it was so underbred, for a person of his position immediately to bow before the new idol of the hour—and a Tory girl too! It was the last thing she could have expected from him. She should, on the contrary, have thought that the very universal admiration which this Miss Herbert commanded would have been exactly the reason why a man like Cadureis would have seemed almost unconscious of her existence. She determined to remonstrate with him; and she was

sure of a speedy opportunity, for he was to dine with her on the morrow.

CHAPTER X.

NOTWITHSTANDING Lady Annabel's reserved demeanour, Lord Cadurcis, supported by the presence of his cousin, who he had discovered to be a favourite of that lady, ventured to call upon her the next day, but she was out. They were to meet, however, at dinner, where Cadurcis determined to omit no opportunity to propitiate her. The Countess had a great deal of tact, and she contrived to make up a party to receive him in which there were several of his friends, among them his cousin and the Bishop of —, and no strangers who were not, like herself, his great admirers; but if she had known more she need not have given herself this trouble, for there was a charm among her guests of which she was ignorant, and Cadurcis went determined to please and to be pleased.

At dinner he was seated next to Lady Annabel, and it was impossible for any person to be more deferential, soft, and insinuating. He spoke of old days with emotion which he did not attempt to suppress; he alluded to the present with infinite delicacy. But it was very difficult to make way. Lady Annabel was courteous, but she was reserved. His lively reminiscences elicited from her no corresponding sentiment; and no art would induce her to dwell upon the present. If she only would have condescended to compliment him, it would have given him an opportunity of expressing his distaste of the life which he now led, and a description of the only life which he wished to lead; but Lady Annabel studiously avoided affording him any opening of the kind. She treated him like a stranger. She impressed upon him without effort that she would only consider him an acquaintance. How Cadurcis, satiated with the incense of the whole world, sighed for one single congratulation from Lady Annabel! Nothing could move her.

"I was so surprised to meet you last night," at length he again observed. "I have made so many inquiries after you. Our dear friend, the Bishop, was, I fear, almost wearied with my inquiries after Cherbury. I know not how it was, I felt quite a pang when I heard that you had left it, and that all these years, when I have been conjuring up so many visions of what was passing under that dear roof, you were at Weymouth."

"Yes. We were at Weymouth some time."
"But do not you long to see Cherbury again? I cannot tell you how I pant for it. For my part, I have seen the world, and I have seen enough of it. After all, the end of all our exertions is to be happy at home; that is the end of every thing; don't you think so?"

"A happy home is certainly a great blessing," replied Lady Annabel; "and a very rare one."

"But why should it be so rare?" inquired Lord Cadurcis.

"It is our own fault," said Lady Annabel; "our vanity drives us from our hearths."

"But we soon return again, and calm and cooled.

For my part I have no object in life but to settle down at the old abbey, and never to quit again our woods. But I shall lead a dull life without my neighbours," he added, with a smile, and in a tone half coaxing.

"I suppose you never see Lord ***** now?" said Lady Annabel, mentioning his late guardian. There was, as Cadurcis fancied, some sarcasm in the question, though not in the tone in which it was asked.

"No, I never see him," his lordship answered, firmly; "we differ in our opinions, and I differ from him with regret; but I differ from a sense of duty, and therefore I have no alternative."

"The claims of duty are of course paramount," observed Lady Annabel.

"You know my cousin?" said Lord Cadurcis, to turn the conversation.

"Yes, and I like him very much; he appears to be a sensible, amiable person, of excellent principles."

"I am not bound to admire George's principles," said Lord Cadurcis, gaily; "but I respect them, because I know that they are conscientious. I love George; he is my only relation, and he is my friend."

"I trust he will always be your friend, for I think you will then, at least, know one person on whom you can depend."

"I believe it. The friendships of the world are wind."

"I am surprised to hear you say so," said Lady Annabel.

"Why, Lady Annabel?"

"You have so many friends."

Lord Cadurcis smiled. "I wish," he said, after a little hesitation, "if only for 'Auld lang syne,' I might include Lady Annabel Herbert among them."

"I do not think there is any basis for friendship between us, my lord," she said, very dryly.

"The past must ever be with me," said Lord Cadurcis, "and I should have thought a sure and solid one."

"Our opinions on all subjects are so adverse, that I must believe that there could be no great sympathy in our feelings."

"My feelings are beyond my control," he replied; "they are, and must ever be, totally independent of my opinions."

Lady Annabel did not reply. His lordship felt baffled, but he was resolved to make one more effort.

"Do you know," he said, "I can scarcely believe myself in London to-day? To be sitting next to you, to see Miss Herbert, to hear Doctor Masham's voice—O! does it not recall Cherbury, or Marringhurst, or that day at Cadurcis, when you were so good as to smile over my rough report. Ah! Lady Annabel, those days were happy! those were feelings that can never die! All the glitter and hubbub of the world can never make me forget them,—can never make you, I hope, Lady Annabel, quite recall them with an effort. We were friends then: let us be friends now."

"I am too old to cultivate new friendships," said her ladyship; "and if we are to be friends, Lord Cadurcis, I am sorry to say that, after the interval that has occurred since we last parted, we should have to begin again."

"It is a long time," said his lordship, mournfully, a "very long time, and one—in spite of what the world may think—to which I cannot look back with any self-congratulation. I wished three years ago never to leave Cadureis again. Indeed I did; and indeed it was not my fault that I quitted it."

"It was no one's fault, I hope, my lord. Whatever the cause may have been, I have ever remained quite ignorant of it; I wished, and wish, to remain ignorant of it. I, for one, have ever considered it the wise dispensation of a merciful Providence."

Cadureis ground his teeth; a dark look came over him which, when once it rose on his brow, was with difficulty dispelled; and for the remainder of the dinner he continued silent and gloomy.

He was, however, not unobserved by Venetia. She had watched his evident attempts to conciliate her mother, with lively interest; she had witnessed their failure with sincere sorrow. In spite of that stormy interview, the results of which—in his hasty departure, and the severance of their acquaintance—she had often regretted, she had always retained for him the greatest affection. During these three years he had still, in her inmost heart, remained her own Plantagenet—her adopted brother, whom she loved, and in whose welfare her feelings were deeply involved. The mysterious circumstances of her birth, and the discoveries to which they had led, had filled her mind with a fanciful picture of human nature, over which she had long brooded. A great poet had become her ideal of man. Sometimes she had sighed—when musing over her father and Plantagenet on the solitary sea-shore at Weymouth—that Cadureis, instead of being the merely amiable, and somewhat narrow-minded being, that she supposed, had not been invested with those brilliant and commanding qualities which she felt could alone master her esteem. Often had she, in those abstracted hours, played with her imagination in combining the genius of her father with the soft heart of that friend to whom she was so deeply attached. She had wished, in her reveries, that Cadureis might have been a great man; that he might have existed in an atmosphere of glory, amid the plaudits and admiration of his race; and that then he might have turned from all that fame, so dear to them both, to the heart which could alone sympathise with the native simplicity of his childhood.

The ladies withdrew. The Bishop and another of the guests joined them after a short interval. The rest remained below, and drank their wine with the freedom not unusual in those days, Lord Cadureis among them, although it was not his habit. But he was not convivial, though he never passed the bottle untouched. He was in one of those dark humours of which there was a latent spring in his nature, but which, in old days, had been kept in check by his simple life, his inexperienced mind, and the general kindness that greeted him, and which nothing but the caprice and perversity of his mother could occasionally develop. But since the great revolution in his position, since circumstances had made him alike acquainted with his nature, and had brought all society to acknowledge its superiority; since he had gained and felt his irresistible power, and had found all the world, and all the glory of it, at his feet, these moods had become more frequent. The slightest reaction in the self-complacency that was almost unceasingly

stimulated by the applause of applauded men, and the love of the loveliest women, instantly took the shape and found refuge in the immediate form of the darkest spleen, generally indeed brooding in silence, and, if speaking, expressing itself only in sarcasm. Cadureis was, indeed,—as we have already described him,—the spoiled child of society; a froward and petted darling, not always to be conciliated by kindness, but furious when neglected or controlled. He was habituated to triumph; it had been his lot to come, to see, and to conquer; even the procrastination of certain success was intolerable to him; his energetic volition could not endure a check. To Lady Annabel Herbert, indeed, he was not exactly what he was to others; there was a spell in old associations from which he unconsciously could not emancipate himself, and from which it was his opinion he honoured her, in not desiring to be free. He had his reasons for wishing to regain his old, his natural influence, over her heart; he did not doubt for an instant that, if Cadureis sued, success must follow the condescending effort. He had sued, and he had been met with coldness, almost with disdain. He had addressed her in those tones of tenderness which experience had led him to believe were irresistible, yet to which he seldom had recourse, for hitherto he had not been under the degrading necessity of courting. He had dwelt with fondness on the insignificant past, because it was connected with her; he had regretted, or affected even to despise, the glorious present, because it seemed, for some indefinite cause, to have estranged him from her hearth. Yes! he had humbled himself before her; he had thrown with disdain at her feet all that dazzling fame and expanding glory which seemed his peculiar and increasing privilege. He had delicately conveyed to her that even these would be sacrificed, not only without a sigh, but with cheerful delight, to find himself once more living, as of old, in the limited world of her social affections. Three years ago he had been rejected by the daughter, because he was an undistinguished youth. Now the mother recoiled from his fame. And who was this woman? The same cold, stern heart, that had alienated the gifted Herbert; the same narrow, rigid mind, that had repudiated ties that every other woman in the world would have gloried to cherish and acknowledge. And with her he had passed his prejudiced youth, and fancied, like an idiot, that he had found sympathy! Yes, as long as he was a slave, a mechanical, submissive slave, bowing his mind to all the traditional bigotry which she adored, never daring to form an opinion for himself, worshipping her idol custom, and labouring by habitual hypocrisy to perpetuate the delusions of all around her!

In the mean time, while Lord Cadureis was chewing the cud of these bitter feelings, we will take the opportunity of explaining the immediate cause of Lady Annabel's frigid reception of his friendly advances. All that she had heard of Cadureis, all the information which she had within these few days so rapidly acquired of his character and conduct, were indeed not calculated to dispose her to witness the renewal of their intimacy with feelings of remarkable satisfaction. But this morning she had read his poem, the poem that all London was talking of, and she had read it with horror. She looked upon Cadureis as a lost man. With her, indeed, since her marriage, an imagina-

tive mind had become an object of terror; but there were some peculiarities in the tone of Cadurcis' genius, which magnified to excess her general apprehension on this head. She traced, in every line, the evidences of a raging vanity, which she was convinced must prompt its owner to sacrifice, on all occasions, every feeling of duty to its gratification. Amid all the fervour of rebellious passions, and the violence of a wayward mind, a sentiment of profound egotism appeared to her impressed on every page she perused. Great as might have been the original errors of Herbert—awful as in her estimation were the crimes to which they had led him, they might in the first instance be traced rather to a perverted view of society than of himself. But self was the idol of Cadurcis; self distorted into a phantom that seemed to Lady Annabel pregnant not only with terrible crimes, but with the basest and most humiliating vices. The certain degradation which in the instance of her husband had been the consequences of a bad system, would, in her opinion, in the case of Cadurcis, be the result of a bad nature; and when she called to mind that there had once been a probability that this individual might have become the husband of her Venetia, her child whom it had been the sole purpose of her life to save from the misery of which she herself had been the victim; that she had even dwelt on the idea with complacency, encouraged its progress, regretted its abrupt termination, but consoled herself by the flattering hope that time, with even more favourable auspices, would mature it into fulfilment; she trembled, and turned pale.

It was to the Bishop that, after dinner, Lady Annabel expressed some of the feelings which the re-appearance of Cadurcis had occasioned her.

"I see nothing but misery for his future," she exclaimed; "I tremble for him when he addresses me. In spite of the glittering surface on which he now floats, I foresee only a career of violence, degradation, and remorse."

"He is a problem difficult to solve," replied Masham, "but there are elements not only in his character, but his career, so different from those of the person of whom we were speaking, that I am not inclined at once to admit, that the result must necessarily be the same."

"I see none," replied Lady Annabel; "at least, none of sufficient influence to work any material change."

"What think you of his success?" replied Masham. "Cadurcis is evidently proud of it. With all his affected scorn of the world, he is the slave of society. He may pique the feelings of mankind, but I doubt whether he will outrage them."

"He is on such a dizzy eminence," replied Lady Annabel, "that I do not believe he is capable of calculating so finely. He does not believe, I am sure, in the possibility of resistance. His vanity will tempt him onwards."

"Not to persecution," said Masham. "Now my opinion of Cadurcis is, that his egotism, or selfishness, or whatever you may style it, will ultimately preserve him from any very fatal, from any irrecoverable excesses. He is of the world—worldly. All his works, all his conduct, tend only to astonish mankind. He is not prompted by any visionary ideas of ameliorating his species. The instinct of self-preservation will serve him as ballast."

"We shall see," said Lady Annabel; "for my-

self, whatever may be his end, I feel assured that great and disgraceful vicissitudes are in store for him."

"It is strange after what, in comparison with such extraordinary changes, must be esteemed so brief an interval," observed Masham, with a smile, "to witness such a revolution in his position. I often think to myself, can this indeed be our little Plantagenet?"

"It is awful!" said Lady Annabel; "much more than strange. For myself, when I recall certain indications of his feelings when he was last at Cadurcis, and think for a moment of the results to which they might have led, I shiver; I assure you, my dear lord, I tremble from head to foot. And I encouraged him! I smiled with fondness on his feelings! I thought I was securing the peaceful happiness of my child! What can we trust to in this world! It is too dreadful to dwell upon! It must have been an interposition of Providence that Venetia escaped!"

"Dear little Venetia!" exclaimed the good Bishop; "for I believe I shall call her little Venetia to the day of my death. How well she looks tonight! Her aunt is, I think, very fond of her. See!"

"Yes, it pleases me," said Lady Annabel; "but I do wish my sister was not such an admirer of Lord Cadurcis' poems. You cannot conceive how uneasy it makes me. I am quite annoyed that he was asked here to-day. Why ask him?"

"O! there is no harm," said Masham; "you must forget the past. By all accounts, Cadurcis is not a marrying man. Indeed, as I understood, marriage with him is at present quite out of the question. And as for Venetia, she rejected him before, and she will, if necessary, reject him again. He has been a brother to her, and after that he can be no more. Girls never fall in love with those with whom they are bred up."

"I hope—I believe there is no occasion for apprehension," replied Lady Annabel; "indeed it has scarcely entered my head. The very charms he once admired in Venetia, can have no sway over him, as I should think, now. I should believe him as little capable of appreciating Venetia now, as he was when last at Cherbury of anticipating the change in his own character."

"You mean opinions, my dear lady, for characters never change. Believe me, Cadurcis is radically the same as in old days. Circumstances have only developed his latent predisposition."

"Not changed, my dear lord; what, that innocent, sweet-tempered, docile child—"

"Hush! here he comes."

The earl and his guests entered the room; a circle was formed round Lady Annabel; some evening visitors arrived; there was singing. It had not been the intention of Lord Cadurcis to return to the drawing-room after his rebuff by Lady Annabel; he had meditated making his peace at Monteagle House; but when the moment of his projected departure arrived, he could not resist the temptation of again seeing Venetia. He entered the room last, and some moments after his companions. Lady Annabel, who watched the general entrance, concluded he had gone, and her attention was now fully engaged. Lord Cadurcis remained at the end of the room alone, apparently abstracted, and looking far from amiable; but his eye, in reality, was watching Venetia. Suddenly

her aunt approached her, and invited the lady who was conversing with Miss Herbert to sing; Lord Cadureis immediately advanced and took her seat. Venetia was surprised that for the first time in her life with Plantagenet she felt embarrassed. She had met his look when he approached her, and had welcomed, or, at least, intended to welcome him with a smile, but she was at a loss for words; she was haunted with the recollection of her mother's behaviour to him at dinner, and she looked down on the ground, far from being at ease.

"Venetia!" said Lord Cadureis.

She started.

"We are alone," he said; "let me call you Venetia when we are alone."

She did not—she could not reply; she felt confused; she felt, indeed, the blood rise to her cheek.

"How changed is every thing!" continued Cadureis. "To think the day should ever arrive when I should have to beg your permission to call you Venetia!"

She looked up; she met his glance. It was mournful; nay, his eyes were suffused with tears. She saw at her side the gentle and melancholy Plantagenet of her childhood.

"I cannot speak; I am agitated at meeting you," she said with her native frankness. "It is so long since we have been alone; and, as you say, all is so changed."

"But are you changed, Venetia?" he said in a voice of emotion, "for all other change is nothing."

"I meet you with pleasure," she replied; "I hear of your fame with pride. You cannot suppose that it is possible I should cease to be interested in your welfare."

"Your mother does not meet me with pleasure; she hears of nothing that has occurred with pride; your mother has ceased to take an interest in my welfare; and why should you be unchanged?"

"You mistake my mother."

"No, no," replied Cadureis, shaking his head, "I have read her inmost soul to-day. Your mother hates me,—me, whom she once styled her son. She was a mother once to me, and you were my sister. If I have lost her heart, why have I not lost yours?"

"My heart, if you care for it, is unchanged," said Venetia.

"O! Venetia, whatever you may think, I never wanted the solace of a sister's love more than I do at this moment."

"I pledged my affection to you when we were children," replied Venetia; "you have done nothing to forfeit it, and it is yours still."

"When we were children," said Cadureis, musingly; when we were innocent, when we were happy. You, at least, are innocent still; are you happy, Venetia?"

"Life has brought sorrows even to me, Plantagenet."

The blood deserted his heart when she called him Plantagenet; he breathed with difficulty.

"When I last returned to Cherbury," he said, "you told me you were changed, Venetia; you revealed to me on another occasion the secret cause of your affliction. I was a boy then,—a foolish, ignorant boy. Instead of sympathising with your

heart-felt anxiety, my silly vanity was offended by feelings I should have shared, and soothed, and honoured. Ah! Venetia, well had it been for one of us that I had conducted myself more kindly, more wisely."

"Nay, Plantagenet, believe me, I remember that interview only to regret it. The recollection of it has always occasioned me great grief. We were both to blame; but we were both children then. We must pardon each other's faults."

"You will hear,—that is, if you care to listen, Venetia,—much of my conduct and opinions," continued Lord Cadureis, "that may induce you to believe me headstrong and capricious. Perhaps I am less of both in all things than the world imagines. But of this be certain, that my feelings towards you have never changed, whatever you may permit them to be; and if some of my boyish judgments have, as was but natural, undergone some transformation, be you, my sweet friend, in some degree consoled for the inconsistency, since I have at length learned duly to appreciate one of whom we then alike knew little, but whom a natural inspiration taught you, at least, justly to appreciate—I need not say I mean the illustrious father of your being."

Venetia could not restrain her tears; she endeavoured to conceal her agitated countenance behind the fan with which she was fortunately provided.

"To me a forbidden subject," said Venetia, "at least with them I could alone converse upon it, but one that my mind never deserts."

"O! Venetia," exclaimed Lord Cadureis with a sigh, "would we were both with him!"

"A wild thought," she murmured, "and one I must not dwell upon."

"We shall meet, I hope," said Lord Cadureis; "we must meet—meet often. I called upon your mother to-day, fruitlessly. You must attempt to conciliate her. Why should we be parted? We, at least, are friends, and more than friends. I cannot exist unless we meet, and meet with the frankness of old days."

"I think you mistake mamma; I think you may, indeed. Remember how lately she has met you, and after how long an interval! A little time, and she will resume her former feelings, and believe that you have never forfeited yours. Besides, we have friends, mutual friends. My aunt admires you, and here I naturally must be a great deal. And the bishop,—he still loves you; that I am sure he does; and your cousin,—mamma likes your cousin. I am sure, if you can manage only to be patient,—if you will only attempt to conciliate a little, all will be as before. Remember, too, how changed your position is," Venetia added with a smile; "you allow me to forget you are a great man, but mamma is naturally restrained by all this wonderful revolution. When she finds that you really are the Lord Cadureis whom she knew such a very little boy,—the Lord Cadureis who, without her aid, would never have been able even to write his fine poems,—O! she must love you again! How can she help it?"

Cadureis smiled. "We shall see," he said. "In the meantime do not you desert me, Venetia."

"That is impossible," she replied: "the happiest of my days have been past with you. You

remember the inscription on the jewel? I shall keep to my vows."

"That was a very good inscription as far as it went," said Cadurcis; and then, as if a little alarmed at his temerity, he changed the subject.

"Do you know," said Venetia, after a pause, "I am treating you all this time as a poet, merely in deference to public opinion. Not a line have I been permitted to read; but I am resolved to rebel, and you must arrange it all."

"Ah!" said the enraptured Cadurcis, "this is fame!"

At this moment the countess approached them, and told Venetia that her mother wished to speak to her. Lady Annabel had discovered the tete-à-tete, and resolved instantly to terminate it. Lord Cadurcis, however, who was quick as lightning, read all that was necessary in Venetia's look. Instead of instantly retiring, he remained some little time longer, talked a great deal to the countess,—who was perfectly enchanted with him,—even sauntered up to the singers, and complimented them, and did not make his bow until he had convinced at least the mistress of the mansion, if not her sister-in-law, that it was not Venetia Herbert who was his principal attraction in this agreeable society.

CHAPTER XI.

THE moment he had quitted Venetia, Lord Cadurcis returned home. He could not endure the usual routine of gaiety after her society; and his coachman, often waiting until five o'clock in the morning at Monteagle House, could scarcely assure himself of his good fortune in this exception to his accustomed trial of patience. The vis-à-vis stopped, and Lord Cadurcis bounded out with a light step and a lighter heart. His table was covered with letters. The first one that caught his eye was a missive from Lady Monteagle. Cadurcis seized it like a wild animal darting on its prey, tore it in half without opening it, and, grasping the poker, crammed it with great energy into the fire. This exploit being achieved, Cadurcis began walking up and down the room; and indeed he paced it for nearly a couple of hours in a deep reverie, and evidently under a considerable degree of excitement, for his gestures were violent, and his voice often audible. At length, about an hour after midnight, he rang for his valet, tore off his cravat, and hurled it in one corner of the apartment, called for his robe de chambre, soda water, and more lights, seated himself, and began pouring forth, faster almost than a pen could trace the words, the poem that he had been meditating ever since he had quitted the roof where he had met Venetia. She had expressed a wish to read his poems; he had resolved instantly to compose one for her solitary perusal. Thus he relieved his heart:—

I.

Within a cloister'd pile, whose Gothic towers
Rise by the margin of a sedge lake,
Embosom'd in a valley of green bowers,
And girt by many a grove, and ferny brake
Loved by the antler'd deer; a tender youth
Whom time to childhood's gentle sway of love
Still spared; yet innocent as is the dove,
Nor wounded yet by care's relentless tooth;

Stood musing: of that fair antique domain
The orphan lord! And yet no childish thought
With wayward purpose holds its transient reign
In his young mind, with deeper feelings fraught;
Then mystery all to him, and yet a dream,
That time has touched with his revealing beam.

II.

There came a maiden to that lonely boy,
And like to him as is the morn to night;
Her sunny face a very type of joy,
And with her soul's unclouded lustre bright.
Still scantier summers had her brow illum'd
Than that on which she threw a witching smile,
Unconscious of the spell that could beguile
His being of the burden it was doom'd
By his ancestral blood to bear—a spirit
Rife with desponding thoughts and fancies drear.
A moody soul that men sometimes inherit,
And worse than all the woes the world may bear,
But when he met that maiden's dazzling eye,
He bade each gloomy image baffled fly.

III.

Amid the shady woods and sunny lawns
The maiden and the youth now wander, gay
As the bright birds, and happy as the fawns,
Their sportive rivals, that around them play;
Their light hands linked in love, the golden hours
Unconscious fly, while thus their graceful roam,
And careless ever till the voice of home
Recall'd them from their sunshine and their flowers,
For then they parted: to his lonely pile
The orphan chief, for though, his bow to lull,
The maiden call'd him brother, her fond smile
Gladden'd another hearth, while his was dull.
Yet, as they parted, she reproved his sadness,
And, for her sake she gayly whisper'd gladness.

IV.

She was the daughter of a noble race,
That beautiful girl, and yet she owed her name
To one who needs no herald's skill to trace
His blazon'd lineage, for his lofty fame
Lives in the mouth of men, and distant climes
Re-echo his wide glory; where the brave
Are honour'd, where his noble deem'd to save
A prostrate nation, and for future times
Work with a high devotion, that no taunt,
Or ribald lie, or zealot's eager curse,
Or the short-sighted world's neglect can daunt,
That name is worshipp'd! His immortal verse
Blends with his godlike deeds, a double spell
To bind the coming age he loved too well!

V.

For from his ancient home, a scatterling,
They drove him forth, unconscious of their prize,
And branded as a vile unhallow'd thing,
The man who struggled only to be wise.
And even his hearth rebell'd, the duteous wife
Whose bosom well might soothe in that dark hour,
Swell'd with her gentle force the world's harsh power,
And aim'd her dart at his devoted life.
That struck; the rest his mighty soul might scorn,
But when his household gods averted stood,
'Twas the last pang that cannot well be borne
When tortured 'e'en to torpor: his heart's blood
Flow'd to the unseen blow: then forth he went,
And gloried in his ruthless banishment.

VI.

A new-born pledge of love within his home,
His alien's home, the exiled father left;
And when, like Cain, he wander'd forth to roam,
A Cain without his solace, all bereft:
Stole down his pallid cheek the scalding tear,
To think a stranger to his tender love
His child must grow, untroubled where might rove
His restless life, or taught, perchance, to fear
Her father's name, and bred in sullen hate,
Shrink from his image. Thus the gentle maid,
Who with her smiles had soothed an orphan's fate
Had felt an orphan's pang; yet undismay'd,
Though taught to deem her sire the child of shame
She clung with instinct to that reverent name!

VII.

Time flow; the boy became a man, no more
His shadow falls upon his cloister'd hall,
But to a stirring world he learn'd to pour
The passion of his being, skilled to call
From the deep caverns of his musing thought
Shadows to which they bow'd, and on their mind
To stamp the image of his own; the wind,
Though all unseen, with force or ardour fraught,

Can sway mankind, and thus a poet's voice,
Now touch'd with sweetness, now inflamed with rage,
Though breath, can make us grieve and then rejoice ;
Such is the spell of his creative page,
That blends with all our moods; and thoughts can yield
That all have felt, and yet till then were seal'd.

VIII

The lute is sounding in a chamber bright
With a high festival,—on every side,
Soft in the gleamy blaze of mellow'd light,
Fair women smile, and dancers graceful glide ;
And words still sweeter than a serenade
Are breathed with guarded voice and speaking eyes,
By joyous hearts, in spite of all their sighs ;
But bygone fantasies that ne'er can fade
Retain the pensive spirit of the youth ;
Reclined against a column he surveys
His laughing peers with a glance, in sooth,
Careless of all their mirth: for other days
Enchain him with their vision, the bright hours
Pass'd with the maiden in their sunny bowers.

IX.

Why turns this brow so pale, why starts to life
That languid eye ? What form before unseen,
With all the spells of hallow'd memory rife,
Now rises on his vision ? As the Queen
Of Beauty from her bed of sparkling foam
Sprang to the azure light ; and felt the air—
Soft as her cheek, the wavy dancers bear
To his rapt sight a mien that calls his home,
His cloister'd home, before him, with his dreams
Prophetic strangely blending. The bright muse
Of his dark childhood still divinely beans
Upon his being ; glowing with the hues
That painters love, when raptur'd pencils soar
To trace a form that nations may adore !

X.

One word alone within her thrilling ear
Breathed with hush'd voice the brother of her heart,
And that for aye is hidden. With a tear
Smiling she strove to conquer, see her start,
The bright blood rising to her quivering cheek,
And meet the glance she hasten'd once to greet,
When not a thought had he, save in her sweet
And solacing society ; to seek
Her smiles, his only life ; ah ! happy prime
Of cloudless purity, no stormy fame
His unknown sprite then stirr'd, a golden time
Worth all the restless splendour of a name.
And one soft accent from those gentle lips
Might all the plaudits of a world eclipse.

XI.

My tale is done; and if some deem it strange
My fancy thus should droop, deign then to learn
My tale is truth: imagination's range
Its bounds exact may touch not: to discern
Far stranger things than poets ever feign,
In life's perplexing annals, is the fate
Of those who act, and musing penetrate
The mystery of fortune: to whose reign
The haughtiest brow must bend: 'twas passing strange,
The youth of these fond children; strange the flush
Of his high fortunes and his spirit's change;
Strange was the maiden's tear, the maiden's blush;
Strange were his musing thoughts and trembling heart;
'Tis strange they met, and stranger if they part!

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Lady Monteagle discovered, which she did a very few hours after the mortifying event, where Lord Cadurcis had dined the day on which he had promised to be her guest, she was very indignant, but her vanity was more offended than her self-complacency. She was annoyed that Cadurcis should have compromised his exalted reputation by so publicly dangling in the train of the new beauty; still more that he should have signified in so marked a manner the impression which the fair stranger had made upon him, by instantly accepting an invitation to a house so totally unconnected with his circle, and where, had it not

been to meet this Miss Herbert, it would of course never have entered his head to be a visiter. But, on the whole, Lady Monteagle was rather irritated than jealous; and far from suspecting that there was the slightest chance of her losing her influence, such as it might be, over Lord Cadurcis, all that she felt was, that less lustre must redound to her from its possession and exercise, if it were obvious to the world that his attentions could be so easily attracted and commanded.

When Lord Cadurcis, therefore, having despatched his poem to Venetia, paid his usual visit on the next day to Monteagle House, he was received rather with sneers than reproaches, as her ladyship, with no superficial knowledge of society or of his lordship's character, was clearly of opinion that this new fancy of her admirer was to be treated rather with ridicule than indignation; and, in short, as she had discovered that Cadurcis was far from being insensible to mockery, that it was clearly a fit occasion, to use a phrase then very much in vogue, for *quizzing*.

"How d'ye do?" said her ladyship, with a very arch smile, "I really could not expect to see you!" Cadurcis looked a little confused; he detested scenes, and now he dreaded one.

"You seem quite distract," continued Lady Monteagle, after a moment's pause, which his lordship ought to have broken. "But no wonder, if the world be right."

"The world cannot be wrong," said Cadurcis, sarcastically.

"Had you a pleasant party yesterday?"

"Very."

"Lady — must have been quite charmed to have got you at last," said Lady Monteagle. "I suppose she exhibited you to all her friends, as if you were one of the savages that went to court the other day."

"She was very courteous."

"O! I can fancy her flutter! For my part, if there be one character in the world more odious than another, I think it is a fussy woman. Lady —, with Lord Cadurcis dining with her, and the new beauty for a niece, must have been in a most delectable state of bustle."

"I thought she was rather quiet," said her companion, with provoking indifference. "She seemed to me a very agreeable person."

"I suppose you mean Miss Herbert?" said Lady Monteagle.

"O! these are very moderate expressions to use in reference to a person like Miss Herbert."

"You know what they said of you two at Ranelagh?" said her ladyship.

"No," said Lord Cadurcis, somewhat changing colour, and speaking through his teeth. "Something devilish pleasant, I dare say."

"They call you Sedition and Treason," said Lady Monteagle.

"Then we are well suited," said Lord Cadurcis.

"She certainly is a most beautiful creature," said her ladyship.

"I think so," said Lord Cadurcis.

"Rather too tall, I think."

"Do you?"

"Beautiful complexion, certainly; wauts delicacy, I think."

"Do you?"

"Fine eyes? Gray, I believe. Cannot say I

admire gray eyes. Certain sign of bad temper, I believe, gray eyes."

"Are they?"

"I did not observe her hand. I dare say a little coarse. Fair people, who are tall, generally fail in the hand and arm. What sort of a hand and arm has she?"

"I did not observe any thing coarse about Miss Herbert."

"Ah! you admire her. And you have cause. No one can deny she is a fine girl, and every one must regret, that with her decidedly provincial air and want of style altogether, which might naturally be expected, considering the rustic way I understand she has been brought up, (an old house in the country, with a methodistical mother,) that she should have fallen into such hands as her aunt, Lady — is enough to spoil any girl's fortune in London."

"I thought that the — were people of the highest consideration," said Lord Cadurcis.

"Consideration!" exclaimed Lady Montegle. "If you mean that they are people of rank, and good blood, and good property, they are certainly people of consideration; but they are Goths, Vandals, Huns, Calmucks, Canadian savages! They have no fashion, no style, no ton, no influence in the world. It is impossible that a greater misfortune could have befallen your beauty than having such an aunt. Why, no man who has the slightest regard for his reputation would be seen in her company. She is a regular quizz, and you cannot imagine how everybody was laughing at you the other night."

"I am very much obliged to them," said Lord Cadurcis.

"And, upon my honour," continued Lady Montegle, "speaking merely as your friend, and not being the least jealous—Cadurcis, do not suppose that—not a twinge has crossed my mind on that score; but still I must tell you that it was most ridiculous for a man like you, to whom everybody looks up, and from whom the slightest attention is an honour, to go and fasten yourself the whole night upon a rustic simpleton, something between a wax doll and a dairy-maid, whom every fool in London was staring at; the very reason why you should not have appeared to have been even aware of her existence."

"We have all our moments of weakness, Gertrude," said Lord Cadurcis, perfectly charmed that the lady was so thoroughly unaware and unsuspecting of his long and intimate connexion with the Herberts. "I suppose it was my cursed vanity. I saw, as you say, every fool staring at her, and so I determined to show that in an instant I could engross her attention."

"Of course, I know it was only that; but you should not have gone and dined there, Cadurcis," added the lady, very seriously. "That compromised you; but, by cutting them in future in the most marked manner, you may get over it."

"You really think I may?" inquired Lord Cadurcis, with some anxiety.

"O! I have no doubt of it," said Lady Montegle.

"What it is to have a friend like you, Gertrude," said Cadurcis, "a friend who is neither a Goth, nor a Vandal, nor a Hun, nor a Calmuck, nor a Canadian savage; but a woman of fashion, style, ton, influence in the world. It is impossible that a

greater piece of good fortune could have befallen me than having you for a friend!"

"Ah! *méchant!* you may mock!" said the lady, triumphantly, for she was quite satisfied with the turn the conversation had taken; "but I am glad for your sake that you take such a sensible view of the case."

Notwithstanding, however, this sensible view of the case, after lounging an hour at Montegle House, Lord Cadurcis' carriage stopped at the door of Venetia's Gothic aunt. He was not so fortunate as to meet his heroine; but, nevertheless, he did not esteem his time entirely thrown away, and consoled himself for the disappointment by confirming the favourable impression he had already made in this establishment, and cultivating an intimacy, which he was assured must contribute many opportunities of finding himself in the society of Venetia. From this day, indeed, he was a frequent guest at her uncle's, and generally contrived also to meet her several times in the week at some great assembly; but here, both from the occasional presence of Lady Montegle, although party spirit deterred her from attending many circles where Cadurcis was now an habitual visitant, and from the crowd of admirers who surrounded the Herberts, he rarely found an opportunity for any private conversation with Venetia. His friend the bishop also, notwithstanding the prejudices of Lady Annabel, received him always with cordiality, and he met the Herberts more than once at his mansion. At the opera and in the Park also he hovered about them, in spite of the sarcasms or reproaches of Lady Montegle; for the reader is not to suppose that that lady continued to take the same self-complacent view of Lord Cadurcis' acquaintance with the Herberts which she originally adopted, and at first flattered herself was the just one. His admiration of Miss Herbert had become the topic of general conversation; it could no longer be concealed or disguised. But Lady Montegle was convinced that Cadurcis was not a marrying man, and persuaded herself that this was a fancy which must evaporate. Moreover, Montegle House still continued his spot of most constant resort; for his opportunities of being with Venetia were, with all his exertions, very limited, and he had no other resource which pleased him so much as the conversation and circle of the bright goddess of his party. After some fiery scenes therefore with the divinity, which only led to his prolonged absence, for the profound and fervent genius of Cadurcis revolted from the base sentiment and mock emotions of society, the lady reconciled herself to her lot, still believing herself the most envied woman in London, and often ashamed of being jealous of a country girl.

The general result of the fortnight which elapsed since Cadurcis renewed his acquaintance with his Cherbury friends, was, that he had become convinced of his inability of propitiating Lady Annabel, was devotedly attached to Venetia, though he had seldom an opportunity of intimating feelings, which the cordial manner in which she ever conducted herself to him gave him no reason to conclude desperate; at the same time that he had contrived that a day should seldom elapse, which did not, under some circumstances, however unfavourable, bring them together, while her intimate friends and the circles in which she passed most of her life always witnessed his presence with favour.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE must, however, endeavour to be more intimately acquainted with the heart and mind of Venetia in her present situation, so strongly contrasting with the serene simplicity of her former life, than the limited and constrained opportunities of conversing with the companion of his childhood enjoyed by Lord Cadureis could possibly enable him to become. Let us recur to her on the night when she returned home, after having met with Plantagenet at her uncle's, and having pursued a conversation with him, so unexpected, so strange, and so affecting! She had been very silent in the carriage, and retired to her room immediately. She retired to ponder. The voice of Cadureis lingered in her ear; his tearful eye still caught her vision. She leaned her head upon her hand, and sighed! Why did she sigh? What at this instant was her uppermost thought? Her mother's dislike of Cadureis. "Your mother hates me." These had been his words; these were the words she repeated to herself, and on whose fearful sounds she dwelt. "Your mother hates me." If by some means she had learned a month ago at Weymouth, that her mother hated Cadureis, that his general conduct had been such as to excite Lady Annabel's odium, Venetia might have for a moment been shocked that her old companion, in whom she had once been so interested, had by his irregular behaviour incurred the dislike of her mother, by whom he had once been so loved. But it would have been a very transient emotion. She might have mused over past feelings and past hopes in a solitary ramble on the sea-shore; she might even have shed a tear over the misfortunes or infelicity of one who had once been to her a brother; but, perhaps, nay probably, on the morrow the remembrance of Plantagenet would scarcely have occurred to her. Long years had elapsed since their ancient fondness; a very considerable interval since even his name had met her ear. She had heard nothing of him that could for a moment arrest her notice or command her attention.

But now the irresistible impression that her mother disliked this very individual filled her with intolerable grief. What occasioned this change in her feelings, this extraordinary difference in her emotions? There was, apparently, but one cause. She had met Cadureis. Could then a glance, could even the tender intonations of that unrivalled voice, and the dark passion of that speaking eye, work in an instant such marvels? Could they revive the past so vividly, that Plantagenet in a moment resumed his ancient place in her affections. No, it was not that: it was less the tenderness of the past that made Venetia mourn her mother's sternness to Cadureis, than the feelings of the future. For now she felt that her mother's heart was not more changed towards this personage than was her own. In truth, she loved him, and no longer as a brother.

It seemed to Venetia that even before they met, from the very moment that his name had so strangely caught her eye in the volume on the first evening she had visited her relations, that her spirit suddenly turned to him. She had never heard that name mentioned since without a fluttering of the heart which she could not repress, and an emotion she could ill conceal. She loved to hear others talk of him, and yet scarcely dared speak of him

herself. She recalled her emotion at unexpectedly seeing his portrait when with her aunt, and her mortification when her mother deprived her of the poem which she sighed to read. Day after day something seemed to have occurred to fix her brooding thoughts with fonder earnestness on his image. At length they met. Her emotion when she first recognised him at Ranelagh and felt him approaching her, was one of those tumults of the heart that form almost a crisis in our sensations. With what difficulty had she maintained herself! Doubtful whether he would even formally acknowledge her presence, her vision as if by fascination had nevertheless met his, and grew dizzy as he passed. In the interval that had elapsed between his first passing and then joining her, what a chaos was her mind! What a wild blending of all the scenes and incidents of her life! What random answers had she made to those with whom she had been before conversing with ease and animation! And then, when she unexpectedly found Cadureis at her side, and listened to the sound of that familiar voice, familiar and yet changed, expressing so much tenderness in its tones, and in its words such deference and delicate respect—existence felt to her that moment affluent with a blissful excitement of which she had never dreamed!

Her life was a revery until they met again, in which she only mused over his fame, and the strange relations of their careers. She had watched the conduct of her mother to him at dinner with poignant sorrow; she scarcely believed that she should have an opportunity of expressing to him her sympathy. And then what had followed? A conversation, every word of which had touched her heart, a conversation that would have entirely controlled her feelings even if he had not already subjected them. The tone in which he so suddenly had pronounced "Venetia," was the sweetest music to which she had ever listened. His allusion to her father had drawn tears, which could not be restrained even in a crowded saloon. Now she wept plentifully. It was so generous, so noble, so kind, so affectionate! Dear, dear Cadureis, is it wonderful that you should be loved!

Then falling into a revery of sweet and unbroken stillness, with her eyes fixed in abstraction on the fire, Venetia reviewed her life from the moment she had known Plantagenet. Not an incident that had ever occurred to them that did not rise obedient to her magical bidding. She loved to dwell upon the time when she was the consolation of his sorrows, and when Cherbury was to him a pleasant refuge! O! she felt sure her mother must remember those fond days, and love him as she once did! She pictured to herself the little Plantagenet of her childhood, so serious and so pensive when alone or with others, yet with her at times so gay, and wild, and sarcastic: forebodings of all that deep and brilliant spirit, which had since stirred up the heart of a great nation, and dazzled the fancy of an admiring world. The change too in their mutual lots was also, to a degree, not free from that sympathy that had ever bound them together. A train of strange accidents had brought Venetia from her spell-bound seclusion, placed her suddenly in the most brilliant circle of civilization, and classed her among not the least admired of its favoured members. And whom had she come to meet? Whom did she find in this new and splendid life the most courted and considered of its community; crowned as it were with

garlands, and perfumed with the incense of a thousand altars! Her own Plantagenet. It was passing strange.

The morrow brought the verses from Cadureis. They greatly affected her. The picture of their childhood, and of the singular sympathy of their mutual situations, and the description of her father, ralled forth her tears; she murmured, however, at the allusion to her other parent. It was not just, it could not be true. These verses were not, of course, shown to Lady Annabel. Would they have been shown, even if they had not contained the allusion? The question is not perplexing. Venetia had her secret, and a far deeper one than the mere reception of a poem; all confidence between her and her mother had expired. Love had stepped in, and before his magic touch, the discipline of a life expired in an instant.

Such is a slight sketch of the state and progress of Venetia's feelings; and from this, however weak, the reader may form an idea of the mood in which, during the fortnight before alluded to, she was in the habit of meeting Lord Cadureis. During this period not the slightest conversation respecting him had occurred between her mother and herself. Lady Annabel never mentioned him, and her brow clouded when his name, as was often the case, was introduced. At the end of this fortnight, it happened that her aunt and mother were out together in the carriage, and had left her in the course of the morning at her uncle's house. During this interval, Lord Cadureis called, and having ascertained, through a garrulous servant, that, though his mistress was out, Miss Herbert was in the drawing-room, he immediately took the opportunity of being introduced. Venetia was not a little surprised at his appearance, and, conscious of her mother's feelings upon the subject, for a moment a little agitated, yet, it must be confessed, as much pleased. She seized this occasion of speaking to him about his verses, for hitherto she had only been able to acknowledge the receipt of them by a word. While she expressed without affectation the emotions they had occasioned her, she complained of his injustice to her mother: this was the cause of an interesting conversation of which her father was the subject, and for which she had long sighed. With what deep, unbroken attention she listened to her companion's enthusiastic delineation of his character and career! What multiplied questions did she not ask him, and how eagerly, how amply, how affectionately he satisfied her just and natural curiosity! Hours flew away while they indulged in this rare communion.

"O! that I could see him!" sighed Venetia.

"You will," replied Plantagenet, "your destiny requires it. You will see him as surely as you beheld that portrait that it was the labour of a life to prevent you beholding."

Venetia shook her head; "And yet," she added musingly, "my mother loves him."

"Her life proves it," said Cadureis, bitterly.

"I think it does," replied Venetia, sincerely.

"I pretend not to understand her heart," he answered, "it is an enigma that I cannot solve. I ought not to believe that she is without one; but, at any rate, her pride is deeper than her love."

"They were ill-suited," said Venetia, mournfully; "and yet it is one of my dreams that they may yet meet."

"Ah! Venetia," he exclaimed in a voice of great

softness, "they had not known each other from their childhood, like us. They met, and they parted, alike in haste."

Venetia made no reply; her eyes were fixed in abstraction on a hand-screen, which she was unconsciously that she held.

"Tell me," said Cadureis, drawing his chair close to hers; "tell me, Venetia, if—"

At this moment a thundering knock at the door announced the return of the countess and her sister-in-law. Cadureis rose from his seat, but his chair, which still remained close to that on which Venetia was sitting, did not escape the quick glance of her mortified mother. The countess welcomed Cadureis with extreme cordiality; Lady Annabel only returned his very courteous bow.

"Stop and dine with us, my dear lord," said the countess. "We are only ourselves, and Lady Annabel and Venetia."

"I thank you, Clara," said Lady Annabel, "but we cannot stop to-day."

"O!" exclaimed her sister. "It will be such a disappointment to Philip. Indeed you must stay," she added, in a coaxing tone. "We shall be such an agreeable little party, with Lord Cadureis."

"I cannot, indeed, my dear Clara," replied Lady Annabel; "not to-day, indeed not to-day. Come, Venetia, we must be going."

CHAPTER XIV.

LADY ANNABEL was particularly kind to Venetia on their return to their hotel, otherwise her daughter might have fancied that she had offended her, for she was very silent. Venetia did not doubt that the presence of Lord Cadureis was the reason that her mother would not remain and dine at her uncle's. This conviction grieved Venetia, but she did not repine; she indulged the fond hope that time would remove the strong prejudice which Lady Annabel now so singularly entertained against one in whose welfare she was originally so deeply interested. During their simple and short repast Venetia was occupied in a reverie, in which, it must be owned, Cadureis greatly figured, and answered the occasional though very kind remarks of her mother with an absent air.

After dinner, Lady Annabel drew her chair towards the fire—for, although May, the weather was chill—and said, "A quiet evening at home, Venetia, will be a relief after all this gayety." Venetia assented to her mother's observation, and nearly a quarter of an hour elapsed without another word being spoken. Venetia had taken up a book, and Lady Annabel was apparently lost in her reflections. At length she said, somewhat abruptly, "It is more than three years, I think, since Lord Cadureis left Cherbury?"

"Yes; it is more than three years," replied Venetia.

"He quitted us suddenly."

"Very suddenly," agreed Venetia.

"I never asked you whether you knew the cause, Venetia," continued her mother, "but I always concluded that you did. I suppose I was not in error?"

'This was not a very agreeable inquiry. Venetia did not reply to it with her previous readiness and indifference. That, indeed, was impossible,

but, with her accustomed frankness, after a moment's hesitation, she answered, "Lord Cadurcis never specifically stated the cause to me, mamma. Indeed I was myself surprised at his departure, but some conversation had occurred between us on the very morning he quitted Cadureis, which, on reflection, I could not doubt occasioned that departure."

"Lord Cadurcis preferred his suit to you, Venetia, and you rejected him?" said Lady Annabel.

"It is as you believe," replied Venetia, not a little agitated.

"You did wisely, my child, and I was a fool ever to have regretted your conduct."

"Why should you think so, dearest mamma?"

"Whatever may have been the cause that impelled your conduct then," said Lady Annabel, "I shall ever esteem your decision as a signal interposition of Providence in your favour. Except his extreme youth, there was apparently no reason which should not have induced you to adopt a very different decision. I tremble when I think what might have been the consequences."

"Tremble! dearest mother?"

"Tremble, Venetia. My only thought in this life is the happiness of my child. It was in peril."

"Nay, I trust not that, mamma: you are prejudiced against Plantagenet. It makes me very unhappy, and him also."

"He is again your suitor?" said Lady Annabel, with a scrutinizing glance.

"Indeed he is not."

"He will be," said Lady Annabel. "Prepare yourself. Tell me, then, are your feelings the same towards him as when he last quitted us?"

"Feelings, mamma!" said Venetia, echoing her mother's words; for, indeed, the question was one very difficult to answer, "I ever loved Plantagenet; I love him still."

"But do you love him now as then? Then you looked upon him as a brother. He has no soul now for sisterly affections. I beseech you tell me, my child—me, your mother, your friend, your best, your only friend—tell me, have you for a moment repented that you ever refused to extend to him any other affection?"

"I have not thought of the subject, mamma; I have not wished to think of the subject; I have had no occasion to think of it. Lord Cadurcis is not my suitor now."

"Venetia!" said Lady Annabel, "I cannot doubt you love me."

"Dearest mother!" exclaimed Venetia, in a tone of mingled fondness and reproach, and she rose from her seat and embraced Lady Annabel.

"My happiness is an object to you, Venetia?" continued Lady Annabel.

"Mother, mother," said Venetia, in a deprecatory tone. "Do not ask such cruel questions! Whom should I love but you, the best, the dearest mother that ever existed! And what object can I have in life that for a moment can be placed in competition with your happiness?"

"Then, Venetia, I tell you," said Lady Annabel, in a solemn, yet excited voice, "that that happiness is gone forever, nay, my very life will be the forfeit, if I ever live to see you the bride of Lord Cadurcis."

"I have no thought of being the bride of any one," said Venetia. "I am happy with you. I wish never to leave you."

"My child, the fulfilment of such a wish is not

in the nature of things," replied Lady Annabel. "The day will come when we must part; I am prepared for the event,—nay, I look forward to it not only with resignation, but delight, when I think it may increase your happiness; but were that step to destroy it—O! then, then I could live no more. I can endure my own sorrows, I can struggle with my own bitter lot, I have some sources of consolation which enable me to endure my own misery without repining, but yours, yours, Venetia, I could not bear. No! if once I were to behold you lingering in life as your mother, with blighted hopes and with a heart broken, if hearts can break, I should not survive the spectacle; I know myself, Venetia, I could not survive it."

"But why anticipate such misery? Why indulge in such gloomy forebodings! Am I not happy now? Do you not love me?"

Venetia had drawn her chair close to that of her mother; she sat by her side and held her hand.

"Venetia," said Lady Annabel, after a pause of some minutes, and in a low voice, "I must speak to you on a subject on which we have never conversed. I must speak to you," and here Lady Annabel's voice dropped lower and lower, but still its tones were very distinct, although she expressed herself with evident effort—"I must speak to you about—your father."

Venetia uttered a faint cry, she clenched her mother's hand with a convulsive grasp, and sank upon her bosom. She struggled to maintain herself, but the first sound of that name from her mother's lips, and all the long-suppressed emotions that it conjured up, overpowered her. The blood seemed to desert her heart, still she did not faint; she clung to Lady Annabel, pallid and shivering.

Her mother tenderly embraced her, she whispered to her words of great affection. She attempted to comfort and console her. Venetia murmured. "This is very foolish of me, mother; but speak, O! speak of what I have so long desired to hear."

"Not now, Venetia!"

"Now, mother! yes, now! I am quite composed. I could not bear the postponement of what you are about to say. I could not sleep, dear mother, if you did not speak to me. It was only for a moment I was overcome. See! I am quite composed." And indeed she spoke in a calm and steady voice, but her pale and suffering countenance expressed the painful struggle which it cost her to command herself.

"Venetia," said Lady Annabel, "it has been one of the objects of my life, that you should not share my sorrows."

Venetia pressed her mother's hand, but made no other reply.

"I concealed from you for years," continued Lady Annabel, "a circumstance in which, indeed, you were deeply interested, but the knowledge of which could only bring you unhappiness. Yet it was destined that my solicitude should eventually be baffled. I know that it is not from my lips that you learn for the first time that you have a father—a father living."

"Mother, let me tell you all!" said Venetia eagerly.

"I know all," said Lady Annabel.

"But, mother, there is something that you do not know; and now I would confess it."

"There is nothing that you can confess with

which I am not acquainted, Venetia; and I feel assured, I have ever felt assured, that your only reason for concealment was a desire to save me pain."

"That, indeed, has ever been my only motive," replied Venetia, "for having a secret from my mother."

"In my absence from Cherbury, you entered the chamber," said Lady Annabel, very calmly. "In the delirium of your fever, I became acquainted with a circumstance which so nearly proved fatal to you."

Venetia's cheek turned scarlet.

"In that chamber you beheld the portrait of your father," continued Lady Annabel. "From our friend you learned that father was still living. That is all?" said Lady Annabel, inquiringly.

"No, not all, dear mother; not all. Lord Cadurcis reproached me at Cherbury with—with—with having such a father," she added, in a hesitating voice. "It was then I learned his misfortunes, mother; his misery."

"I thought that misfortunes, that misery, were the lot of your other parent," replied Lady Annabel, somewhat coldly.

"Not with my love," said Venetia, eagerly; "not with my love, mother. You have forgotten your misery in my love. Say so, say so, dearest mother." And Venetia threw herself on her knees before Lady Annabel, and looked up with earnestness in her face.

The expression of that countenance had been for a moment stern, but it relaxed into fondness, as Lady Annabel gently bowed her head, and pressed her lips to her daughter's forehead. "Ah! Venetia," she said, "all depends upon you. I can endure, nay, I can forget the past, if my child be faithful to me. There are no misfortunes, there is no misery, if the being to whom I have consecrated the devotion of my life will only be dutiful, will only be guided by my advice, will only profit by my sad experience."

"Mother, I repeat I have no thought but for you," said Venetia. "My own dearest mother, if my duty, if my devotion can content you, you shall be happy. But wherein have I failed?"

"In nothing, love. Your life has hitherto been one unbroken course of affectionate obedience."

"And ever shall be," said Venetia. "But you were speaking, mother, you were speaking of—of my—my father!"

"Of him!" said Lady Annabel, thoughtfully. "You have seen his picture?"

Venetia kissed her mother's hand.

"Was he less beautiful than Cadurcis? Was he less gifted?" exclaimed Lady Annabel, with animation. "He could whisper in tones as sweet, and pour out his vows as fervently. Yet what am I!"

"O my child," continued Lady Annabel, "beware of such beings! They bear within them a spirit on which all the devotion of our sex is lavished in vain. A year—no! not a year, not one short year!—and all my hopes were blighted! O! Venetia, if your future should be like my bitter past!—and it might have been, and I might have contributed to the fulfilment!—can you wonder that I should look upon Cadurcis with aversion?"

"But, mother, dearest mother, we have known Plantagenet from his childhood! You ever loved him; you ever gave him credit for a heart—most tender and affectionate."

"He has no heart."

"Mother!"

"He cannot have a heart. Spirits like him are heartless. It is another impulse that sways their existence. It is imagination; it is vanity; it is self, disguised with glittering qualities that dazzle our weak senses, but selfishness, the most entire, the most concentrated. We knew him as a child,—ah! what can women know! We are born to love, and to be deceived. We saw him young, helpless, and abandoned; he moved our pity. We knew not his nature; then he was ignorant of it himself. But the young tiger, though cradled at our hearths and fed on milk, will in good time retire to its jungle and prey on blood. You cannot change its nature; and the very hand that fostered it will be its first victim."

"How often have we parted!" said Venetia, in a deprecating tone; "how long have we been separated! and yet we find him ever the same; he loves you now, the same as in old days. If you had seen him, as I have seen him, weep when he recalled your promise to be a parent to him, and then contrasted with such sweet hopes your present reserve, O! you would believe he had a heart, you would, indeed!"

"Weep!" exclaimed Lady Annabel, bitterly, "ay! they can weep. Sensibility is a luxury which they love to indulge. Their very susceptibility is our bane. They can weep; they can play upon our feelings; and our emotion, so easily excited, is an homage to their own power, in which they glory."

"Look at Cadurcis," she suddenly resumed, "bred with so much care; the soundest principles instilled into him with such sedulousness; imbibing them apparently with so much intelligence, ardour, and sincerity, with all that fervour, indeed, with which men of his temperament for the moment pursue every object; but a few years back, pious, dutiful, and moral, viewing perhaps with intolerance too youthful all that differed from the opinions and the conduct he had been educated to admire and follow. And what is he now? The most lawless of the wild; casting to the winds every salutary principle of restraint and social discipline, and glorying only in the abandoned energy of self. Three years ago, you yourself confess to me, he reproached you with your father's conduct; now he emulates it. There is a career which such men must run, and from which no influence can divert them; it is in their blood. To-day Cadurcis may vow to you eternal devotion; but, if the world speaks truth, Venetia, a month ago he was equally enamoured of another—and one, too, who cannot be his. But grant that his sentiments towards you are for the moment sincere; his imagination broods upon your idea, it transfigures it with a halo which exists only to his vision. Yield to him; become his bride; and you will have the mortification of finding, that before six months have elapsed, his restless spirit is already occupied with objects which may excite your mortification, your disgust, even your horror!"

"Ah! mother, it is not with Plantagenet as with my father; Plantagenet could not forget Cherbury, he could not forget our childhood," said Venetia.

"On the contrary, while you lived together these recollections would be wearisome, commonplace to him; when you had separated, indeed, mellowed by distance, and the comparative vagueness with

which your absence would invest them, they would become the objects of his muse, and he would insult you by making the public the confidant of all your most delicate domestic feelings."

Lady Annabel rose from her seat, and walked up and down the room, speaking with an excitement very unusual with her. "To have all the soft secrets of your life revealed to the coarse wonder of the gloating multitude; to find yourself the object of the world's curiosity—still worse, their pity, their sympathy; to have the sacred conduct of your hearth canvassed in every circle, and be the grand subject of the pros and cons of every paltry journal,—ah! Venetia, you know not, you cannot understand, it is impossible you can comprehend, the bitterness of such a lot."

"My beloved mother!" said Venetia, with streaming eyes, "you cannot have a feeling that I do not share."

"Venetia, you know not what I had to endure!" exclaimed Lady Annabel, in a tone of extreme bitterness. "There is no degree of wretchedness that you can conceive equal to what has been the life of your mother. And what has sustained me—what, throughout all my tumultuous troubles, has been the star on which I have ever gazed?—My child! And am I to lose her now, after all my sufferings, all my hopes that she at least might be spared my miserable doom! Am I to witness her also a victim!" Lady Annabel clasped her hands in passionate grief.

"Mother! mother!" exclaimed Venetia, in agony, "spare yourself, spare me!"

"Venetia, you know how I have doted upon you; you know how I have watched and tended you from your infancy. Have I had a thought, a wish, a hope, a plan!—has there been the slightest action of my life, of which you have not been the object? All mothers feel, but none ever felt like me: you were my solitary joy."

Venetia leaned her face upon the table at which she was sitting, and sobbed aloud.

"My love was baffled," Lady Annabel continued. "I fled, for both our sakes, from the world in which my family were honoured;—I sacrificed without a sigh, in the very prime of my youth, every pursuit which interests woman; but I had my child! I had my child!"

"And you have her still!" exclaimed the miserable Venetia. "Mother, you have her still!"

"I have schooled my mind," continued Lady Annabel, still pacing the room with agitated steps; "I have disciplined my emotions; I have felt at my heart the constant, the undying pang, and yet I have smiled, that you might be happy. But I can struggle against my fate no longer. No longer can I suffer my unparalleled,—yes, my unjust doom. What have I done to merit these afflictions?—Now, then, let me struggle no more; let me die!"

Venetia tried to rise; her limbs refused their office; she tottered; she fell again into her seat with an hysterical cry.

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed Lady Annabel, "to a mother, a child is every thing; but to a child, a parent is only a link in the chain of her existence. It was weakness, it was folly, it was madness to stake every thing on a source which must fail me. I feel it now, but I feel it too late."

Venetia held forth her arms; she could not speak; she was stifled with her emotion.

"But was it wonderful that I was so weak?"

continued her mother, as it were communing only with herself. "What child was like mine? O! the joy, the bliss, the hours of rapture that I have passed, in gazing upon my treasure, and dreaming of all her beauty and her rare qualities! I was so happy!—I was so proud! Ah! Venetia, you know not how I have loved you!"

Venetia sprang from her seat; she rushed forward with convulsive energy; she clung to her mother, threw her arms round her neck, and buried her passionate wo in Lady Annabel's bosom.

Lady Annabel stood for some minutes supporting her speechless and agitated child; then, as her sobs became fainter, and the tumult of her grief gradually died away, she bore her to the sofa, and seated herself by her side, holding Venetia's hand in her own, and ever and anon soothing her with soft embraces, and still softer words.

At length, in a faint voice, Venetia said, "Mother, what can I do to restore the past? How can we be to each other as we were, for this I cannot bear?"

"Love me, my Venetia, as I love you; be faithful to your mother; do not disregard her counsel; profit by her errors."

"I will in all things obey you," said Venetia, in a low voice; "there is no sacrifice I am not prepared to make for your happiness."

"Let us not talk of sacrifices, my darling child; it is not a sacrifice that I require. I wish only to prevent your everlasting misery."

"What, then, shall I do?"

"Make me only one promise; whatever pledge you give I feel assured that no influence, Venetia, will ever induce you to forfeit it."

"Name it, mother."

"Promise me never to marry Lord Cadurcis," said Lady Annabel, in a whisper, but a whisper of which not a word was lost by the person to whom it was addressed.

"I promise never to marry, but with your approbation," said Venetia, in a solemn voice, and uttering the words with great distinctness.

The countenance of Lady Annabel instantly brightened; she embraced her child with extreme fondness, and breathed the softest and the sweetest expressions of gratitude and love.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN Lady Monteagle discovered that of which her good-natured friends took care she should not long remain ignorant,—that Venetia Herbert had been the companion of Lord Cadurcis' childhood, and that the most intimate relations had once subsisted between the two families,—she became the prey of the most violent jealousy; and the bitterness of her feelings was not a little increased, when she felt that she had not only been abandoned, but duped; and that the new beauty, out of his fancy for whom she had flattered herself she had so triumphantly rallied him, was an old friend, whom he had always admired. She seized the first occasion, after this discovery, of relieving her feelings, by a scene so violent, that Cadurcis had never again entered Monteagle House; and then repenting of this mortifying result, which she had herself precipitated, she overwhelmed him with letters,

which, next to scenes, were the very things which Lord Cadureis most heartily abhorred. These,—now indignant, now passionate, now loading him with reproaches, now appealing to his love, and now to his pity,—daily arrived at his residence, and were greeted at first only with short and sarcastic replies, and finally by silence. Then the lady solicited a final interview, and Lord Cadureis having made an appointment to quiet her, went out of town the day before to Richmond, to a villa belonging to Venetia's uncle, and where, among other guests, he was of course to meet Lady Annabel and her daughter.

The party was a most agreeable one, and assumed an additional interest with Cadureis, who had resolved to seize this favourable opportunity to bring his aspirations to Venetia to a crisis. The day after the last conversation with her, which we have noticed, he had indeed boldly called upon the Herberts at their hotel for that purpose, but without success, as they were again absent from home. He had been since almost daily in the society of Venetia; but London, to a lover who is not smiled upon by the domestic circle of his mistress, is a very unfavourable spot for confidential conversations. A villa life, with its easy, unembarrassed habits, its gardens and lounging walks, to say nothing of the increased opportunities resulting from being together at all hours, and living under the same roof, was more promising; and here he flattered himself he might defy even the Argus eye and ceaseless vigilance of his intended mother-in-law, his enemy, whom he could not propitiate, and whom he now fairly hated.

His cousin George, too, was a guest, and his cousin George was the confidant of his love. Upon this kind relation devolved the duty—far from a disagreeable one—of amusing the mother; and as Lady Annabel, though she relaxed not a jot of the grim courtesy which she ever extended to Lord Cadureis, was no longer seriously uneasy as to his influence after the promise she had extracted from her daughter, it would seem that circumstances combined to prevent Lord Cadureis from being disappointed at least in the first object which he wished to obtain—an opportunity.

And yet several days elapsed before this offered itself,—passed by Cadureis, however, very pleasantly in the presence of the being he loved, and very judiciously too, for no one could possibly be more amiable and ingratiating than our friend. Every one present, except Lady Annabel, appeared to entertain for him as much affection as admiration: those who had only met him in throngs were quite surprised how their superficial observation and the delusive reports of the world had misled them. As for his hostess, whom it had ever been his study to please, he had long won her heart; and, as she could not be blind to his projects and pretensions, she heartily wished him success, assisted him with all her efforts, and desired nothing more sincerely than that her niece should achieve such a conquest, and she obtain so distinguished a nephew.

Notwithstanding her promise to her mother, Venetia felt justified in making no alteration in her conduct to one whom she still sincerely loved; and, under the immediate influence of his fascination, it was often, when she was alone, that she mourned with a sorrowing heart over the opinion which her

mother entertained of him. Could it indeed be possible that Plantagenet,—the same Plantagenet she had known so early and so long, to her invariably so tender and so devoted,—could entail on her, by their union, such unspeakable and inevitable misery? Whatever might be the view adopted by her mother of her conduct, Venetia felt every hour more keenly that it was a sacrifice, and the greatest; and she still indulged in a vague yet delicious dream, that Lady Annabel might ultimately withdraw the harsh and perhaps heart-breaking interdiction she had so rigidly decreed.

"Cadureis," said his cousin to him one morning, "we are all going to Hampton Court. Now is your time; Lady Annabel, the Vernons, and myself, will fill one carriage; I have arranged that. Look out, and something may be done. Speak to the countess."

Accordingly Lord Cadureis hastened to make a suggestion to a friend always flattered by his notice. "My dear friend," he said, in his softest tone, "let you, Venetia, and myself, manage to be together; it will be so delightful; we shall quite enjoy ourselves."

The countess did not require this animating compliment to effect the object which Cadureis did not express. She had gradually fallen into the unacknowledged conspiracy against her sister-in-law, whose prejudice against her friend she had long discovered, and had now ceased to combat. Two carriages, and one filled as George had arranged, accordingly drove gayly away; and Venetia, and her aunt, and Lord Cadureis, were to follow them on horseback. They rode with delight through the splendid avenues of Bushey, and Cadureis was never in a lighter or happier mood.

The month of May was in its decline, and the cloudless sky, and the balmy air such as suited so agreeable a season. The London season was approaching its close; for the royal birthday was, at the period of our history, generally the signal of preparation for country quarters. The carriages arrived long before the riding party, for they had walked their steeds, and they found a messenger who requested them to join their friends in the apartments which they were visiting.

"For my part," said Cadureis, "I love the sun that rarely shines in this land. I feel no inclination to lose the golden hours in these gloomy rooms. What say you, ladies fair, to a stroll in the gardens? It will be doubly charming after our ride."

His companions cheerfully assented, and they walked away, congratulating themselves on their escape from the wearisome amusement of palace-hunting, straining their eyes to see pictures hung at a gigantic height, and solemnly wandering through formal apartments full of state beds, and massy cabinets, and modern armour.

Taking their way along the terrace, they struck at length into a less formal path. At length the countess seated herself on a bench. "I must rest," she said, "but you young people may roam about; only do not lose me."

"Come, Venetia!" said Lord Cadureis.

Venetia was hesitating; she did not like to leave her aunt alone, but the countess encouraged her. "If you will not go, you will only make me continue walking," she said. So Venetia proceeded, and for the first time since her visit was alone with Plantagenet.

"I quite love your aunt," said Lord Cadurcis.

"It is difficult indeed not to love her," said Venetia.

"Ah! Venetia, I wish your mother was like your aunt," he continued. It was an observation which was not heard without some emotion by his companion, though it was imperceptible. "Venetia," said Cadurcis, "when I recollect old days, how strange it seems that we now never should be alone, but by some mere accident, like this, for instance."

"It is of no use thinking of old days," said Venetia.

"No use!" said Cadurcis. "I do not like to hear you say that, Venetia. Those are some of the least agreeable words that were ever uttered by that mouth. I cling to old days; they are my only joy and my only hope."

"They are gone," said Venetia.

"But may they not return?" said Cadurcis.

"Never," said Venetia, mournfully.

They had walked on to a marble fountain of gigantic proportions and elaborate workmanship, an assemblage of divinities and genii, all spouting water in fantastic attitudes.

"Old days," said Plantagenet, "are like the old fountain at Cadurcis, dearer to me than all this modern splendour."

"The old fountain at Cadurcis," said Venetia, musingly, and gazing on the water with an abstracted air, "I loved it well!"

"Venetia," said her companion, in a tone of extreme tenderness, yet not untouched with melancholy, "dear Venetia, let us return, and return together, to that old fountain and those old days!"

Venetia shook her head. "Ah! Plantagenet," she exclaimed, in a mournful voice, "we must not speak of these things."

"Why not, Venetia?" exclaimed Lord Cadurcis, eagerly. "Why should we be estranged from each other? I love you; I love only you; never have I loved another. And you—have you forgotten all our youthful affection? You cannot, Venetia. Our childhood can never be a blank."

"I told you, when first we met, my heart was unchanged," said Venetia, in a very serious tone.

"Remember the vows I made to you, when last at Cherbury," said Cadurcis. "Years have flown on, Venetia; but they find me urging the same. At any rate, now I know myself; at any rate I am not now an obscure boy; yet what is manhood, and what is fame, without the charm of my infancy and my youth. Yes, Venetia, you must—you will be mine?"

"Plantagenet," she replied, in a solemn tone, "yours I never can be."

"You do not, then, love me?" said Cadurcis, reproachfully, and in a voice of great feeling.

"It is impossible for you to be loved more than I love you," said Venetia.

"My own Venetia!" said Cadurcis; "Venetia that I dote on! what does this mean? Why, then, will you not be mine?"

"I cannot; there is an obstacle—an insuperable obstacle."

"Tell it me," said Cadurcis, eagerly; "I will overcome it."

"I have promised never to marry without the approbation of my mother; her approbation you never can obtain."

Cadurcis' countenance fell; this was an obstacle which he felt that even he could not overcome.

"I told you your mother hated me, Venetia." And then, as she did not reply, he continued, "You confess it, I see you confess it. Once you flattered me I was mistaken; but now, now you confess it."

"Hatred is a word which I cannot understand," replied Venetia. "My mother has reasons for disapproving my union with you; not founded on the circumstances of your life, and therefore removable—for I know what the world says, Plantagenet, of you—but I have confidence in your love, and that is nothing but founded on your character, on your nature; they may be unjust, but they are insuperable, and I must yield to them."

"You have another parent, Venetia," said Cadurcis, in a tone of almost irresistible softness, "the best and greatest of men! Once you told me that his sanction was necessary to your marriage. I will obtain it. O! Venetia, be mine, and we will join him; join that ill-fated and illustrious being, who loves you with a passion second only to mine; him, who has addressed you in language which rests on every lip and has thrilled many a heart that you even can never know. My adored Venetia, picture to yourself, for one moment, a life with him; resting on my bosom, consecrated by his paternal love! Let us quit this mean and miserable existence, which we now pursue, which never could have suited us; let us shun forever this dull and degrading life, that is not life, if life be what I deem it; let us fly to those beautiful solitudes, where he communes with an inspiring nature; let us—let us be happy!"

He uttered these last words in a tone of melting tenderness; he leaned forward his head, and his gaze caught hers which was fixed upon the water. Her hand was pressed suddenly in his; his eye glittered, his lip seemed still speaking; he awaited his doom.

The countenance of Venetia was quite pale, but it was disturbed. You might see as it were the shadowy progress of thought, and mark the tumultuous passage of conflicting passions. Her mind for a moment was indeed a chaos. There was a terrible conflict between love and duty. At length a tear, one solitary tear, burst from her burning eyeball, and stole slowly down her cheek; it relieved her pain. She pressed Cadurcis' hand, and speaking in a hollow voice, and with a look vague and painful, she said, "I am a victim, but I am resolved. I never will desert her who devoted herself to me."

Cadurcis quitted her hand rather abruptly, and began walking up and down on the turf that surrounded the fountain.

"Devoted herself to you!" he exclaimed, with a fiendish laugh, and speaking, as was his custom, between his teeth, "Commend me to such devotion. Not content with depriving you of a father, now forsooth she must bereave you of a lover too! And this is a mother, a devoted mother! The cold-blooded, sullen, selfish, inexorable tyrant!"

"Plantagenet!" exclaimed Venetia, with great animation.

"Nay, I will speak. Victim indeed! You have ever been her slave. She a devoted mother! Ay! as devoted as a mother as she was dutiful as a wife! She has no heart; she never had a feeling. And she cajoles you with her love, her devotion—the stern hypocrite!"

"I must leave you," said Venetia; "I cannot bear this."

"O! the truth, the truth is precious," said Cadurcis, taking her hand and preventing her from moving. "Your mother, your devoted mother, has driven one man of genius from her bosom, and his country. Yet there is another. Deny me what I ask, and to-morrow's sun shall light me to another land; to this I will never return; I will blend my tears with your father's, and I will publish to Europe the double infamy of your mother. I swear it solemnly. Still I stand here, Venetia; prepared, if you will but smile upon me, to be her son, her dutiful son. Nay! her slave, like you. She shall not murmur. I will be dutiful; she shall be devoted; we will all be happy," he added, in a softer tone. "Now, now, Venetia, my happiness is on the stake, now, now."

"I have spoken," said Venetia. "My heart may break, but my purpose shall not falter."

"Then my curse upon your mother's head!" said Cadurcis, with terrible vehemency. "May Heaven rain all its plagues upon her! The He- cate!"

"I will listen no more," exclaimed Venetia, indignantly, and she moved away. She had proceeded some little distance when she paused and looked back; Cadurcis was still at the fountain, but he did not observe her. She remembered his sudden departure from Cherbury, she did not doubt that, in the present instance, he would leave them as abruptly, and that he would keep his word, so solemnly given. Her heart was nearly breaking, but she could not bear the idea of parting in bitterness with the being whom perhaps she loved best in the world. She stopped, she called his name in a voice low indeed, but in that silent spot it reached him. He joined her immediately, but with a slow step. When he had reached her, he said, without any animation, and in a frigid tone, "I believe you called me?"

Venetia burst into tears. "I cannot bear to part in anger, Plantagenet. I wished to say farewell in kindness. I shall always pray for your happiness. God bless you, Plantagenet!"

Lord Cadurcis made no reply, though for a moment he seemed about to speak; he bowed, and as Venetia approached her aunt, he turned his steps in a different direction.

CHAPTER XVI.

VENETIA stopped for a moment to collect herself before she joined her aunt, but it was impossible to conceal her agitation from the countess. They had not, however, been long together before they observed their friends in the distance, who had now quitted the palace. Venetia made the utmost efforts to compose herself, and not unsuccessful ones. She was sufficiently calm on their arrival, to listen, if not to converse. The countess, with all the tact of a woman, covered her niece's confusion by her animated description of their agreeable ride, and their still more pleasant promenade; and in a few minutes the whole party were walking back to their carriages. When they had arrived at the inn, they found Lord Cadurcis, to whose temporary absence the countess had alluded with some casual observa-

tion which she flattered herself was very satisfactory. Cadurcis appeared rather sullen, and the countess, with feminine quickness, suddenly discovered that both herself and her niece were extremely fatigued, and that they had better return in the carriages. There was one vacant place, and some of the gentlemen must ride outside. Lord Cadurcis, however, said that he should return as he came, and the grooms might lead back the ladies' horses: and so in a few minutes the carriages had driven off.

Our solitary equestrian, however, was no sooner mounted than he put his horse to its speed, and never drew in his rein, until he reached Hyde Park Corner. The rapid motion accorded with his tumultuous mood. He was soon at home, gave his horse to a servant, for he had left his groom behind, rushed into his library, tore up a letter of Lady Monteagle's with a demoniac glance, and rang his bell with such force that it broke. His valet, not unused to such ebullitions, immediately appeared.

"Has any thing happened, Spalding?" said his lordship.

"Nothing particular, my lord. Her ladyship sent every day, and called herself twice, but I told her your lordship was in Yorkshire."

"That was right: I saw a letter from her. When did it come?"

"It has been here several days, my lord."

"Mind, I am at home to nobody; I am not in town."

The valet bowed and disappeared. Cadurcis threw himself into an easy chair, stretched his legs, sighed, and then swore; then suddenly starting up, he seized a mass of letters that were lying on the table, and hurled them to the other end of the apartment, dashed several books to the ground, kicked down several chairs that were in his way, and began pacing the room with his usual troubled step; and so he continued until the shades of twilight entered his apartment. Then he pulled down the other bell-rope, and Mr. Spalding again appeared.

"Order post-horses for to-morrow," said his lordship.

"Where to, my lord?"

"I don't know; order the horses."

Mr. Spalding again bowed and disappeared.

In a few minutes he heard a great stamping and confusion in his master's apartment, and presently the door opened, and his master's voice was heard calling him repeatedly in a very irritable tone.

"Why are there no bells in this cursed room?" inquired Lord Cadurcis.

"The ropes are broken, my lord."

"Why are they broken?"

"I can't say, my lord."

"I cannot leave this house for a day but I find every thing in confusion. Bring me some Burgundy."

"Yes, my lord; there is a young lad, my lord, called a few minutes back, and asked for your lordship. He says he has something very particular to say to your lordship. I told him your lordship was out of town. He said your lordship would wish very much to see him, and that he had come from the Abbey."

"The Abbey!" said Cadurcis, in a tone of curiosity. "Why did you not show him in?"

"Your lordship said you were not at home to anybody."

"Idiot! Is this anybody? Of course I would

have seen him. What the devil do I keep you for, sir? You seem to me to have lost your head."

Mr. Spalding retired.

"The Abbey! that is droll," said Cadurcis. "I owe some duties to the poor Abbey. I should not like to quit England, and leave anybody in trouble at the Abbey. I wish I had seen the lad. Some son of a tenant who has written to me, and I have never opened his letters. I am sorry."

In a few minutes Mr. Spalding again entered the room. "The young lad has called again, my lord. He says he thinks your lordship has come to town, and he wishes to see your lordship very much."

"Bring lights and show him up. Show him up first."

Accordingly, a country lad was ushered into the room, although it was so dusky that Cadurcis could only observe his figure standing at the door.

"Well, my good fellow," said Cadurcis, "what do you want? Are you in any trouble?"

The boy hesitated.

"Speak out, my good fellow; do not be alarmed. If I can serve you, or any one at the Abbey, I will do it."

Here Mr. Spalding entered with the lights. The lad held a cotton handkerchief to his face; he appeared to be weeping; all that was seen of his head were his locks of red hair. He seemed a country lad, dressed in a long green coat with silver buttons, and he twirled in his disengaged hand a peasant's white hat.

"That will do, Spalding," said Lord Cadurcis. "Leave the room. Now, my good fellow, my time is precious! but speak out, and do not be afraid."

"Cadurcis!" said the lad, in a sweet and trembling voice.

"Gertrude, by G—d!" exclaimed Lord Cadurcis, starting. "What infernal masquerade is this?"

"Is it a greater disguise than I have to bear every hour of my life!" exclaimed Lady Monteaule, advancing. "Have I not to bear a smiling face with a breaking heart!"

"By Jove! a scene," exclaimed Cadurcis, in a piteous tone.

"A scene!" exclaimed Lady Monteaule, bursting into a flood of indignant tears. "Is this the way the expression of my feelings is ever to be stigmatized! Barbarous man!"

Cadurcis stood with his back to the fireplace, with his lips compressed, and his hands under his coat-tails. He was resolved that nothing should induce him to utter a word. He looked the picture of dogged indifference.

"I know where you have been," continued Lady Monteaule. "You have been to Richmond; you have been with Miss Herbert. Yes! I know all. I am a victim, but I will not be a dupe. Yorkshire, indeed! Paltry coward!"

Cadurcis hummed an air.

"And this is Lord Cadurcis!" continued the lady. "The sublime, ethereal Lord Cadurcis, condescending to the last refuge of the meanest, most commonplace mind, a vulgar, wretched lie! What could have been expected from such a mind? You may delude the world, but I know you. Yes, sir; I know you. And I will let everybody know you. I will tear away the veil of charlatanism with which you have enveloped yourself. The world shall at length discover the nature of the idol they have worshipped. All your meanness, all your falsehood,

all your selfishness, all your baseness, shall be revealed. I may be spurned, but at any rate I will be revenged!"

Lord Cadurcis yawned.

"Insulting, pitiful wretch!" continued the lady "And you think that I wish to hear you speak! You think the sound of that deceitful voice has any charm for me! You are mistaken, sir. I have listened to you too long. It was not to remonstrate with you that I resolved to see you. The tones of your voice can only excite my disgust. I am here to speak myself; to express to you the contempt, the detestation, the aversion, the scorn, the hatred, which I entertain for you!"

Lord Cadurcis whistled.

The lady paused; she had effected the professed purpose of her visit; she ought now to have retired, and Cadurcis would most willingly have opened the door for her, and bowed her out of his apartment. But her conduct did not exactly accord with her speech. She intimated no intention of moving. Her courteous friend retained his position, and adhered to his policy of silence. Here was a dead pause, and then Lady Monteaule, throwing herself into a chair, went into violent hysterics.

Lord Cadurcis, following her example, also seated himself, took up a book, and began to read.

The hysterics became fainter and fainter; they experienced all those gradations of convulsive voice with which Lord Cadurcis was so well acquainted; at length they subsided into sobs and sighs. Finally, there was again silence, now only disturbed by the sound of a page turned by Lord Cadurcis.

Suddenly the lady sprang from her seat, and firmly grasping the arm of Cadurcis, threw herself on her knees at his side.

"Cadurcis!" she exclaimed in a tender tone, "do you love me?"

"My dear Gertrude," said Lord Cadurcis, coolly, but rather regretting he had quitted his original and less assailable posture. "You know I like quiet women."

"Cadurcis, forgive me!" murmured the lady.

"Pity me! Think only how miserable I am!"

"Your misery is one of your own making," said Lord Cadurcis. "What occasion is there for any of these extraordinary proceedings? I have told you a thousand times that I cannot endure scenes. Female society is a relaxation to me; you convert it into torture. I like to sail upon a summer sea; and you always will insist upon a white squall."

"But you have deserted me!"

"I never desert any one," replied Cadurcis, very calmly, raising her from her supplicating attitude, and leading her to a seat. "The last time we met, you banished me your presence, and told me never to speak to you again. Well, I obeyed your orders, as I always do."

"But I did not mean what I said," said Lady Monteaule.

"How should I know that?" said Lord Cadurcis.

"Your heart ought to have assured you," said the lady.

"The tongue is a less deceptive organ than the heart," said her companion.

"Cadurcis," said the lady, looking at her strange disguise, "what do you advise me to do?"

"To go home; and if you like I will order my-vis-à-vis for you directly," and he rose from his seat to give the order.

"Ah! you are sighing to get rid of me," said the lady, in a reproachful, but still very subdued tone.

"Why, the fact is, Gertrude, I prefer calling upon you, to your calling upon me. When I am fitted for your society, I seek it; and, when you are good-tempered, always with pleasure: when I am not in the mood for it, I stay away. And when I am at home I wish to see no one;—I have business now, and not very agreeable business. I am disturbed by many causes, and you could not have taken a step which could have given me greater annoyance than the strange one you have adopted this evening."

"I am sorry for it now," said the lady, weeping. "When shall I see you again?"

"I will call upon you to-morrow, and pray receive me with smiles."

"I ever will," said the lady, weeping plentifully. "It is all my fault; you are ever too good. There is not in the world a kinder and more gentle being than yourself. I shall never forgive myself for this exposure."

"Would you like to take any thing?" said Lord Cadurcis; "I am sure you must feel exhausted. You see I am drinking wine; it is my only dinner to-day, but I dare say there is some sal-volatile in the house: I dare say, when my maids go into hysterics, they have it!"

"Ah! mocker," said Lady Monteagle, "but I can pardon every thing, if you will only let me see you."

"Au revoir! then," said his lordship; "I am sure the carriage must be ready. I hear it. Come, Mr. Gertrude, settle your wig,—it is quite awry. By Jove! we might as well go to the Pantheon, as you are ready dressed. I have a domino." And so saying, Lord Cadurcis handed the lady to his carriage, and pressed her lightly by the hand, as he reiterated his promise of calling at Monteagle House the next day.

CHAPTER XVII.

LORD CADURCIS—unhappy at home, and wearied of the commonplace resources of society—had passed the night in every species of dissipation; his principal companion being that same young nobleman in whose company he had been when he first met Venetia at Ranelagh. The morn was nearly breaking when Cadurcis and his friend arrived at his door. They had settled to welcome the dawn with a beaker of burnt Burgundy.

"Now, my dear Scrope," said Cadurcis, "now for quiet and philosophy. The laughter of those infernal women, the rattle of those cursed dice, and the oaths of those ruffians, are still ringing in my ears. Let us compose ourselves and moralize."

Accustomed to their master's habits—who generally turn night into day—the household were all on the alert; a blazing fire greeted them, and his lordship ordered instantly a devil and the burnt Burgundy.

"Sit you down here, my Scrope; that is the seat of honour, and you shall have it. What is this—a letter? and marked 'urgent'—and in a man's hand. It must be read. Some good fellow nabbed by a bailiff, or planted by his mistress. Signals of distress! We must assist our friends."

The flame of the fire fell upon Lord Cadurcis'

face as he read the letter; he was still standing, while his friend was stretched out in his easy chair, and inwardly congratulating himself on his comfortable prospects. The countenance of Cadurcis did not change, but he bit his lip, and read the letter twice, and turned it over, but with a careless air; and then he asked what o'clock it was. The servant informed him, and left the room.

"Scrope," said Lord Cadurcis, very quietly, and still standing, "are you very drunk?"

"My dear fellow, I am as fresh as possible, you will see what justice I shall do to the Burgundy."

"Burgundy to-morrow," as the Greek proverb saith," observed Lord Cadurcis. "Read that."

His companion had the pleasure of perusing a challenge from Lord Monteagle, couched in no gentle terms, and requesting an immediate meeting.

"Well, I never heard any thing more ridiculous in my life," said Lord Scrope. "Does he want satisfaction because you have planted her?"

"D—n her!" said Lord Cadurcis. "She has occasioned me a thousand annoyances, and now she has spoiled our supper. I don't know, though; he wants to fight quickly,—let us fight at once. I will send him a cartel now, and then we can have our Burgundy. You will go out with me of course! Hyde Park, six o'clock, and short swords."

Lord Cadurcis accordingly sat down, wrote his letter, and despatched it by Mr. Spalding to Monteagle House, with peremptory instructions to bring back an answer. The companions then turned to their devil.

"This is a bore, Cadurcis," said Lord Scrope.

"It is. I cannot say I am very valorous in a bad cause. I do not like to fight 'upon compulsion,' I confess. If I had time to screw my courage up, I dare say I should do it very well, for instance, if ever I am publicly executed, I shall die game."

"God forbid," said Lord Scrope. "I say, Cadurcis, I would not drink any Burgundy if I were you. I shall take a glass of cold water."

"Ah! you are only a second, and so you want to cool your valour," said Cadurcis. "You have all the fun."

"But how came this blow-up?" inquired Lord Scrope. "Letters discovered—eh? Because I thought you never saw her now?"

"By Jove! my dear fellow, she has been the whole evening here, masquerading it like a very vixen, as she is; and now she has committed us both. I have burnt her letters, without reading them, for the last month. Now I call that honourable; because, as I had no longer any claim on her heart, I would not think of trenching on her correspondence. But honour, what is honour in these dishonourable days! This is my reward. She contrived to enter my house this evening, dressed like a farmer's boy, and you may imagine what ensued; rage, hysterics, and repentance. I am sure if Monteagle had seen me, he would not have been jealous. I never opened my mouth, but, like a fool, sent her home in my carriage; and now I am going to be run through the body for my politeness."

In this light strain,—blended, however, with more decorous feeling on the part of Lord Scrope,—the young men conversed until the messenger returned, with Lord Monteagle's answer. In Hyde Park, in the course of an hour, himself and Lord Cadurcis, attended by their friends, were to meet.

"Well, there is nothing like having these affairs over," said Cadureis, "and, to confess the truth, my dear Scrope, I should not much care if Monteaule were to despatch me to my fathers; for, in the whole course of my miserable life,—and miserable, whatever the world may think, it has been,—I never felt much more wretched than I have during the last four-and-twenty hours. By Jove! do you know I was going to leave England this morning, and I have ordered my horses too."

"Leave England!"

"Yes, leave England; and where I never intended to return."

"Well you are the oddest person I ever knew, Cadureis. I should have thought you the happiest person that ever existed. Everybody admires, everybody envies you. You seem to have every thing that man can desire. Your life is a perpetual triumph."

"Ah! my dear Scrope, there is a skeleton in every house. If you knew all, you would not envy me."

"Well, we have not much time," said Lord Scrope, "have you any arrangements to make?"

"None. My property goes to George, who is my only relative, without the necessity of a will, otherwise I should leave every thing to him, for he is a good fellow, and my blood is in his veins. Just you remember, Scrope, that I will be buried with my mother. That is all; and now let us get ready."

The sun had just risen when the young men went forth, and the day promised to be as brilliant as the preceding one. Not a soul was stirring in the courtly quarter in which Cadureis resided; even the last watchman had stolen to repose. They called a hackney coach at the first stand they reached, and were soon at the destined spot. They were indeed before their time, and strolling by the side of the Serpentine, Cadureis said, "Yesterday morning was one of the happiest of my life. Scrope, and I was in hopes that an event would have occurred in the course of the day, that might have been my salvation. If it had, by-the-by, I should not have returned to town, and got into this cursed scrape. However, the gods were against me, and now I am reckless."

Now Lord Monteaule and his friend, who was Mr. Horace Pole, appeared. Cadureis advanced, and bowed: Lord Monteaule returned his bow, stiffly, but did not speak. The seconds chose their ground, the champions disembarassed themselves of their coats, and their swords crossed. It was a brief affair. After a few passes, Cadureis received a slight wound in his arm, while his weapon pierced his antagonist in the breast. Lord Monteaule dropped his sword, and fell.

"You had better fly, Lord Cadureis," said Mr. Horace Pole. "This is a bad business, I fear: we have a surgeon at hand, and he can help us to the coach that is waiting close by."

"I thank you, sir, I never fly," said Lord Cadureis; "and I shall wait here until I see your principal safely deposited in his carriage; he will have no objection to my friend, Lord Scrope, assisting him, who, by his presence to-day, has only fulfilled one of the painful duties that society imposes upon us."

The surgeon gave a very unfavourable report of the wound, which he dressed on the field. Lord Monteaule was then borne to his carriage, which

was at hand, and Lord Scrope, the moment he had seen the equipage move slowly off, returned to his friend.

"Well, Cadureis," he exclaimed, in an anxious voice, "I hope you have not killed him. What will you do now?"

"I shall go home, and await the result, my dear Scrope. I am sorry for you, for this may get you into trouble. For myself, I care nothing."

"You bleed!" said Lord Scrope.

"A scratch. I almost wish our lots had been the reverse. Come, Scrope, help me on with my coat. Yesterday I lost my heart, last night I lost my money, and perhaps to-morrow I shall lose my arm. It seems we are not in luck."

CHAPTER XVIII.

It has been well observed, that no spectacle is so ridiculous as the British public, in one of its periodical fits of morality. In general, elopements, divorces, and family quarrels, pass with little notice. We read the scandal, talk about it for a day, and forget it. But once in six or seven years, our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. We must make a stand against vice. We must teach libertines that the English people appreciate the importance of domestic ties. Accordingly, some unfortunate man, in no respect more depraved than hundreds whose offences have been treated with lenity, is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. If he has children, they are to be taken from him. If he has a profession, he is to be driven from it. He is cut by the higher orders, and hissed by the lower. He is, in truth, a sort of whipping boy, by whose vicarious agonies all the other transgressors of the same class are, it is supposed, sufficiently chastised. We reflect very complacently on our own severity, and compare, with great pride, the high standard of morals established in England, with the Parisian laxity. At length, our anger is satiated—our victim is ruined, and heart-broken—and our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more.

Thus it happened to Lord Cadureis; he was the periodical victim, the scape-goat of English morality, sent into the wilderness with all the crimes and curses of the multitude on his head. Lord Cadureis had certainly committed a great crime: not his intrigue with Lady Monteaule, for that surely was not an unprecedented offence; nor his duel with her husband, for after all it was a duel in self-defence; and, at all events, divorces and duels, under any circumstances, would scarcely have excited, or authorised the storm which was now about to burst over the late spoiled child of society. But Lord Cadureis had been guilty of the offence which, of all offences, is punished most severely:—Lord Cadureis had been overpraised. He had excited too warm an interest; and the public, with its usual justice, was resolved to chastise him for its own folly.

There are no fits of caprice so hasty and so violent as those of society. Society, indeed, is all passions and no heart. Cadureis, in allusion to his sudden and singular success, had been in the habit of saying to his intimates, that he "woke one morning and found himself famous." He might now

observe, "I woke one morning and found myself infamous." Before twenty-four hours had passed over his duel with Lord Monteaule, he found himself branded by every journal in London, as an unprincipled and unparalleled reprobate. The public, without waiting to think or even to inquire after the truth, instantly selected as genuine the most false and the most flagrant of the fifty libellous narratives that were circulated of the transaction. Stories, inconsistent with themselves, were all alike eagerly believed, and what evidence there might be for any one of them, the virtuous people, by whom they were repeated, neither cared nor knew. The public, in short, fell into a passion with their darling, and, ashamed of their past idolatry, nothing would satisfy them but knocking the divinity on the head.

Until Lord Monteaule, to the great regret of society, who really wished him to die in order that his antagonist might commit murder, was declared out of danger, Lord Cadureis never quitted his house, and he was not a little surprised that scarcely a human being called upon him except his cousin, who immediately flew to his succour. George, indeed, would gladly have spared Cadureis any knowledge of the storm that was raging against him, and which he flattered himself would blow over before Cadureis was again abroad, but he was so much with his cousin, and Cadureis was so extremely acute and naturally so suspicious, that this was impossible. Moreover, his absolute desertion by his friends, and the invectives and the lampoons with which the newspapers abounded, and of which he was the subject, rendered any concealment out of the question, and poor George passed his life in running about contradicting falsehoods, stating truth, fighting his cousin's battles, and then reporting to him, in the course of the day, the state of the campaign.

Cadureis, being a man of infinite sensibility, suffered tortures. He had been so habituated to panegyric, that the slightest criticism ruffled him, and now his works had suddenly become the subject of universal and outrageous attack; having lived only in a cloud of incense, he suddenly found himself in a pillory of moral indignation; his writings, his habits, his temper, his person, were all alike ridiculed and vilified. In a word, Cadureis, the petted, idolized, spoiled Cadureis, was enduring that charming vicissitude in a prosperous existence, styled a reaction; and a conqueror, who deemed himself invincible, suddenly vanquished, could scarcely be more thunderstruck, or feel more impotently desperate.

The tortures of his mind, however, which this sudden change in his position and in the opinions of society, were of themselves competent to occasion to one of so impetuous and irritable a temperament, and who ever magnified both misery and delight with all the creative power of a brooding imagination, were excited in his case even to the liveliest agony, when he reminded himself of the situation in which he was now placed with Venetia. All hope of ever obtaining her hand had now certainly vanished, and he doubted whether even her love could survive the quick occurrence, after his ardent vows, of this degrading and mortifying catastrophe. He execrated Lady Monteaule with the most heart-felt rage, and when he remembered that all this time the world believed him the devoted admirer of this vixen, his brain was stimulated almost to the verge of insanity. His only hope of the truth

reaching Venetia was through the medium of his cousin, and he impressed daily upon Captain Cadureis the infinite consolation it would prove to him, if he could contrive to make her aware of the real facts of the case. According to the public voice, Lady Monteaule at his solicitation had fled to his house and remained there, and her husband forced his entrance into the mansion in the middle of the night, while his wife escaped disguised in Lord Cadureis' clothes. She did not, however, reach Monteaule House in time enough to escape detection by her lord, who had instantly sought and obtained satisfaction from his treacherous friend. All the monstrous inventions of the first week had now subsided into this circumstantial and undoubted narrative; at least this was the version believed by those who had been Cadureis' friends. They circulated the authentic tale with the most considerate assiduity, and shook their heads, and said it was too bad, and that he must not be countenanced.

The moment Lord Monteaule was declared out of danger, Lord Cadureis made his appearance in public. He walked into Brookes's, and everybody seemed suddenly so deeply interested in the newspaper, that you might have supposed they had brought intelligence of a great battle, or a revolution, or a change of ministry at the least. One or two men spoke to him, who had never presumed to address him at any other time, and he received a faint bow from a very distinguished nobleman, who had ever professed for him the greatest consideration and esteem.

Cadureis mounted his horse and rode down to the House of Lords. There was a debate of some public interest, and a considerable crowd was collected round the Peers' entrance. The moment Lord Cadureis was recognised the multitude began hooting. He was agitated, and grinned a ghastly smile at the rabble. But he dismounted, without further annoyance, and took his seat. Not a single peer of his own party spoke to him. The leader of the opposition, indeed, bowed to him, and, in the course of the evening, he received, from one or two more of his party, some formal evidences of frigid courtesy. The tone of his reception by his friends could not be concealed from the ministerial party. It was soon detected, and generally whispered, that Lord Cadureis was cut. Nevertheless, he sat out the debate and voted. The house broke up. He felt lonely; his old friend, the Bishop of —, who had observed all that had occurred, and who might easily have avoided him, came forward, however in the most marked manner, and, in a tone which everybody heard, said, "How do you do, Lord Cadureis! I am very glad to see you," shaking his hand most cordially. This made a great impression. Several of the tory lords, among them Venetia's uncle, now advanced and saluted him. He received their advances with a haughty, but not disdainful courtesy; but when his whig friends, very confused, now hurried to encumber him with their assistance, he treated them with the scorn which they well deserved.

"Will you take a seat in my carriage home, Lord Cadureis?" said his leader, for it was notorious that Cadureis had been mobbed on his arrival.

"Thank you, my lord," said Cadureis, speaking very audibly, "I prefer returning as I came. We are really both of us such very unpopular personages, that your kindness would scarcely be prudent."

The house had been very full; there was a great scuffle and confusion as the peers were departing; the mob, now very considerable, were prepared for the appearance of Lord Cadurcis, and their demeanour was very menacing. Some shouted out his name; then it was repeated with the most odious and vindictive epithets, followed by ferocious yells. A great many peers collected round Cadurcis, and entreated him not to return on horse-back. It must be confessed that very genuine and considerable feeling was now shown by men of all parties. And indeed to witness this young, and noble, and gifted creature, but a few days back the idol of the nation, and from whom a word, a glance even, was deemed the greatest and most gratifying distinction—whom all orders, classes, and conditions of men had combined to stimulate with multiplied adulation,—with all the glory and ravishing delights of the world, as it were, forced upon him—to see him thus assailed with the savage execrations of all those vile things who exult in the fall of every thing that is great, and the abasement of every thing that is noble, was indeed a spectacle which might have silenced malice and satisfied envy!

“My carriage is most heartily at your service, Lord Cadurcis,” said the noble leader of the government, in the Upper House; “you can enter it without the slightest suspicion by these ruffians.”—“Lord Cadurcis; my dear lord; my good lord—for our sakes, if not for your own—Cadurcis, dear Cadurcis, my good Cadurcis, it is madness, folly, insanity—a mob will do any thing, and an English mob is viler than all—for Heaven’s sake!” Such were a few of the varied exclamations which resounded on all sides, but which produced on the person to whom they were addressed only the result of his desiring the attendant to call for his horses.

The lobby was yet full; it was a fine thing in the light of the archway to see Cadurcis spring into his saddle. Instantly there was a horrible yell. Yet, in spite of all their menaces, the mob were for a time awed by his courage; they made way for him; he might even have rode quickly on for some few yards, but he would not; he reined his fiery steed into a slow but stately pace, and, with a countenance scornful and composed, he continued his progress, apparently unconscious of impediment. Meanwhile, the hooting continued without abatement, increasing, indeed, after the first comparative pause, in violence and menace. At length a bolder ruffian, excited by the uproar, rushed forward and seized Cadurcis’ bridle. Cadurcis struck the man over the eyes with his whip, and at the same time touched his horse with his spur, and the assailant was dashed to the ground. This seemed a signal for a general assault. It commenced with the most hideous yells. His friends at the House, who had watched every thing with the keenest interest, immediately directed all the constables who were at hand to rush to his succour; hitherto they had restrained, the police, lest their interference might stimulate rather than repress the mob. The charge of the constables was well-timed; they laid about them with their staves; you might have heard the echo of many a broken crown. Nevertheless, though they dispersed the mass, they could not penetrate the immediate barrier that surrounded Lord Cadurcis, whose only defence indeed, for they had cut off his groom, was the terrors of his horse’s hoels, and whose managed motions he regulated

with admirable skill—now rearing, now prancing, now kicking behind, and now turning round with a quick yet sweeping motion, before which the mob retreated. Off his horse, however, they seemed resolved to drag him; and it was not difficult to conceive, if they succeeded, what must be his eventual fate. They were indeed infuriated, but his contact with his assailants fortunately prevented their comates from hurling stones at him from the fear of endangering their own friends.

A messenger to the Horse Guards had been sent from the House of Lords; but, before the military could arrive, and fortunately—for, with their utmost expedition, they must have been too late—a rumour of the attack got current in the House of Commons. Captain Cadurcis, Lord Scrope, and a few other young men instantly rushed out; and ascertaining the truth, armed with good cudgels and such other effective weapons as they could instantly obtain, they mounted their horses and charged the nearly triumphant populace, dealing such vigorous blows that their efforts soon made a visible diversion in Lord Cadurcis’ favour. It is very difficult, indeed, to convey an idea of the exertions and achievements of Captain Cadurcis; no Paladin of chivalry ever executed such marvels in a swarm of Paynim slaves; and many a bloody coxcomb and broken limb bore witness in Petty France that night to his achievements. Still the mob struggled and were not daunted by the delay in immolating their victim. As long as they had only to fight against men in plain clothes, they were valorous and obstinate enough; but the moment that the crests of a company of Horse Guards were seen trotting down Parliament Street, everybody ran away, and in a few minutes all Palace Yard was as still as if the genius of the place rendered a riot impossible.

Lord Cadurcis thanked his friends, who were profuse in their compliments to his pluck. His manner, usually playful with his intimates of his own standing, was, however, rather grave at present, though very cordial. He asked them home to dine with him; but they were obliged to decline his invitation, as a division was expected; so saying “Good-b’ye, George, perhaps I shall see you to-night,” Cadurcis rode rapidly off.

With Cadurcis there was but one step from the most exquisite sensitiveness to the most violent defiance. The experience of this day had entirely cured him of his previous nervous deference to the feelings of society. Society had outraged him, and now he resolved to outrage society. He owed society nothing; his reception in the House of Lords and the riot in Palace Yard, had alike cleared his accounts with all orders of men, from the highest to the lowest. He had experienced, indeed, some kindness that he could not forget, but only from his own kin, and those who with his associations were the same as kin. His memory dwelt with gratification on his cousin’s courageous zeal, and still more on the demonstration which Masham had made in his favour, which, if possible, argued still greater boldness and sincere regard. That was a trial of true affection and an instance of moral courage, which Cadurcis honoured, and which he never could forget. He was anxious about Venetia; he wished to stand as well with her as he deserved; no better; but he was grieved to think she could believe all those infamous tales at present current respecting himself. But for the rest of the

world, he delivered them all to the most absolute contempt, disgust, and execration; he resolved, from this time, nothing should ever induce him again to enter society, or admit the advances of a single civilized ruffian who affected to be social. The country, the people, their habits, laws, manners, customs, opinions, and every thing connected with them were viewed with the same jaundiced eye; and his only object now was to quit England, to which he resolved never to return.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN the mean time we must not forget Venetia, who was perhaps not quite so surprised as the rest of her friends, when, on their return to Richmond, Lord Cadurcis was not again seen. She was very unhappy; she recalled the scene in the garden at Cherbury some years back; and with her knowledge of the impetuosity of his temper, she believed she should never see him again. Poor Plantagenet, who loved her so much, and whose love she so fully returned! why might they not be happy? She neither doubted the constancy of his affection, nor their permanent felicity if they were united. She shared none of her mother's apprehensions or her prejudices, but she was the victim of duty and her vow. In the course of four-and-twenty hours strange rumours were afloat respecting Lord Cadurcis; and the newspapers on the ensuing morning told the truth, and more than the truth. Venetia could not doubt as to the duel or the elopement; but instead of feeling indignation, she attributed what had occurred to the desperation of his mortified mind; and she visited on herself all the fatal consequences that had happened. At present, however, all her emotions were quickly absorbed in the one terrible fear, that Lord Monteaule would die. In that dreadful and urgent apprehension, every other sentiment merged. It was impossible to conceal her misery, and she entreated her mother to return to town.

Very differently, however, was the catastrophe viewed by Lady Annabel. She, on the contrary, triumphed in her sagacity and her prudence. She hourly congratulated herself on being the saviour of her daughter; and though she refrained from indulging in any open exultation over Venetia's escape and her own profound discretion, it was nevertheless impossible for her to conceal from her daughter her infinite satisfaction and self-congratulation. While Venetia was half broken-hearted, her mother silently returned thanks to Providence for the merciful dispensation which had exempted her child from so much misery.

The day after their return to town, Captain Cadurcis called upon them. Lady Annabel never mentioned the name of his cousin; but George, finding no opportunity of conversing with Venetia alone, and being indeed too much excited to speak on any other subject, plunged at once into the full narrative; defended Lord Cadurcis, abused the Monteaules and the slanderous world, and in spite of Lady Annabel's ill-concealed dissatisfaction, favoured her with an exact and circumstantial account of every thing that had happened; how it happened, when it happened, and where it happened; concluding by a declaration that Cadurcis was the best fellow that ever lived, the most un-

fortunate, and the most ill-used; and that, if he were to be hunted down for an affair like this, over which he had no control, there was not a man in London who could be safe for ten minutes. All that George effected by his zeal, was to convince Lady Annabel that his cousin had entirely corrupted him; she looked upon her former favourite as another victim; but Venetia listened in silence, and not without solace.

Two or three days after the riot at the House of Lords, Captain Cadureis burst into his cousin's room with a triumphant countenance. "Well, Plantagenet!" he exclaimed. "I have done it; I have seen her alone; and I have put you as right as possible. Nothing can be better."

"Tell me, my dear fellow," said Lord Cadurcis, eagerly.

"Well, you know, I have called half a dozen times," said George; "but either Lady Annabel was there, or they were not at home, or something always occurred to prevent any private communication. But I met her to-day with her aunt; I joined them immediately, and kept with them the whole morning. I am sorry to say, she, I mean Venetia, is devilish ill; she is indeed. However, her aunt now is quite on your side, and very kind, I can tell you that. I put her right at first, and she has fought our battle bravely. Well, they stopped to call somewhere, and Venetia was so unwell, that she would not get out, and I was left alone in the carriage with her. Time was precious, and I opened at once. I told her how wretched you were, and that the only thing that made you miserable was about her, because you were afraid she would think you so profligate, and all that. I went through it all; told her the exact truth, which indeed she had before heard; but now I assured her on my honour, that it was exactly what had happened; and she said she did not doubt it, and could not, from some conversation which you had together the day we were all at Hampton Court, and that she felt that nothing could have been premeditated, and fully believed that every thing had occurred as I said; and, however she deplored it, she felt the same for you as ever, and prayed for your happiness. Then she told me what misery the danger of Lord Monteaule had occasioned her; that she thought his death must have been the forerunner of her own, but the moment he was declared out of danger, seemed the happiest hour of her life. I told her you were going to leave England, and asked her whether she had any message for you; and she said, 'Tell him he is the same to me that he has always been.' So when her aunt returned, I jumped out and ran on to you at once."

"You are the best fellow that ever lived, George," said Lord Cadurcis; "and now the world may go to the devil!"

This message from Venetia acted upon Lord Cadureis like a charm. It instantly cleared his mind. He shut himself up in his house for a week, and wrote a farewell to England, perhaps the most masterly effusion of his powerful spirit. It abounded in passages of overwhelming passion, and almost Satanic sarcasm. Its composition entirely relieved his long-brooding brain. It contained, however, a veiled address to Venetia,—delicate, tender, and irresistibly affecting. He appended also to the publication, the verses he had previously addressed to her.

This volume, which was purchased with an

avidity exceeding even the eagerness with which his former productions had been received, exercised the most extraordinary influence on public opinion. It enlisted the feelings of the nation on his side in a struggle with a coterie. It was suddenly discovered that Lord Cadurcis was the most injured of mortals, and far more interesting than ever. The address to the unknown object of his adoration, and the verses to Venetia, mystified everybody. Lady Monteagle was universally abused, and all sympathized with the long-treasured and baffled affection of the unhappy poet. Cadurcis, however, was not to be conciliated. He left his native shores in a blaze of glory, but with the accents of scorn still quivering on his lip.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

THE still waters of the broad and winding lake reflected the lustre of the cloudless sky. The gentle declivities of the green hills that immediately bordered the lake, with an undulating margin that now retired into bays of the most picturesque form, now jutted forth into woody promontories, and then opened into valleys of sequestered beauty, which the eye delighted to pursue, were studded with white villas, and cottages scarcely less graceful, and occasionally with villages, and even towns; here and there rose a solitary chapel; and, scarcely less conspicuous, the black spire of some cypress strikingly contrasting with the fair buildings or the radiant foliage that in general surrounded them. A rampart of azure mountains raised their huge forms behind the nearer hills; and occasionally peering over these, like spectres on some brilliant festival, were the ghastly visages of the Alpine glaciers.

It was within an hour of sunset, and the long shadows had fallen upon the waters; a broad boat, with a variegated awning, rowed by two men, approached the steps of a marble terrace. The moment they had reached their point of destination, and had fastened the boat to its moorings, the men landed their oars, and immediately commenced singing a simple yet touching melody, wherewith it was their custom to apprise their employers of their arrival.

"Will they come forth this evening, think you, Vittorio?" said one boatman to the other.

"By our holy mother! I hope so," replied his comrade, "for this light air that is now rising will do the young signora more good than fifty doctors."

"They are good people," said Vittorio. "It gives me more pleasure to row them than any person who ever hired us."

"Ay, ay!" said his comrade, "it was a lucky day when we first put an oar in the lake for them, heretics though they be."

"But they may be converted yet," said his companion; "for, as I was saying to Father Francisco last night, if the young signora dies, it is a sad thing to think what will become of her."

"And what said the good Father?"

"He shook his head," said Vittorio.

"When Father Francisco shakes his head, he means a great deal," said his companion.

At this moment a servant appeared on the terrace, to say the ladies were at hand; and very shortly afterwards Lady Annabel Herbert, with her daughter leaning on her arm, descended the steps, and entered the boat. The countenances of the boatmen brightened when they saw them, and they both made their inquiries after the health of Venetia with tenderness and feeling.

"Indeed, my good friends," said Venetia, "I think you are right, and the lake will cure me after all."

"The blessings of the lake be upon you, signora," said the boatmen, crossing themselves.

Just as they were moving off, came running Mistress Pauncefort, quite breathless. "Miss Herbert's fur cloak, my lady; you told me to remember, my lady, and I cannot think how I forgot it. But I really have been so very hot all day, that such a thing as furs never entered my head. And for my part, until I travelled, I always thought furs were only worn in Russia. But live and learn, as I say."

They were now fairly floating on the calm, clear waters, and the rising breeze was as grateful to Venetia as the boatmen had imagined.

A return of those symptoms which had before so disquieted Lady Annabel for her daughter, and which were formerly the cause of their residence at Weymouth, had induced her, in compliance with the advice of her physicians, to visit Italy; but the fatigue of travel had exhausted the energies of Venetia—for in those days the Alps were not passed in luxurious travelling carriages—on the very threshold of the promised land; and Lady Annabel had been prevailed upon to take a villa on the Lago Maggiore, where Venetia had passed two months, still suffering indeed from great debility, but not without advantage.

There are few spots more favoured by nature than the Italian lakes and their vicinity, combining, as they do, the most sublime features of mountainous scenery with all the softer beauties and the varied luxuriance of the plain. As the still, bright lake is to the rushing and troubled cataract, is Italy to Switzerland and Savoy. Emerging from the chaotic ravines and the wild gorges of the Alps, the happy land breaks upon us like a beautiful vision. We revel in the sunny light, after the unearthly glare of eternal snow. Our sight seems renovated as we throw our eager glance over those golden plains, clothed with such picturesque trees, sparkling with such graceful villages, watered by such noble rivers, and crowned with such magnificent cities; and all bathed and beaming in an atmosphere so soft and radiant! Every isolated object charms us with its beautiful novelty: for the first time we gaze on palaces; the garden, the terrace, and the statue, recall our dreams beneath a colder sky; and we turn from these to catch the hallowed form of some enoplaed convent, crowning the gentle elevation of some green hill, and flanked by the cypress or pine.

The influence of all these delightful objects and of this benign atmosphere on the frame and mind of Venetia had been considerable. After the excitement of the last year of her life, and the harassing and agitating scenes with which it closed, she found a fine solace in this fair land and this soft sky, which the sad perhaps can alone experience

(its repose alone afforded a consolatory contrast to the turbulent pleasure of the great world. She looked back upon those glittering and noisy scenes with an aversion which was only modified by her self-congratulation at her escape from their exhausting and contaminating sphere. Here she recurred,—but with all the advantages of a change of scene, and a scene so rich in novel and interesting associations,—to the calm tenor of those days, when not a thought ever seemed to escape from Cherbury and its spell-bound seclusion. Her books, her drawings, her casel, and her harp, were now again her chief pursuits; pursuits, however, influenced by the genius of the land in which she lived, and therefore invested with a novel interest; for the literature and the history of the country naturally attracted her attention; and its fair aspects and sweet sounds, alike inspired her pencil and her voice. She had, in the society of her mother, indeed, the advantage of communing with a mind not less refined and cultivated than her own. Lady Annabel was a companion whose conversation from reading and reflection was eminently suggestive; and their hours, though they lived in solitude, never hung heavy. They were always employed, and always cheerful. But Venetia was not more than cheerful. Still very young, and gifted with an imaginative, and, therefore, sanguine mind, the course of circumstances, however, had checked her native spirit, and shaded a brow which at her time of life, and with her temperament, should have been rather fanciful than pensive. If Venetia, supported by the disciplined energies of a strong mind, had schooled herself into not looking back to the past with grief, her future was certainly not tinged with the Iris pencil of Hope. It seemed to her that it was her fate that life should bring her no happier hours than those she now enjoyed. They did not amount to exquisite bliss. That was a conviction which, by no process of reflection, however ingenious, could she delude herself to credit. Venetia struggled to take refuge in content, a mood of mind perhaps less natural than it should be to one so young, so gifted, and so fair!

Their villa was surrounded by a garden in the ornate and artificial style of the country. A marble terrace overlooked the lake, crowned with many a statue, and vase that held the aloe. The laurel and the cactus, the cypress and the pine, filled the air with their fragrance, or charmed the eye with their rarity and beauty: the walks were festooned with the vine, and they could raise their hands and pluck the glowing fruit which screened them from the beam by which it was ripened. In this enchanted domain Venetia might be often seen—a form even fairer than the sculptured nymphs among which she glided—catching the gentle breeze that played upon the surface of the lake, or watching the white sail that glittered in the sun as it floated over its purple bosom.

Yet this beautiful retreat Venetia was soon to quit, and she thought of her departure with a sigh. Her mother had been warned to avoid the neighbourhood of the mountains in the winter, and the autumn was approaching its close. If Venetia could endure the passage of the Apennines, it was the intention of Lady Annabel to pass the winter on the coast of the Mediterranean; or otherwise to settle in one of the Lombard cities. At all events, in the course of a few weeks they were to quit their villa on the lake.

CHAPTER II.

A VERY few days after that excursion on the lake with which this volume of our history opened, Lady Annabel and her daughter were both surprised and pleased with a visit from a friend whose appearance was certainly very unexpected: this was Captain Cadureis. On his way from Switzerland to Sicily he had heard of their residence in the neighbourhood, and had crossed over from Arona to visit them.

The name of Cadureis was still dear to Venetia, and George had displayed such gallantry and devotion in all his cousin's troubles, that she was personally attached to him; he had always been a favourite of her mother; his arrival, therefore, was welcomed by each of the ladies with great cordiality. He accepted the hospitality which Lady Annabel offered him, and remained with them a week, a period which they spent in visiting the most beautiful and interesting spots of the lake, with which they were already sufficiently familiar to allow them to prove guides as able as they were agreeable. These excursions, indeed, contributed to the pleasure and happiness of the whole party. There was about Captain Cadureis a natural cheerfulness which animated every one in his society; a gay simplicity, difficult to define, but very charming, and which, without effort, often produced deeper impressions than more brilliant and subtle qualities. Left alone in the world, and without a single advantage save those that nature had conferred upon him, it had often been remarked, that in whatever circle he moved, George Cadureis always became the favourite, and everywhere made friends. His sweet and engaging temper had perhaps as much contributed to his professional success as his distinguished gallantry and skill. Other officers, no doubt, were as brave and able as Captain Cadureis, but his commanders always signalled him out for favourable notice; and strange to say, his success, instead of exciting envy and ill-will, pleased even his less fortunate competitors. However hard another might feel his own lot, it was soothed by the reflection that George Cadureis was at least more fortunate. His popularity, however, was no confined to his profession. His cousin's noble guardian, whom George had never seen until he ventured to call upon his lordship on his return to England, now looked upon him almost as a son, and omitted no opportunity of advancing his interests in the world. Of all the members of the House of Commons he was perhaps the only one that every body praised, and his success in the world of fashion had been as remarkable as in his profession. These great revolutions in his life and future prospects had, however, not produced the slightest change in his mind and manners; and this was perhaps the secret spell of his prosperity. Though we are most of us the creatures of affectation, simplicity has a great charm, especially when attended, as in the present instance, with many agreeable, and some noble qualities. In spite of the rough fortunes of his youth, the breeding of Captain Cadureis was very high; the recollection of the race to which he belonged had never been forgotten by him. He was proud of his family. He had one of those light hearts, too, which enable their possessors to acquire accomplishments with facility: he had a sweet voice, a quick ear, a rapid eye. He acquired a language as some men learn

an air. Then his temper was imperturbable, and although the most obliging and kindest-hearted creature that ever lived, there was a native dignity about him which prevented his good nature from being abused. No sense of interest either could ever induce him to act contrary to the dictates of his judgment and his heart. "At the risk of offending his patron, he sided with his cousin, although he had deeply offended his guardian, and although the whole world was against him. Indeed, the strong affection that Lord Cadurcis instantly entertained for George, is not the least remarkable instance of the singular, though silent, influence that Captain Cadurcis everywhere acquired. Lord Cadurcis had fixed upon him for his friend from the first moment of their acquaintance, and though apparently there could not be two characters more dissimilar, there were at bottom some striking points of sympathy and some strong bonds of union, in the generosity and courage that distinguished both, and in the mutual blood that filled their veins.

There seemed to be a tacit understanding between the several members of our party that the name of Lord Cadurcis was not to be mentioned. Lady Annabel made no inquiry after him; Venetia was unwilling to hazard a question which would annoy her mother, and of which the answer could not bring her much satisfaction; and Captain Cadurcis did not think fit himself to originate any conversation on the subject. Nevertheless, Venetia could not help sometimes fancying when her eyes met his, that their mutual thoughts were the same, and both dwelling on one who was absent, and of whom her companion would have willingly conversed. To confess the truth, indeed, George Cadurcis was on his way to join his cousin, who had crossed over from Spain to Barbary, and journeyed along the African coast from Tangiers to Tripoli. Their point of reunion was to be Sicily or Malta. Hearing of the residence of the Herberts on the lake, he thought it would be but kind to Plantagenet to visit them; and perhaps to bear to him some message from Venetia. There was nothing, indeed, on which Captain Cadurcis was more intent than to effect the union between his cousin and Miss Herbert. He was deeply impressed with the sincerity of Plantagenet's passion, and he himself entertained for the lady the greatest affection and admiration. He thought she was the only person whom he had ever known, who was really worthy to be his cousin's bride. And, independent of her personal charms and undoubted talents, she had displayed during the outcry against Lord Cadurcis, so much good sense, such a fine spirit, and such modest yet sincere affection for the victim, that George Cadurcis had almost lost his own heart to her, when he was endeavouring to induce her not utterly to reject that of another; and it became one of the dreams of his life, that in a little time, when all, as he fondly anticipated, had ended as it should, and as he wished it, he should be able to find an occasional home at Cadurcis Abbey, and enjoy the charming society of one whom he had already taught himself to consider as a sister.

"And to-night you must indeed go?" said Venetia, as they were walking together on the terrace. It was the only time that they had been alone together during his visit.

"I must start from Arona at day-break," replied George; "and I must travel quickly; for in less than a month I must be in Sicily."

"Sicily! Why are you going to Sicily?"

Captain Cadurcis smiled. "I am going to join a friend of ours," he answered.

"Plantagenet?" she said.

Captain Cadurcis nodded assent.

"Poor Plantagenet!" said Venetia. "Here we have been a week together, and no one has ever mentioned his name. He seems quite proscribed."

"His name has been on my lips several times," said George.

"I am sure of that," said Venetia. "Is he well?"

"He writes to me in fair spirits," said Captain Cadurcis. "He has been travelling in Spain, and now he is somewhere in Africa; we are to meet in Sicily or Malta. I think travel has greatly benefited him. He seems quite delighted with his glimpse of oriental manners; and I should scarcely be surprised if he were now to stretch on to Constantinople."

"I wonder if he will ever return to England," said Venetia thoughtfully.

"There is only one event that would induce him," said Captain Cadurcis. And then after a pause he added, "You will not ask me what it is?"

"I wish he were in England, and were happy," said Venetia.

"It is in your power to effect both results," said her companion.

"It is useless to recur to that subject," said Venetia. "Plantagenet knows my feelings towards him, but fate has forbidden our destinies to be combined."

"Then he will never return to England, and never be happy. Ah! Venetia, what shall I tell him when we meet? What message am I to bear him from you?"

"Those regards which he ever possessed, and has never forfeited," said Venetia.

"Poor Cadurcis!" said his cousin, shaking his head, "if any man ever had reason to be miserable, it is he."

"We are none of us very happy, I think," said Venetia mournfully. "I am sure, when I look back to the last few years of my life, it seems to me that there is some curse hanging over our families. I cannot penetrate it; it baffles me."

"I am sure," said Captain Cadurcis with great animation: "Nay, I would pledge my existence cheerfully on the venture, that if Lady Annabel would only relent towards Cadurcis, we should all be the happiest people in the world."

"Heigho!" said Venetia. "There are other cares in our house besides our unfortunate acquaintance with your cousin. We were the last people in the world with whom he should ever have become connected."

"And yet it was an intimacy that commenced auspiciously," said her friend. "I am sure I have sat with Cadurcis, and listened to him by the hour, while he has told me of all the happy days at Cherbury when you were both children; the only happy days according to him, that he ever knew."

"Yes! they were happy days," said Venetia.

"And what connexion could have offered a more rational basis for felicity than your union?" he continued. "Whatever the world may think, I, who know Cadurcis from the very bottom of his heart, feel assured that you never would have repented for an instant becoming the sharer of his life; your families were of equal rank, your estates joined.

he felt for your mother the affection of a son. There seemed every element that could have contributed to earthly bliss. As for his late career, you who know all have already, have always indeed, viewed it with charity. Placed in his position, who could have acted otherwise? I know very well that his genius, which might recommend him to another woman, is viewed by your mother, with more than apprehension. It is true that a man of his exquisite sensibility requires sympathies as refined to command his nature. It is no common mind that could maintain its hold over Cadurcis, and his spirit could not yield but to rare and transcendent qualities. He found them, Venetia, he found them in her, whom he had known longest and most intimately, and loved from his boyhood. Talk of constancy, indeed! who has been so constant as my cousin? No, Venetia, you may think fit to bow to the feelings of your mother, and it would be impertinence in me to doubt for an instant the propriety of your conduct: I do not doubt it; I admire it; I admire you, and everything you have done; none can view your behaviour throughout all these painful transactions with more admiration, I might even say with more reverence, than myself; but, Venetia, you never can persuade me, you have never attempted to persuade me, that you yourself are incredulous of the strength and permanency of my cousin's love."

"Ah! George, you are our friend!" said Venetia, a tear stealing down her cheek. "But indeed, we must not talk of these things. As for myself, I think not of happiness. I am certain I am not born to be happy. I wish only to live calmly, contentedly I would say; but that, perhaps, is too much. My feelings have been so harrowed, my mind so harassed, during these last few years, and so many causes of pain and misery seem ever hovering round my existence, that I do assure you, my dear friend, I have grown old before my time. Ah! you may smile, George, but my heart is heavy; it is indeed."

"I wish I could lighten it," said Captain Cadurcis. "I fear I am somewhat selfish in wishing you to marry my cousin, for then you know, I should have a permanent and authentic claim to your regard. But no one, at least I think so, can feel more deeply interested in your welfare, than I do. I never knew any one like you, and I always tell Cadurcis so, and that I think makes him worse, but I cannot help it."

Venetia could not refrain from smiling at the simplicity of this confession.

"Well," continued her companion, "every thing, after all, is for the best. You and Plantagenet are both very young; I live in hopes that I shall yet see you Lady Cadurcis."

Venetia shook her head, but was not sorry that their somewhat melancholy conversation should end in a livelier vein. So they entered the villa.

The hour of parting was painful; and the natural gaiety of Captain Cadurcis deserted him. He had become greatly attached to the Herberts. Without any female relatives of his own, their former intimacy and probable connexion with his cousin had taught him to look upon them in some degree in the light of kindred. He had originally indeed become acquainted with them in all the blaze of London society, not very calculated to bring out the softer tints and more subdued tones of our character, but even then the dignified grace

of Lady Anrabel and the radiant beauty of Venetia, had captivated him, and he had cultivated their society with assiduity and extreme pleasure. The grand crisis of his cousin's fortunes had enabled him to become intimate with the more secret and serious qualities of Venetia, and from that moment he had taken the deepest interest in every thing connected with her. His happy and unexpected meeting in Italy had completed the spell; and now that he was about to leave them, uncertain even if they should ever meet again, his soft heart trembled, and he could scarcely refrain from tears as he pressed their hands, and bade them his sincere adieus.

The moon had risen ere he entered his boat, and flung a rippling line of glittering light on the bosom of the lake. The sky was without a cloud, save a few thin fleecy vapours that hovered over the azure brow of a distant mountain. The shores of the lake were suffused with the serene effulgence, and every object was so distinct, that the eye was pained by the lights of the villages, that, every instant, became more numerous and vivid. The bell of a small chapel on the opposite shore, and the distant chant of some fishermen still working at their nets, were the only sounds that broke the silence, which they did not disturb. Reclined in his boat, George Cadurcis watched the vanishing villa of the Herberts, until the light in the principal chamber was the only sign that assured him of its site. That chamber held Venetia; the unhappy Venetia! He covered his face with his hand when even the light of her chamber vanished, and, full of thoughts tender and disconsolate, he at length arrived at Arona.

CHAPTER III.

PURSUANT to their plans, the Herberts left the Lago Maggiore towards the end of October, and proceeded by gentle journeys to the Apennines. Before they crossed this barrier, they were to rest a while in one of the Lombard cities; and now they were on the point of reaching Arquâ, which Venetia had expressed a strong desire to visit.

At the latter part of the last century, the race of tourists, the offspring of a long peace, and the rapid fortunes made during the war, did not exist. Travelling was then confined to the aristocracy, and though the English, when opportunity offered, have ever been a restless people, the gentle bosom of the Euganean Hills was then rarely disturbed amid its green and sequestered valleys.

There is not perhaps in all the Italian region, fertile as it is in interesting associations and picturesque beauty, a spot that tradition and nature have so completely combined to hallow, as the last residence of Petrarch. It seems, indeed, to have been formed for the retirement of a pensive and poetic spirit. It recedes from the world by a succession of delicate acclivities clothed with vineyards and orchards, until winding within these hills, the mountain hamlet is at length discovered, enclosed by two ridges that slope towards each other, and seem to shut out all the passions of a troubled race. The houses are scattered at intervals on the steep sides of these summits, and on a little knoll is the mansion of the poet, built by himself, and commanding a rich and extensive view, that ends indeed only with the shores of the Adriatic sea. His tomb, a

sarcophagus of red marble, supported by pillars, doubtless familiar to the reader, is at hand; and placed on an elevated site, gives a solemn impression to a scene, of which the character would otherwise be serenely cheerful.

Our travellers were surprised to find, that the house of the poet was inhabited by a very different tenant to the rustic occupier they had anticipated. They heard that a German gentleman had within the last year fixed upon it as the residence of himself and his wife. The peasants were profuse in their panegyrics of this visitor, whose arrival had proved quite an era in the history of their village. According to them, a kinder and more charitable gentlemen never breathed; his whole life was spent in studying and contributing to the happiness of those around him. The sick, the sorrowful, and the needy, were ever sure of finding a friend in him, and merit a generous patron. From him came portions to the portionless; no village maiden need despair of being united to her betrothed, while he could assist her; and at his own cost he had sent to the academy of Bologna, a youth whom his father would have made a cowherd, but whom nature predisposed to be a painter. The inhabitants believed this benevolent and generous person was a physician, for he attended the sick, prescribed for their complaints, and had once even performed an operation with great success. It seemed, that since Petrarch no one had ever been so popular at Arquà as this kind German. Lady Annabel and Venetia were interested with the animated narratives of the ever active beneficence of this good man, and Lady Annabel especially regretted that his absence deprived her of the gratification of becoming acquainted with a character so rare and so invaluable. In the meantime, they availed themselves of the offer of his servants to view the house of Petrarch, for their master had left orders, that his absence should never deprive a pilgrim from paying his homage to the shrine of genius.

The house, consisting of two floors, had recently been repaired by the present occupier. It was simply furnished. The ground floor was allotted to the servants. The upper story contained five rooms, three of which were of good size, and two closets, in one of these were the traditionary chair and table of Petrarch, and here, according to their guides, the master of the house passed a great portion of his time in study, to which, by their account, he seemed devoted. The adjoining chamber was his library; its windows opened on a balcony looking on two lofty and conical hills, one topped with a convent, while the valley opened on the side and spread into a calm and very pleasant view. Of the other apartments, one served as a saloon, but there was nothing in it remarkable, except an admirably painted portrait of a very beautiful woman, which the servant informed them was their mistress.

"But that surely is not a German physiognomy?" said Lady Annabel.

"The mistress is an Italian," replied the servant.

"She is very handsome, of whatever nation she may be," replied Lady Annabel.

"O! how I should have liked to have met these happy people, mamma," said Venetia, "for happy they surely must be."

"They seemed to be good people," said Lady Annabel. "It really lightened my heart to hear of all this gentleman's kind deeds."

"Ah! if the signora only knew the master,"

said their guide, "she would indeed know a good man!"

They descended to the garden, which certainly was not like the garden of their villa; it had been but lately a wilderness of laurels, but there were evidences that the eye and hand of taste were commencing its restoration with effect.

"The master did this," said their guide. "He will allow no one to work in the garden but himself. It is a week since he went to Bologna, to see our Paulo. He gained a prize at the academy, and his father begged the master to be present when it was conferred on him; he said it would do his son so much good! So the master went, though it is the only time he has quitted Quà since he came to reside here."

"And how long has he resided here?" inquired Venetia.

"'Tis the second autumn," said the guide, "and he came in the spring. If the signora would only wait, we expect the master home to-night or to-morrow, and he would be glad to see her."

"We cannot wait, my friend," said Lady Annabel, rewarding the guide; "but you will thank your master in our names, for the kindness we have experienced. You are all happy in such a friend."

"I must write my name in Petrarch's house," said Venetia. "Adieu! happy Arquà! Adieu! happy dwellers in this happy valley!"

CHAPTER IV.

JUST as the Herberts arrived at Rovigo, one of those sudden and violent storms that occasionally occur at the termination of an Italian autumn raged with irresistible fury. The wind roared with a noise that overpowered even the thunder; then came a rattling shower of hail, with stones as big as pigeon's eggs, succeeded by rain, not in showers, but literally in cataracts. The only thing to which a tempest of rain in Italy can be compared, is the bursting of a water spout. Venetia could scarcely believe that this could be the same day of which the golden morning had found her among the sunny hills of Arquà. This unexpected vicissitude induced Lady Annabel to alter her plans, and she resolved to rest at Rovigo, where she was glad to find that they could be sheltered in a very commodious inn.

The building had originally been a palace, and in its halls and galleries, and the vast octagonal vestibule on which the principal apartments opened, it retained many noble indications of the purposes to which it was formerly destined. At present, a lazy innkeeper, who did nothing; his bustling wife, who seemed equally at home in the saloon, the kitchen, and even the stable; and a solitary waiter, were the only inmates, except the Herberts, and a travelling party, who had arrived shortly after them, and who, like them, had been driven by stress of weather to seek refuge at a place where otherwise they had not intended to remain.

A blazing fire of pine wood soon gave cheerfulness to the vast and somewhat desolate apartment in which the Herberts had been ushered; their sleeping-room was adjoining, but separated. In spite of the lamentations of Pouncefort, who had been drenched to the skin, and who required much more waiting upon than her mistress, Lady Anna

bel and Venetia at length produced some degree of comfort. They drew the table near the fire; they ensconced themselves behind an old screen; and, producing their books and work, notwithstanding the tempest, they contrived to domesticate themselves at Rovigo.

"I cannot help thinking of Arquá and its happy tenants, mamma," said Venetia.

"And yet perhaps they may have their secret sorrows," said Lady Annabel. "I know not why, I always associate seclusion with unhappiness."

Venetia remembered Cherbury. Their life at Cherbury was like the life of the German at Arquá. A chance visitor to Cherbury in their absence, viewing the beautiful residence and the fair domain, and listening to the tales which they well might hear of all her mother's grace and goodness, might perhaps too envy its happy occupiers. But were they happy? Had they no secret sorrows? Was their seclusion associated with unhappiness? These were reflections that made Venetia grave; but she opened her journal, and describing the adventures and feelings of the morning, she dissipated some mournful reminiscences.

The storm still raged, Venetia had quitted the saloon in which her mother and herself had been sitting, and had repaired to the adjoining chamber to fetch a book. The door of this room opened, as all the other entrances of the different apartments, on to the octagonal vestibule. Just as she was quitting the room, and about to return to her mother, the door of the opposite chamber opened, and there came forward a gentleman in a Venetian dress of black velvet. His stature was considerably above the middle height, though his figure, which was remarkably slender, was bowed—not by years certainly, for his countenance, though singularly emaciated, still retained traces of youth. His hair, which he wore very long, descended over his shoulders, and must originally have been of a light golden colour, but now was severely touched with gray. His countenance was very pallid, so colourless indeed that its aspect was almost unearthly; but his large blue eyes, that were deeply set in his majestic brow, still glittered with fire, and their expression alone gave life to a visage, which, though singularly beautiful in its outline, from its faded and attenuated character seemed rather the countenance of a corpse than of a breathing being.

The glance of the stranger caught that of Venetia, and seemed to fascinate her. She suddenly became motionless; wildly she stared at the stranger, who, in his turn, seemed arrested in his progress, and stood still as a statue, with his eyes fixed with absorbing interest on the beautiful apparition before him. An expression of perplexity and pain flitted over the amazed features of Venetia; and then it seemed that, by some almost supernatural effort, confusion amounting to stupefaction suddenly brightened and expanded into keen and overwhelming intelligence. Exclaiming in a frenzied tone "My father!" Venetia sprang forward, and fell senseless on the stranger's breast.

Such, after so much mystery, so many aspirations, so much anxiety, and so much suffering, such was the first meeting of Venetia Herbert with her father!

Marmion Herbert, himself trembling and speechless, bore the apparently lifeless Venetia into his apartment. Not permitting her for a moment to quit his embrace, he seated himself, and gazed

silently on the inanimate and unknown form he held so strangely within his arms. Those lips, now closed as if in death, had uttered however one word which thrilled to his heart, and still echoed, like a supernatural annunciation within his ear. He examined with an eye of agitated scrutiny the fair features no longer sensible of his presence. He gazed upon that transparent brow, as if he would read some secret in its pellucid veins; and touched those long locks of golden hair, with a trembling finger, that seemed to be wildly seeking for some vague and miraculous proof of inexpressible identity. The fair creature had called him "Father!" His dreaming reveries had never pictured a being half so beautiful! She called him "Father!" The word had touched his brain, as lightning cuts a tree. He looked around him with a distracted air, then gazed on the tranced form he held with a glance which would have penetrated her soul, and murmured unconsciously the wild word she had uttered. She called him "Father!" He dared not think whom she might be. His thoughts were wandering in a distant land; visions of another life, another country, rose before him, troubled and obscure. Baffled aspirations, and hopes blighted in the bud, and the cherished secrets of his lorn existence, clustered like clouds upon his perplexed, yet creative brain. She called him "Father!" It was a word to make him mad. "Father!" This beautiful being had called him "Father," and seemed to have expired, as it were, in the irresistible expression. His heart yearned to her; he had met her embrace with an inexplicable sympathy; her devotion had seemed, as it were, her duty and his right. Yet who was she? He was a father. It was a fact—a fact alike full of solace and mortification—the consciousness of which never deserted him. But he was the father of an unknown child—to him the child of his poetic dreams, rather than his reality. And now there came this radiant creature, and called him "Father!" Was he awake, and in the harsh busy world; or was it the apparition of an over-excited imagination, brooding too constantly on one fond idea, on which he now gazed so fixedly? Was this some spirit? Would that she would speak again! Would that those sealed lips would part and utter but one word—would but again call him "Father," and he asked no more!

"Father!"—to be called "Father" by one whom he could not name, by one over whom he mused in solitude, by one to whom he had poured forth all the passion of his desolate soul; to be called "Father" by this being was the aspiring secret of his life. He had painted her to himself in his loneliness, he had conjured up dreams of ineffable loveliness and inexpressible love; he had led with her an imaginary life of thrilling tenderness; he had indulged in a delicious fancy of mutual interchange of the most exquisite offices of our nature; and then, when he had sometimes looked around him, and found no daughter there, no beaming countenance of purity to greet him with his constant smile, and receive the quick and ceaseless tribute of his vigilant affection, the tears had stolen down his lately excited features, all the consoling beauty of his visions had vanished into air, he had felt the deep curse of his desolation, and had anatomised the cunning brain that made his misery a thousand-fold keener by the mockery of its transporting illusions.

And now there came this transcendent creature, with a form more glowing than all his dreams; a voice more musical than a seraphic chorus, though it had uttered but one thrilling word: there came this transcendent creature, beaming with grace, beauty, and love, and had fallen upon his heart, and called him "Father!"

Herbert looked up to heaven as if waiting for some fresh miracle to terminate the harrowing suspense of his tortured mind; Herbert looked down upon his mysterious companion; the rose was gradually returning to her cheek, her lips seemed to tremble with reviving breath. There was only one word more strange to his ear than that which she had uttered, but an irresistible impulse sent forth the sound.

"Venetia!" he exclaimed.

The eyes of the maiden slowly opened; she stared around her with a vague glance of perplexity, not unmingled with pain; she looked up; she caught the rapt gaze of her father, bending over her with fondness yet with fear; his lips moved, for a moment they refused to articulate, yet at length they again uttered—"Venetia!" And the only response she made was to cling to him with nervous energy, and hide her face in his bosom.

Herbert pressed her to his heart. Yet even now he hesitated to credit the incredible union. Again he called her by her name, but added with rising confidence, "My Venetia!"

"Your child, your child," she murmured. "Your own Venetia."

He pressed his lips to hers, which it then seemed they would never again quit; he breathed over her a thousand blessings; she felt his tears trickling on her neck.

At length Venetia looked up and sighed; she was exhausted by the violence of her emotions; her father relaxed his grasp with infinite tenderness, and watching her with the most delicate solicitude, rested her on his knee; she leaned her arm upon his shoulder, and sat with downcast eyes.

Herbert gently took her disengaged hand, and pressed it to his lips. "I am as in a dream," murmured Venetia.

"The daughter of my heart has found her sire," said Herbert in an impassioned voice. "The father who has long lived upon her fancied image; the father, I fear, she has been bred up to hate."

"O! no, no," said Venetia, speaking rapidly and with a slight shiver, "not hate; it was a secret, his being was a secret, his name was never mentioned; it was unknown."

"A secret! My existence a secret from my child, my beautiful, fond child!" exclaimed Herbert in a tone even more desolate than bitter. "Why did they not let you at least hate me?"

"My father!" said Venetia, in a firmer voice, and with returning animation, yet gazing around her with a still distracted air. "Am I with my father? The clouds clear from my brain. I remember that we met. Where was it? Was it at Arquâ? In the garden? I am with my father!" she continued, in a rapid tone, and with a wild smile, "O! let me look at him!" and she turned round, and gazed upon Herbert with a serious scrutiny. "Are you my father?" she continued, in a still small voice. "Your hair has grown gray since last I saw you; it was golden then like mine. I know you are my father." she added, after a

pause, and in a tone almost of gayety. "You cannot deceive me. I know your name. They did not tell it me; I found it out myself, but it made me very ill, very; and I do not think I have ever been well since, quite. You are Marmion Herbert. My mother had a dog called Marmion, when I was a little girl, but I did not know I had a father then."

"Venetia!" exclaimed Herbert, with streaming eyes, as he listened with anguish to these incoherent sentences. "My Venetia loves me!"

"O! she always loved you," replied Venetia; always, always. Before she knew her father she loved him. I dare say you think I do not love you because I am not used to speak to a father. Everything must be learned, you know," she said, with a faint, sad smile; "and then it was so sudden! I do not think my mother knows it yet. And after all, though I found you out in a moment, still, I know not why, I thought it was a picture. But I read your verses, and I knew them by heart at once; but now my memory has worn out, for I am ill, and every thing has gone cross with me. And all because my father wrote me verses. 'Tis very strange, is not it?"

"Sweet lamb of my affections," exclaimed Herbert to himself, "I fear me much this sudden meeting with one from whose bosom you ought never to have been estranged, has been for the moment too great a trial for this delicate brain."

"I will not tell my mother," said Venetia; "she will be angry."

"Your mother, darling, where is your mother?" said Herbert, looking, if possible, paler than he was wont.

"She was at Arquâ with me, and on the lake for months, but where we are now I cannot say. If I could only remember where we are now," she added, with earnestness, and with a struggle to collect herself, "I should know every thing."

"This is Rovigo, my child, the inn of Rovigo. You are travelling with your mother. Is it not so?"

"Yes! and we came this morning, and it rained. Now I know every thing," said Venetia, with an animated and even cheerful air.

"And we met in the vestibule, my sweet," continued Herbert, in a soothing voice; "we came out of opposite chambers, and you knew me; my Venetia knew me. Try to tell me, my darling," he added, in a tone of coaxing fondness, "try to remember how Venetia knew her father."

"He was so like his picture at Cherbury," replied Venetia.

"Cherbury!" exclaimed Herbert, with a deep drawn sigh.

"Only your hair has grown gray, dear father; but it is long, quite as long as in your picture."

"Her dog called Marmion!" murmured Herbert to himself, "and my portrait, too! You saw your father's portrait, then, every day, love?"

"O, no!" said Venetia, shaking her head, "only once, only once. And I never told mamma. It was where no one could go, but I went there one day. It was in a room that no one ever entered except mamma, but I entered it. I stole the key, and had a fever, and in my fever I confessed all. But I never knew it. Mamma never told me I confessed it, until many, many years afterwards. It was the first, the only time she ever mentioned to me your name, my father."

"And she told you to shun me, to hate me?"

She told you I was a villain, a profligate, a demon? eh? eh! Was it not so, Venetia?"

"She told me that you had broken her heart," said Venetia; "and she prayed to God that her child might not be so miserable."

"O! my Venetia," exclaimed Herbert, pressing her to his breast, and in a voice stifled with emotion, "I feel, now, we might have been happy!"

In the meantime, the prolonged absence of her daughter surprised Lady Annabel. At length she rose, and walked into their adjoining apartment, but, to her surprise, Venetia was not there. Returning to her saloon, she found Pouncefort and the waiter arranging the table for dinner.

"Where is Miss Herbert, Pouncefort?" inquired Lady Annabel.

"I am sure, my lady, I cannot say. I have no doubt she is in the other room."

"She is not there, for I have just quitted it," replied Lady Annabel. "How very strange! You have not seen the signora?" inquired Lady Annabel of the waiter.

"The signora is in the room with the gentleman."

"The gentleman!" exclaimed Lady Annabel. "Tell me, good man, what do you mean? I am inquiring for my daughter!"

"I know well the signora is talking of her daughter," replied the waiter.

"But do you know my daughter by sight? Surely you must mean some one else."

"Do I know the signora's daughter?" said the waiter. "The beautiful young lady, with hair like Santa Marguerite in the church of the Holy Trinity? I tell the signora, I saw her carried into numero 4, in the arms of the Signor Forestiere, who arrived this morning."

"Venetia is ill," said Lady Annabel. "Show me to the room, my friend."

Lady Annabel accordingly, with a hurried step, following her guide, quitted the chamber. Pouncefort remained fixed to the earth, the very picture of perplexity.

"Well, to be sure!" she exclaimed, "was any thing ever so strange? In the arms of Signor Forestiere! Forestiere! An English name. There is no person of the name of Forest that I know. And in his arms, too! I should not wonder if it was my lord after all. Well, I should be glad if he were to come to light again; for, after all, my lady may say what she likes, but if Miss Venetia don't marry Lord Cadurcis, I must say marriages were never made in heaven!"

CHAPTER V.

THE waiter threw open the door of Mr. Herbert's chamber, and Lady Annabel swept in with a majesty which she generally assumed when about to meet strangers. The first thing she beheld was her daughter in the arms of a man, whose head was bent, and who was embracing her. Notwithstanding this astounding spectacle, Lady Annabel neither started nor screamed—she only said, in an audible tone, and one rather expressing astonishment than agitation, "Venetia!"

Immediately the stranger looked up, and Lady Annabel beheld her husband!

She was rooted to the earth. She turned deadly pale—for a moment her countenance expressed only error, but the terror quickly changed into aversion.

Suddenly she rushed forward, and exclaimed, in a tone in which decision conquered dismay, "Restore me my child!"

The moment Herbert had recognised his wife, he had dexterously disengaged himself from the grasp of Venetia, whom he left on the chair, and meeting Lady Annabel with extended arms, that seemed to deprecate her wrath, he said, "I seek not to deprive you of her; she is yours, and she is worthy of you; but respect for a few moments the feelings of a father who has met his only child in a manner so unforeseen."

The presence of her mother instantaneously restored Venetia to herself. Her mind was in a moment cleared and settled. Her past and peculiar life, and all its incidents, recurred to her with their accustomed order, vividness, and truth. She thoroughly comprehended her present situation. Actuated by long cherished feelings and the necessity of the occasion, she rose and threw herself at her mother's feet, and exclaimed, "O! mother, he is my father—love him!"

Lady Annabel stood with an averted countenance, Venetia clinging to her hand, which she had caught when she rushed forward, and which now fell passive by Lady Annabel's side, giving no sign, by any pressure or motion, of the slightest sympathy with her daughter, or feeling for the strange and agonizing situation in which they were both placed.

"Annabel," said Herbert, in a voice that trembled, though the speaker struggled to appear calm, "be charitable! I have never intruded upon your privacy—I will not now outrage it. Accident, or some diviner motive, has brought us together this day. If you will not treat me with kindness, look not upon me with aversion before our child."

Still she was silent and motionless, her countenance hidden from her husband and her daughter, but her erect and haughty form betokening her inexorable mind. "Annabel," said Herbert, who had now withdrawn to some distance, and leaned against a pillar, "will not then nearly twenty years of desolation purchase one moment of intercourse? I have injured you. Be it so. This is not the moment I will defend myself. But have I not suffered? Is not this meeting a punishment deeper even than your vengeance could devise? Is it nothing to behold this beautiful child, and feel that she is only yours? Annabel, look on me—look on me only one moment! My frame is bowed, my hair is gray, my heart is withered; the principle of existence waxes faint and slack in this attenuated frame. I am no longer that Herbert on whom you once smiled, but a man stricken with many sorrows. The odious conviction of my life cannot long haunt you—yet a little while, and my memory will alone remain. Think of this, Annabel—I beseech you, think of it. O! believe me, when the speedy hour arrives that will consign me to the grave, where I shall at least find peace, it will not be utterly without satisfaction that you will remember that we met if even by accident, and parted at least not with harshness!"

"Mother, dearest mother!" murmured Venetia, "speak to him, look on him!"

"Venetia," said her mother, without turning her head, but in a calm, firm tone, "your father has seen you, has conversed with you. Between your father and myself there can be nothing to communicate, either of fact or feeling. Now let us depart."

"No, no, not depart!" said Venetia, frantically. "You did not say depart, dear mother! I cannot go," she added in a low and half hysterical voice.

"Desert me then," said the mother. "A fitting consequence of your private communications with your father," she added, in a tone of bitter scorn; and Lady Annabel moved to depart, but Venetia, still kneeling, clung to her convulsively.

"Mother, mother, you shall not go; you shall not leave me; we will never part, mother," continued Venetia, in a tone almost of violence, as she perceived her mother give no indication of yielding to her wish. "Are my feelings then nothing?" she then exclaimed. "Is this your sense of my fidelity? Am I for ever to be a victim?" She loosened her hold of her mother's hand—her mother moved on. Venetia fell upon her forehead, and uttered a faint scream. The heart of Lady Annabel relented when she fancied her daughter suffered physical pain, however slight; she hesitated, she turned, she hastened to her child; her husband had simultaneously advanced; in the rapid movement and confusion her hand touched that of Herbert.

"I yield her to you, Annabel," said Herbert, placing Venetia in her mother's arms. "You mistake me, as you have often mistaken me, if you think I seek to practise on the feelings of this angelic child. She is yours; may she compensate to you for the misery I have caused you, but never sought to occasion."

"I am not hurt, dear mother," said Venetia, as her mother tenderly examined her forehead. "Dear, dear mother, why did you reproach me?"

"Forget it," said Lady Annabel, in a softened tone, "for indeed you are irreproachable."

"O! Annabel," said Herbert, "may not this child be some atonement—this child, of whom I solemnly declare I would not deprive you, though I would willingly forfeit my life for a year of her affection; and your—your sufferance," he added.

"Mother! speak to him," said Venetia, with her head on her mother's bosom, who still, however, remained rigidly standing. But Lady Annabel was silent.

"Your mother was ever stern and cold, Venetia," said Herbert, the bitterness of his heart at length expressing itself.

"Never," said Venetia, with great energy, "never; you know not my mother. Was she stern and cold when she visited each night in secret your portrait?" said Venetia, looking round upon her astonished father with her bright gray eye. "Was she stern and cold when she wept over your poems—those poems whose characters your own hand had traced? Was she stern and cold when she hung a withered wreath on your bridal bed—the bed to which I owe my miserable being? O! no, my father; sad was the hour of separation for my mother and yourself. It may have dimmed the lustre of her eye, and shaded your locks with premature gray, but whatever may have been its inscrutable cause, there was one victim of that dark hour, less thought of than yourselves, and yet a greater sufferer than both, the being in whose heart you implanted affections whose unfulfilled tenderness has made that wretched thing they call your daughter."

"Annabel!" exclaimed Herbert, rapidly advancing, with an imploring gesture, and speaking

in a tone of infinite anguish, "Annabel, Annabel, even now we can be happy!"

The countenance of his wife was troubled, but its stern expression had disappeared. The long concealed, yet at length irrepressible emotion of Venetia, had touched her heart. In the conflict of affection between the claims of her two parents, Lady Annabel had observed with a sentiment of sweet emotion, in spite of all the fearfulness of the meeting, that Venetia had not flattered in her devotion to her mother. The mental torture of her child touched her to the quick. In the excitement of her anguish, Venetia had expressed a profound sentiment, the irresistible truth of which Lady Annabel could no longer withstand. She had too long and too fondly schooled herself to look upon the outraged wife as the only victim. There was then, at length it appeared even to this stern-minded woman, another. She had laboured in the flattering delusion, that the devotion of a mother's love might compensate to Venetia for the loss of that other parent which, in some degree, Lady Annabel had occasioned her; for the worthless husband, had she chosen to tolerate the degrading connexion, might nevertheless have proved a tender father. But nature, it seemed, had shrunk from the vain effort of the isolated mother. The seeds of affection for the father of her being were mystically implanted in the bosom of his child. Lady Annabel recalled the harrowing hours that this attempt by her to curb and control the natural course and rising sympathies of filial love, had cost her child, on whom she had so vigilantly practised it. She recalled her strange aspirations, her inspired curiosity, her brooding reveries, her fitful melancholy, her terrible illness, her resignation, her fidelity, her sacrifices—there came across the mind of Lady Annabel a mortifying conviction that the devotion to her child, on which she had so rated herself, might after all only prove a subtle form of profound selfishness; and that Venetia, instead of being the idol of her love, might eventually be the martyr of her pride. And, thinking of these things, she wept.

This evidence of emotion, which in such a spirit Herbert knew how to estimate, emboldened him to advance; he fell on one knee before her and her daughter; gently he stole her hand, pressed it to his lips. It was not withdrawn, and Venetia laid her hand upon theirs, and would have bound them together, had her mother been relentless. It seemed to Venetia that she was at length happy, but she would not speak, but she would not disturb the still and silent bliss of the impending reconciliation. Was it then indeed at hand? In truth the deportment of Herbert throughout the whole interview, so delicate, so subdued, so studiously avoiding the slightest rivalry with his wife in the affections of their child, and so carefully abstaining from attempting in the slightest degree to control the feelings of Venetia, had not been lost upon Lady Annabel. And when she thought of him, so changed from what he had been, gray, bent, and careworn, with all the lustre that had once so fascinated her, faded, and talking of that impending fate which his wan though spiritual countenance too clearly intimated, her heart melted.

Suddenly the door burst open, and there stalked into the room, a woman of eminent but most graceful stature, and of a most sovereign and voluptuous beauty. She was habited in the Venetian dress

her dark eyes glittered with fire, her cheek was inflamed with no amiable emotion, and her long black hair was disordered by the violence of her gesture.

"And who are these?" she exclaimed in a shrill voice.

All started—Herbert sprang up from his position with a glance of withering rage. Venetia was perplexed, Lady Annabel looked round, and recognised the identical face, however distorted by passion, that she had admired in the portrait at Arqua.

"And who are these?" exclaimed the intruder, advancing. "Perfidious Marmion! to whom do you dare to kneel?"

Lady Annabel drew herself up to a height that seemed to look down even upon this tall stranger. The expression of majestic scorn that she cast upon the intruder made her, in spite of all her violence and excitement, tremble and be silent; she felt cowed she knew not why.

"Come, Venetia," said Lady Annabel with all her usual composure "let me save my daughter at least from this profanation."

"Annabel!" said Herbert, rushing after them. "Be charitable, be just!" He followed them to the threshold of the door; Venetia was silent, for she was alarmed.

"Adieu! Marmion!" said Lady Annabel, looking over her shoulder with a bitter smile, but placing her daughter before her, as if to guard her. "Adieu, Marmion, adieu forever!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE moon shone brightly on the house of Petrarch, and the hamlet slept in peace. Not a sound was heard, save the shrill voice of the grasshopper, so incessant that its monotony blended as it were, with the stillness. Over the green hills, and the far expanse of the sheeny plain, the beautiful light of heaven fell with all the magical repose of the serene hour—an hour that brought to one troubled breast, and one distracted spirit, in that still and simple village, no quietude.

Herbert came forth into the balcony of his residence, and leaning over the balustrade, revolved in his agitated mind the strange and stirring incidents of the day. His wife and his child had quitted the inn of Rovigo instantly after that mortifying encounter that had dashed so cruelly to the ground all his sweet and quickly rising hopes. As for his companion, she had by his peremptory desire returned to Arqua alone; he was not in a mood to endure her society, but he had conducted himself to her mildly, though with firmness; he had promised to follow her, and in pursuance of his pledge, he rode home alone.

He was greeted on his return by his servant, full of the visit of the morning. With an irresistible curiosity, Herbert had made him describe every incident that had occurred, and repeat a hundred times every word that the visitors had uttered. He listened with some consolation, however mournful, to his wife's praises of the unknown stranger's life; he gazed upon with witching interest the autograph of his daughter on the wall of his library. He had not confessed to his mistress the relation which the two strangers bore to him; yet he was influenced in concealing the real circumstances, only by an indefinite sentiment, that made him reluctant to acknowledge to her ties so pure. The feelings of

the parent overpowered the principles of the philosopher. This lady indeed, although at the moment she had indulged in so violent an ebullition of temper, possessed little influence over the mind of her companion. Herbert, however fond of solitude, required in his restricted world the graceful results of feminine superintendence. Time had stilled his passions, and cooled the fervour of his soul. The age of his illusions had long past. This was a connexion that had commenced in no extravagant or romantic mood, and perhaps for that reason had endured. He had become acquainted with her on his first unknown arrival in Italy, from America, now nearly two years back. It had been maintained on his side by a temper naturally very sweet, and which, exhausted by years of violent emotion, now required only repose; seeking, indeed, in a female friend, a form that should not outrage an eye ever musing on the beautiful, and a disposition that should contribute to his comfort, and never ruffle his feelings. Separated from his wife by her own act, whatever might have been its impulse, and for so long an interval, it was a connexion which the world in general must have looked upon with charity, which in her calmer hours one would imagine even Lady Annabel might have glanced over without much bitterness. Certainly it was one which, under all the circumstances of the case, could scarcely be esteemed by her as an outrage or an insult; but even Herbert felt, with all his philosophy and proud freedom from prejudice, that the rencounter of the morning was one which no woman could at the moment tolerate, few eventually excuse, and which of all incidents was that which would most tend to confirm his wife in her stoical obduracy. Of his offences towards her, whatever were their number or their quality, this surely was the least, and yet its results upon his life and fortunes would in all probability only be equalled by the mysterious cause that had led to their original separation. But how much more bitter than that original separation was their present parting! Mortifying and annoying as had been the original occurrence, it was one that many causes and considerations combined to enable Herbert to support. He was then in the very prime of youth, very inexperienced, sanguine, restless, and adventurous, with the whole world and its unknown results before him, and freedom for which he ever sighed to compensate for the loss of that domestic joy that he was then unable to appreciate. But now twenty years, which in the career of such a spirit were equal to a century of the existence of coarser clay, had elapsed; he was bowed with thought and suffering, if not by time; his conscience was light, but it was sad; his illusions had all vanished; he knew the world and all that the world could bring, and he disregarded them; and the result of all his profound study, lofty aspirations, and great conduct was, that he sighed for rest. The original catastrophe had been merely a separation between a husband and a wife: the one that had just happened, involved other feelings; the father was also separated from his child—and a child of such surpassing qualities, that his brief acquaintance with her had alone sufficed to convert his dream of domestic repose into a vision of domestic bliss.

Beautiful Venetia! So fair and yet so dutiful; with a bosom teeming with such exquisite sensibilities, and a mind bright with such acute and elevated intelligence! An abstract conception of the

sentiments that might subsist between a father and a daughter, heightened by all the devices of a glowing imagination, had haunted indeed occasionally the solitary musings of Marmion Herbert; but what was this creation of his poetic brain, compared with the reality that now had touched his human heart? Vainly had he believed that repose was the only solace that remained for his exhausted spirit. He found that a new passion now swayed his soul; a passion, too, that he had never proved; of a nature most peculiar; pure, gentle, refined, yet ravishing and irresistible, compared with which all former transports, no matter how violent, tumultuous, and exciting, seemed evanescent and superficial: they were indeed the wind, the fire, and the tempest that had gone before, but this was the still small voice that followed, excelled, and survived their might and majesty, unearthly and eternal!

His heart melted to his daughter, nor did he care to live without her love and presence. His philosophical theories all vanished. He felt how dependent we are in this world on our natural ties, and how limited, with all his arrogance, is the sphere of man. Dreaming of philanthropy, he had broken his wife's heart, and bruised, perhaps irreparably, the spirit of his child; he had rendered those miserable who depended on his love, and for whose affection his heart now yearned to that degree, that he could not contemplate existence without their active sympathy.

Was it then too late? Was it then impossible to regain that Paradise he had forfeited so weakly, and of whose amaranthine bowers, but a few hours since he had caught such an entrancing glimpse, of which the gate for a moment seemed to reopen? In spite of all, then, Annabel still loved him—loved him passionately, visited his picture, mused over the glowing expression of their loves, wept over the bridal bed so soon deserted! She had a dog too when Venetia was a child, and called it Marmion.

The recollection of this little trait, so trifling yet so touching, made him weep even with wildness. The tears poured down his cheeks in torrents, he sobbed convulsively, his very heart seemed to burst. For some minutes he leaned over the balustrade in a paroxysm of grief.

He looked up. The convent hill rose before him, bright in the moon; beneath was his garden; around him the humble roofs that he made happy. It was not without an effort that he recalled the locality—that he remembered he was at Arquá. And who was sleeping within the house? Not his wife—Annabel was far away with their daughter. The vision of his whole life passed before him. Study and strife, and fame and love; the pride of the philosopher, the rapture of the poet, the blaze of eloquence, the clash of arms, the vows of passion, the execration and the applause of millions; both once alike welcome to his indomitable soul! And what had they borne to him? Misery. He called up the image of his wife, young, beautiful, and noble, with a mind capable of comprehending his loftiest and his finest moods, with a soul of matchless purity, and a temper whose winning tenderness had only been equalled by her elevated sense of self-respect; a woman that might have figured in the days of chivalry, soft enough to be his slave, but too proud to be his victim. He called up her image in the castle of his fathers, exercising in a domain worthy of such a mistress, all those

sweet offices of life which, here in this hired roof in a strange land, and with his crippled means, he had yet found solacing. He conjured before him a bud by the side of that beautiful flower, sharing all her lustre and all her fragrance—his own Venetia! What happiness might not have been his! And for what had he forfeited it? A dream, with no dream-like beauty; a perturbed, and restless, and agitated dream, from which he had now woke shattered and exhausted.

He had sacrificed his fortune, he had forfeited his country, he had alienated his wife, and he had lost his child: the home of his heroic ancestry, the ancient land whose fame and power they had created, the beautiful and gifted woman who would have clung for ever to his bosom, and her transcendent offspring worthy of all their loves! Profound philosopher!

The clock of the convent struck the second hour after midnight. Herbert started. And all this time where were Annabel and Venetia? They still lived, they were in the same country, an hour ago they were under the same roof, in the same chamber; their hands had joined, their hearts had opened, for a moment he had dared to believe that all that he cared for might be regained. And why was it not? The cause—the cause? It recurred to him with associations of dislike, of disgust, of wrath, of hatred, of which one whose heart was so tender, and whose reason was so clear, could under the influence of no other feelings have been capable. The surrounding scene, that had so often soothed his mournful soul, and connected it with the last hours of a spirit to whom he bore much resemblance, was now looked upon with aversion. To rid himself of ties, now so dreadful, was all his ambition. He entered the house quickly, and seating himself in his closet, he wrote these words:—

“You beheld this morning my wife and child; we can meet no more. All that I can effect to console you under this sudden separation shall be done. My banker from Bologna will be here in two days; express to him all your wishes.”

It was written, sealed, directed, and left upon the table at which they had so often been seated. Herbert descended into the garden, saddled his horse, and in a few minutes, in the heart of night, had quitted Arquá.

CHAPTER VII.

WE must now return to Lady Annabel and her unhappy daughter. The moment that the wife of Marmion Herbert re-entered her saloon, she sent for her courier, and ordered horses to her carriage instantly. Until they were announced as ready, Lady Annabel walked up and down the room with an impatient step, but was as completely silent as the miserable Venetia, who remained weeping on the sofa. The confusion and curiosity of Mistress Pauncefort were extraordinary. She still had a lurking suspicion that the gentleman was Lord Cadreus, and she seized the first opportunity of leaving the room, and flouncing into that of the stranger, as if by mistake, determined to catch a glimpse of him; but all her notable skill was baffled, for she had scarcely opened the door before she was met by the Italian lady, who received Mistress Pauncefort's ready-made apology, and bowed her away

The faithful attendant then hurried down stairs to cross-examine the waiter, but, though she gained considerable information from that functionary, it was of a very perplexing nature; for from him she only learned that the stranger lived at Arquá. "The German gentleman!" soliloquized Mistress Pouncefort; and what could he have to say to Miss Venetia! And a married man too! Well, to be sure there is nothing like travelling for adventures! And I must say, considering all that I know, and how I have held my tongue for nearly twenty years, I think it is very strange indeed of my lady to have any secrets from me. Secrets, indeed! Poh!" and Mistress Pouncefort flounced again into Lady Annabel's room, with a face of offended pride, knocking the books about, dashing down writing-cases, tossing about work, and making as much noise and disturbance as if she had a separate quarrel with every single article under her superintendence.

In the mean time, the carriage was prepared, to which they were obliged almost to carry Venetia; not, indeed, that she made any resistance to their departure—she appeared feeble and stupified with grief. Uncertain of her course, but anxious in the present state of her daughter, for rest and quiet, Lady Annabel ordered the courier to proceed to Padua, at which city they arrived late at night, scarcely a word having been interchanged during the whole journey between Lady Annabel and her child, though infinite were the soft and soothing attentions which the mother lavished upon her. Night, however, brought no rest to Venetia; and the next day, her state appeared so alarming to Lady Annabel, that she would have instantly summoned medical assistance, had not it been for Venetia's strong objections; "Indeed, dear mother," she said, "it is not physicians that I require. They cannot cure me. Let me be quiet."

The same cause, indeed, which during the last five years had at intervals so seriously menaced the existence of this unhappy girl, was now at work with renovated and even irresistible influence. Her frame could no longer endure the fatal action of her over-excited nerves. Her first illness, however alarming, had been baffled by time, skill, and principally by the vigour of an extremely youthful frame, then a stranger to any serious indisposition. At a later period, the change of life induced by their residence at Weymouth had permitted her again to rally. She had quitted England with renewed symptoms of her former attack, but a still more powerful change, not only of scene, but of climate and country, and the regular and peaceful life she had led on the Lago Maggiore, had again reassured the mind of her anxious mother. This last adventure at Rovigo, however, prostrated her. The strange surprise, the violent development of feeling, the agonising doubts and hopes, the terrible suspense, the profound and bitter and overwhelming disappointment, all combined to shake her mind to its very foundations. She felt for the first time, that she could no longer bear up against the torture of her singular position. Her energy was entirely exhausted; she was no longer capable of making the slightest exertion: she took refuge in that turbid resignation that results from utter hopelessness.

Lying on her sofa, with her eyes fixed in listless abstraction, the scene at Rovigo flitted unceasingly before her languid vision. At length she had seen

that father, that unknown and mysterious father whose idea had haunted her infancy as if by inspiration, to gain the slightest knowledge of whom had cost her such long and acute suffering; and round whose image for so many years every thought of her intelligence, and every feeling of her heart, had clustered like spirits round some dim and mystical altar. At length she had beheld him; she had gazed on that spiritual countenance; she had listened to the tender accents of that musical voice; within his arms she had been folded with rapture, and pressed to a heart that seemed to beat only for her felicity. The blessing of her father, uttered by his long-loved lips, had descended on her brow, and been sealed with his passionate embrace.

The entrance of her mother,—that terrible contest of her lacerated heart, when her two parents, as it were, appealed to her love, which they would not share;—the inspiration of her despair, that so suddenly had removed the barriers of long years, before whose irresistible pathos her father had been a penitent, and her mother's inexorable pride had melted, the ravishing bliss that for a moment had thrilled through her, being experienced too for the first time, when she felt that her parents were again united and bound by the sweet tie of her now happy existence—this was the drama acted before her with an almost ceaseless repetition of its transporting incidents; and when she looked round, and beheld her mother sitting alone, and watching her with a countenance almost of anguish, it was indeed with extreme difficulty that Venetia could persuade herself that all had not been a revelry; and she was only convinced of the contrary, by that heaviness of the heart which too quickly assures us of the reality of those sorrows, of which fancy for a moment may cheat us into skepticism.

Nor, indeed, was her mother scarcely less miserable. The sight of Herbert, so changed from the form that she remembered; those tones of heart-rending sincerity, in which he had mournfully appealed to the influence of time and sorrow on his life, still greatly affected her. She had indulged for a moment in a dream of domestic love, she had cast to the winds the inexorable determination of a life, and had mingled her tears with those of her husband and her child. And how had she been repaid? By a degrading catastrophe, from whose revolting associations her mind recoiled with indignation and disgust. But her lingering feeling for her husband, her own mortification, were as nothing compared with the harrowing anxiety she now entertained for her daughter. To converse with Venetia on the recent occurrence, was impossible. It was a subject which admitted of no discussion. They had passed a week at Padua, and the slightest allusion to what had happened had never been made by either Lady Annabel or her child. It was only by her lavish testimonies of affection, that Lady Annabel conveyed to Venetia how deeply she sympathised with her, and how unhappy she was herself. She had, indeed, never quitted for a moment the side of her daughter: and witnessed each day with renewed anguish, her deplorable condition. For Venetia continued in a state which, to those unacquainted with her, might have been mistaken for insensibility, but her mother knew too well that it was despair. She never moved, she never sighed, or wept; she took no notice of any thing that occurred; she sought relief in no resources. Books, and drawings, and music were quite forgotten by

her; nothing amused, and nothing amoyed her; she was not even fretful; she had, indeed, apparently no physical ailment; she remained pale and silent, plunged in an absorbing paroxysm of overwhelming wo.

The unhappy Lady Annabel, at a loss how to act, yet anxious not to sink under these afflictions, at length thought it might be advisable to cross over to Venice. She felt assured now, that it would be a long time, if ever, before her child could again endure the fatigue of travel; and she thought that for every reason, whether for domestic comfort or medical advice, or those multifarious considerations which interest the invalid, a capital was by far the most desirable residence for them. There was a time when a visit to the city that had given her a name, had been a favourite dream of Venetia; she had often sighed to be within

“The sea-born city’s walls; the graceful towers
Loved by the bard—”

Those lines of her father had long echoed in her ear; but now the proposition called no light to her glazed eye, nor summoned for an instant the colour back to her cheek. She listened to her mother’s suggestion, and expressed her willingness to do whatever she desired. Venice was to her now only a name; for, without the presence and the united love of both her parents no spot on earth could interest and no combination of circumstances affect her. To Venice, however, the Herberts departed, having previously taken care that every arrangement should be made for their reception. The English ambassador at the ducal court was a relative of Lady Annabel, and therefore, no means or exertions were spared to secure the convenience and accommodation of the invalid. The barge of the ambassador met them at Fusina; and when Venetia beheld the towers and cupolas of Venice, suffused with a golden light and rising out of the bright blue waters, for a moment her spirit seemed to lighten. It is indeed a spectacle as beautiful as rare, and one to which the world offers few, if any, rivals. Gliding over the great Lagune, the buildings, with which the pictures at Cherbury had already made her familiar, gradually rose up before her; the mosque-like church of St. Marc, the tall Campanile red in the sun, the Moresco Palace of the doges, the deadly Bridge of Sighs, and the dark structure to which it leads.

Venice had not then fallen. The gorgeous standards of the sovereign republic, and its tributary kingdoms, still waved in the Place of St. Marc; the bucentaur was not rotting in the arsenal, and the warlike galleys of the state cruised without the Lagune; a busy and picturesque population swarmed in all directions; and the Venetian noble, the haughtiest of men, might still be seen proudly moving from the council of state, or stepping into a gondola amid a bowing crowd. All was stirring life, yet all was silent; the fantastic architecture, the glowing sky, the flitting gondolas, and the brilliant crowd gliding about with noiseless step—this city without sound—it seemed a dream!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ambassador had engaged for Lady Annabel a palace on the Grand Canal belonging to Count

Manfrini. It was a structure of great size and magnificence, and rose out of the water with a flight of marble steps. Within was a vast gallery, lined with statues and busts on tall pedestals; suites of spacious apartments, with marble floors and hung with satin; ceilings painted by Tintoretto and full of Turkish trophies; furniture, alike sumptuous and massy; the gilding, although of two hundred years’ duration, as bright and burnished as if it had but yesterday been touched with the brush: sequin gold, as the Venetians tell you to this day with pride; but even their old furniture will not soon be left to them, as palaces are now daily broken up like old ships, and their colossal spoils consigned to Hanway-yard and Bond-street, whence, reburnished and vamped up, their Titanic proportions in time appropriately figure in the boudoirs of May Fair and the miniature saloons of St. James’. Many a fine lady now sits in a doge’s chair, and many a dandy listens to his doom from a couch that has already witnessed the less inexorable decrees of the Council of Ten.

Amid all this splendour, however, one mournful idea alone pervaded the tortured consciousness of Lady Annabel Herbert. Daily the dark truth stole upon her with increased conviction, that Venetia had come hither only to die. There seemed, to the agitated ear of this distracted mother, a terrible omen even in the very name of her child; and she could not resist the persuasion that her final destiny would, in some degree, be connected with her fanciful appellation. The physicians, for, hopeless as Lady Annabel could not resist esteeming their interference, Venetia was now surrounded with physicians, shook their heads, prescribed different remedies, and gave contrary opinions; each day, however, their patient became more languid, thinner and more thin, until she seemed like a beautiful spirit gliding into the saloon, leaning on her mother’s arm, and followed by Pauncetot, who had now learned the fatal secret from her mistress, and whose heart was indeed almost broken at the prospect of the calamity that was impending over them.

At Padua Lady Annabel, in her mortified reveries, outraged as she conceived by her husband, and anxious about her daughter, had schooled herself into visiting her fresh calamities on the head of the unhappy Herbert, to whose intrusion and irresistible influence she ascribed all the illness of her child; but, as the indisposition of Venetia gradually, but surely, increased, until at length it assumed so alarming an aspect, that Lady Annabel, in the distraction of her mind, could no longer refrain from contemplating the most fatal results, she had taught herself bitterly to regret the failure of that approaching reconciliation which now she could not but believe would, at least, have secured her the life of Venetia. Whatever might be the risk of again uniting herself with her husband, whatever might be the mortification and misery which it might ultimately, or even speedily, entail upon her, there was no unhappiness that she could herself experience, which for one moment she could put into competition with the existence of her child. When that was the question, every feeling that had hitherto impelled her conduct assumed a totally different complexion. That conduct, in her view, had been a systematic sacrifice of self to secure the happiness of her daughter: and the result of all her exertions was, that not only her happiness was

destroyed, but her life fast vanishing away. To save Venetia, it now appeared to Lady Annabel, that there was no extremity which she would not endure; and, if it came to a question, whether Venetia should survive, or whether she should even be separated from her mother, her maternal heart now assured her that she would not for an instant hesitate in preferring an eternal separation to the death of her child. Her terror, indeed, worked to such a degree upon her character, that she even, at times, half resolved to speak to Venetia upon the subject, and contrive some method of communicating her wishes to her father; but pride, the habitual repugnance of so many years to converse upon the topic, mingled also, as should be confessed, with an indefinite apprehension of the ill-consequences of a conversation of such a character on the nervous temperament of her daughter, restrained her.

"My love!" said Lady Annabel, one day to her daughter, "do you think you could go out? The physicians think it of such great importance that you should attempt to exert yourself, however slightly."

"Dear mother, if any thing could annoy me from your lips, it would be to hear you quote these physicians," said Venetia. "Their daily presence and inquiries irritate me. Let me be at peace. I wish to see no one but you."

"But, Venetia," said Lady Annabel in a voice of great emotion, "Venetia—" and here she paused; "think of my anxiety."

"Dear mother, it would be ungrateful for me ever to forget that. But you, and you alone, know that my state, whatever it may be, and to whatever it may be, I am reconciled, is not produced by causes over which these physicians have any control, over which no one has control—now," added Venetia, in a tone of great mournfulness.

For here we must remark that so inexperienced was Venetia in the feelings of others, and so completely did she judge of the strength and purity of their emotions from her own, that reflection, since the terrible adventure of Rovigo, had only convinced her that it was no longer in her mother's power to unite herself again with her other parent. She had taught herself to look upon her father's burst of feeling towards Lady Annabel as the momentary and inevitable result of a meeting so unexpected and overpowering, but she did not doubt that the stranger whose presence had ultimately so fatally clouded that interview of promise, possessed claims upon Marmion Herbert which he would neither break, nor, upon reflection, be desirous to question. It was then the conviction that a reconciliation between her parents was now impossible, in which her despair originated, and she pictured to herself her father once more at Arqua, disturbed, perhaps for a day or two, as he naturally must be, by an interview so sudden and so harassing; shedding a tear, perhaps, in secret to the wife whom he had injured, and the child whom he had scarcely seen: but relapsing alike from the force of habit and inclination into those previous and confirmed feelings, under whose influence, she was herself a witness, his life had been so serene, and even so laudable. She was confirmed in these opinions by the circumstance of their never having heard since from him. Placed in his situation, if indeed an irresistible influence were not controlling him, would he have hesitated for a moment to have pre-

vented even their departure, or to have pursued them; to have sought at any rate some means of communicating with them? He was plainly reconciled to his present position, and felt that under these circumstances silence on his part was alike most discreet and kind. Venetia had ceased, therefore, to question the justice or the expediency, or even the abstract propriety of her mother's conduct. She viewed their condition how as the result of stern necessity. She pitied her mother, and for herself, she had no hope.

There was then much meaning in that little monosyllable with which Venetia concluded her reply to her mother. She had no hope "now." Lady Annabel, however, ascribed it to a very different meaning; she only believed that her daughter was of opinion that nothing would induce her now to listen to the overtures of her father. Prepared for any sacrifice of self, Lady Annabel replied, "But there is hope, Venetia, when your life is in question, there is nothing that should not be done."

"Nothing can be done," said Venetia, who, of course, could not dream of what was passing in her mother's mind.

Lady Annabel rose from her seat and walked to the window; apparently her eye watched only the passing gondolas, but indeed she saw them not: she saw only her child stretched perhaps on the couch of death.

"We quitted, perhaps, Rovigo too hastily," said Lady Annabel, in a choking voice, and with a face of scarlet. It was a terrible struggle, but the words were uttered.

"No, mother," said Venetia, to Lady Annabel's inexpressible surprise, "we did right to go."

"Even my child, even Venetia, with all her devotion to him, feels the absolute necessity of my conduct," thought Lady Annabel. Her pride returned; she felt the impossibility of making an overture to Herbert; she looked upon their daughter as the last victim of his fatal career.

CHAPTER IX.

How beautiful is night in Venice! Then music and the moon reign supreme; the glittering sky reflected on the waters, and every gondola gliding with sweet sounds! Around on every side are palaces and temples, rising from the waves which they shadow with their solemn forms, their costly fronts rich with the spoils of kingdoms, and softened with the magic of the midnight beam. The whole city too is poured forth for festival. The people lounge on the quays and cluster on the bridges; the light barks skim along in crowds, just touching the surface of the water, while their bright prows of polished iron gleam in the moonshine, and glitter in the rippling wave. Not a sound that is not graceful—the tinkle of guitars, the sighs of serenaders, and the responsive chorus of gondoliers. Now and then a laugh, light, joyous, and yet musical, bursts forth from some illuminated coffee-house, before which a bullo disports, a tumbler stands on his head, or a juggler mystifies; and all for a sequin!

The Place of St. Marc, at the period of our story, still presented the most brilliant spectacle of the kind in Europe. Not a spot was more dis-

tungished for elegance, luxury, and enjoyment. It was indeed the inner shrine of the temple of pleasure, and very strange and amusing would be the annals of its picturesque arcades. We must not however step behind their blue awnings, but content ourselves with the exterior scene; and certainly the Place of St. Mare, with the variegated splendour of its Christian mosque, the ornate architecture of its buildings, its diversified population, a tribute from every shore of the midland sea, and where the noble Venetian, in his robe of crimson silk and long white wig, might be jostled by the Slavonian with his target, and the Albanian in his kilt, while the Turk sitting cross-legged on his Persian carpet, smoked his long chibouque with serene gravity, and the mild Armenian glided by him with a low reverence, presented an aspect, under a Venetian moon, such as we shall not easily find again in Christendom, and, in spite of the dying glory and the neighbouring vice, was pervaded with an air of romance and refinement, compared with which the glittering dissipation of Paris, even in its liveliest and most graceful hours, assumes a character alike coarse and commonplace.

It is the hour of love and of faro; now is the hour to press your suit and to break a bank; to glide from the apartment of rapture into the chamber of chance. Thus a noble Venetian contrived to pass the night, in alternations of excitement that in general left him sufficiently serious of the morrow's council. For more vulgar tastes there was the minstrel, the conjurer, and the storyteller, goblets of Cypress wine, flasks of sherbet, and confectionary that dazzled like diamonds. And for every one, from the grave senator to the gay gondolier, there was an atmosphere in itself a spell, and which, after all, has more to do with human happiness than all the accidents of fortune and all the arts of government.

Amid this gay and brilliant multitude, one human being stood alone. Muffled in his cloak, and leaning against a column in the portico of St. Mare, an expression of oppressive care and affliction was imprinted on his countenance, and ill accorded with the light and festive scene. Had he been crossed in love or had he lost at play! Was it woman or gold to which his anxiety and sorrow were attributable, for under one or other of these categories, undoubtedly, all the miseries of man may range. Want of love, or want of money, lies at the bottom of all our griefs.

The stranger came forward, and leaving the joyous throng, turned down the Piazzetta, and approached the quay of the Lagune. A gondolier saluted him, and he entered his boat.

"Whither, signor?" said the gondolier.

"To the Grand Canal," he replied.

Over the moonlit wave the gondola swiftly skimmed! The scene was a marvellous contrast to the one which the stranger had just quitted; but it brought no serenity to his care-worn countenance, though his eye for a moment kindled as he looked upon the moon, that was sailing in the cloudless heaven with a single star by her side.

They had soon entered the Grand Canal, and the gondolier looked to his employer for instructions. "Row opposite to the Manfrini palace," said the stranger, "and rest upon your oar."

The blinds of the great window of the palace were withdrawn. Distinctly might be recognised a female figure bending over the recumbent form

of a girl. An hour passed away and still the gondola was motionless, and still the silent stranger gazed on the inmates of the palace. A servant now came forward and closed the curtain of the chamber. The stranger sighed, and waving his hand to the gondolier, bade him repair to the Lagune.

CHAPTER X.

It is curious to recall our feelings at a moment when a great event is impending over us, and we are utterly unconscious of its probable occurrence. How often does it happen that a subject which almost unceasingly engages our mind, is least thought of at the very instant that the agitating suspense involved in its consideration is perhaps about to be terminated forever! The very morning after the mysterious gondola had rested so long before the Manfrini Palace, Venetia rose for the first time since the flight from Rovigo, refreshed by her slumbers and tranquil in her spirit. It was not in her power to recall her dreams; but they had left a vague and yet serene impression. There seemed a lightness in her heart, that long had been unusual with her, and she greeted her mother with a smile, faint indeed, yet natural.

Perhaps this beneficial change, slight, but still delightful, might be attributed to the softness and the splendour of the morn. Before the approach of winter, it seemed that the sun was resolved to remind the Venetians that they were his children; and that, although his rays might be soon clouded for a season, they were not to believe that their parent had deserted them. The sea was like glass, a golden haze suffused the horizon, and a breeze, not strong enough to disturb the waters, was wafted at intervals from the gardens of the Brenta, fitful and sweet.

Venetia had yielded to the suggestion of her mother, and had agreed for the first time to leave the palace. They stepped into their gondola, and were wafted to an island in the Lagune where there was a convent, and, what in Venice was more rare and more delightful, a garden. Its scanty shrubberies sparkled in the sun; and a cypress flanked by a pine-tree, offered to the eye unused to trees a novel and picturesque group. Beneath its shade they rested, watching on one side the distant city, and on the other the still and gleaming waters of the Adriatic. While they were thus sitting, renovated by the soft air and pleasant spectacle, a holy father, with a beard like a meteor, appeared and addressed them.

"Welcome to St. Lazo!" said the holy father, speaking in English; "and may the peace that reigns within its walls fill also your breasts!"

"Indeed, holy father," said Lady Annabel to the Armenian monk, "I have long heard of your virtues and your happy life."

"You know that Paradise was placed in our country," said the monk with a smile. "We have all lost Paradise, but the Armenian has lost his country too. Nevertheless, with God's blessing, on this islet we have found an Eden, pure at least and tranquil."

"For the pious, Paradise exists everywhere," said Lady Annabel.

"You have been in England, holy father?" said Venetia.

"It has not been my good fortune," replied the monk.

"Yet you speak our tongue with a facility and accent that surprise me."

"I learned it in America, where I long resided," rejoined the Armenian.

"This is for your eye, lady," continued the monk, drawing a letter from his bosom.

Lady Annabel felt not a little surprised; but the idea immediately occurred to her that it was some conventual memorial, appealing to her charity. She took the paper from the monk, who immediately moved away; but what was the agitation of Lady Annabel when she recognised the handwriting of her husband! Her first thought was to save Venetia from sharing that agitation. She rose quickly; she commanded herself sufficiently to advise her daughter in a calm tone, to remain seated, while for a moment she refreshed herself by a stroll. She had not quitted Venetia many paces, when she broke the seal and read these lines:—

"Tremble not, Annabel, when you recognise this handwriting. It is that of one whose only aspiration is to contribute to your happiness; and, although the fulfilment of that fond desire may be denied him, it never shall be said, even by you, that any conduct of his should now occasion you annoyance. I am in Venice at the peril of my life, which I only mention because the difficulties inseparable from my position are the principal cause that you did not receive this communication immediately after our strange meeting. I have gazed at night upon your palace, and watched the forms of my wife and our child; but one word from you, and I quit Venice for ever, and it shall not be my fault if you are ever again disturbed by the memory of the miserable Herbert.

"But before I go, I will make this one appeal if not to your justice, at least to your mercy. After the fatal separation of a life, we have once more met; you have looked upon me not with hatred; my hand has once more pressed yours; for a moment I indulged the impossible hope, that this weary and exhausted spirit might at length be blessed. With agony I allude to the incident that dispelled the rapture of this vision. Sufficient for me most solemnly to assure you that four-and-twenty hours had not elapsed without that feeble and unhallowed tie being severed forever! It vanished instantaneously before the presence of my wife and my child. However you decide, it can never again subsist: its utter and eternal dissolution was the inevitable homage to your purity.

"Whatever may have been my errors, whatever my crimes—for I will not attempt to justify to you a single circumstance of my life—I humble myself in the dust before you, and solicit only mercy; yet whatever may have been my career, ah! Annabel, in the infinite softness of your soul was it not for a moment pardoned? Am I indeed to suffer for that last lamentable intrusion? You are a woman, Annabel, with a brain as clear as your heart is pure. Judge me with calmness, Annabel; were there no circumstances in my situation to extenuate that deplorable connexion? I will not urge them; I will not even intimate them; but surely, Annabel, when I kneel before you full of deep repentance and long remorse, if you could pardon the past, it is not that incident, however mortifying to you, however disgraceful to myself, that should be an impassable barrier to all my hopes!

"Once you loved me; I ask you not to love me now. There is nothing about me now that can touch the heart of woman. I am old before my time; bent with the blended influence of action and of thought, and of physical and moral suffering. The play of my spirit has gone forever. My passions have expired like my hopes. The remaining sands of my life are few. Once it was otherwise: you can recall a different picture of the Marmion on whom you smiled, and of whom you were the first love. O! Annabel—gray, feeble, exhausted, penitent—let me stagger over your threshold, and die! I ask no more; I will not hope for your affection; I will not even count upon your pity; but endure my presence; let your roof screen my last days!"

It was read; it was read again, dim as was the sight of Lady Annabel with fast-flowing tears. Still holding the letter, but with hands fallen, she gazed upon the shining waters before her in a fit of abstraction. It was the voice of her child that roused her.

"Mother," said Venetia, in a tone of some decision, "you are troubled, and we have only one cause of trouble. That letter is from my father."

Lady Annabel gave her the letter in silence.

Venetia withdrew almost unconsciously a few paces from her mother. She felt this to be the crisis of her life. There never was a moment which she believed required more fully the presence of all her energies. Before she had addressed Lady Annabel, she had endeavoured to steel her mind to great exertion. Yet now that she held the letter, she could not command herself sufficiently to read it. Her breath deserted her—her hand lost its power; she could not even open the lines on which perhaps her life depended. Suddenly, with a rapid effort, she glanced at the contents. The blood returned to her cheek—her eye became bright with excitement—she gasped for breath—she advanced to Lady Annabel. "Ah! mother," she exclaimed, "you will grant all that it desires!"

Still gazing on the wave that laved the shore of the island with an almost imperceptible ripple, Lady Annabel continued silent.

"Mother," said Venetia, "my beloved mother, you hesitate." She approached Lady Annabel, and, with one arm around her neck, she grasped with the other her mother's hand. "I implore you, by all that affection which you lavish on me, yield to this supplication. O! mother, dearest mother, it has been my hope that my life has been at least a life of duty; I have laboured to yield to all your wishes. I have struggled to make their fulfilment the law of my being. Yes! mother, your memory will assure you, that when the sweetest emotions of my heart were the stake, you appealed to me to sacrifice them, and they were dedicated to your will. Have I ever murmured? I have sought only to repay your love by obedience. Speak to me, dearest mother! I implore you speak to me! Tell me can you ever repent relenting in this instance! O! mother, you will not hesitate; you will not indeed; you will bring joy and content to our long harassed hearth! Tell me so; I beseech you tell me so! I wish, O! how I wish, that you would comply from the mere impulse of your own heart! But grant that it is a sacrifice; grant that it may be unwise—that it may be vain;—I supplicate you to make it! I, your child, who never deserted you,

who will never desert you, pledging my faith to you, in the face of Heaven; for my sake I supplicate you to make it. You do not hesitate—you cannot hesitate; mother, you cannot hesitate. Ah! you would not, if you knew all; if you knew all the misery of my life, you would be glad—you would be cheerful—you would look upon this as an interposition of Providence in favour of your Venetia; you would, indeed, dear mother!"

"What evil fortune guided our steps to Italy!" said Lady Annabel in a solemn tone, and as if in soliloquy.

"No, no, mother; not evil fortune; fortune the best and brightest," exclaimed her daughter. "We came here to be happy, and happiness we have at length gained. It is in our grasp; I feel it. It was not fortune, dear mother, it was fate, it was Providence, it was God. You have been faithful to him, and he has brought back to you my father, chastened and repentant. God has turned his heart to all your virtues. Will you desert him? No, no, mother, you will not, you cannot; for his sake, for your own sake, and for your child's, you will not!"

"For twenty years I have acted from an imperious sense of duty," said Lady Annabel, "and for your sake, Venetia, as much as for my own. Shall the feeling of a moment—"

"O! mother, dearest mother, say not these words. With me, at least, it has not been the feeling of a moment. It haunted my infancy; it harassed me while a girl; it has brought me in the prime of womanhood to the brink of the grave. And with you, mother, has it been the feeling of a moment? Ah! you ever loved him, when his name was never breathed by those lips. You loved him when you deemed he had forgotten you; when you pictured him to yourself in all the pride of health and genius, wanton and daring; and now, now that he comes to you penitent, perhaps dying, more like a remorseful spirit than a breathing being, and humbles himself before you, and appeals only to your mercy, ah! my mother, you cannot reject, you could not reject him, even if you were alone,—even if you had no child!"

"My child! my child! all my hopes were in my child," murmured Lady Annabel.

"Is she not by your side?" said Venetia.

"You know not what you ask; you know not what you counsel," said Lady Annabel. "It has been the prayer and effort of my life that you should never know. There is a bitterness in the reconciliation which follows long estrangement, that yields a pang more acute even than the first disunion. Shall I be called upon to mourn over the wasted happiness of twenty years? Why did he not hate us?"

"The pang is already felt, mother," said Venetia. "Reject my father, but you cannot resume the feelings of a month back. You have seen him; you have listened to him. He is no longer the character which justified your conduct, and upheld you under the trial. His image has entered your soul; your heart is softened. Bid him quit Venice without seeing you, and you will remain the most miserable of women."

"On his head, then, be the final desolation," said Lady Annabel; "it is but a part of the lot that he has yielded me."

"I am silent," said Venetia, relaxing her grasp; "I see that your child is not permitted to enter into your consideration." She turned away.

"Venetia!" said her mother.

"Mother!" said Venetia, looking back, but not returning.

"Return one moment to me."

Venetia slowly rejoined her. Lady Annabel spoke in a kind and gentle, though very serious tone.

"Venetia," she said, "what I am about to speak is not the impulse of the moment, but has been long revolved in my mind; do not, therefore, misapprehend it. I express without passion what I believe to be truth. I am persuaded that the presence of your father is necessary to your happiness; nay, more, to your life. I recognise the mysterious influence which he has ever exercised over your existence. I feel it impossible for me any longer to struggle against a power to which I bow. Be happy, then, my daughter, and live. Fly to your father, and be to him as matchless a child as you have been to me." She uttered these last words in a choking voice.

"Is this, indeed, the dictate of your calm judgment, mother?" said Venetia.

"I call God to witness, it has of late been more than once on my lips. The other night, when I spoke of Rovigo, I was about to express this."

"Then, mother," said Venetia, "I find that I have been misunderstood. At least I thought my feelings towards yourself had been appreciated. They have not; and I can truly say, my life does not now afford a single circumstance to which I can look back with content. Well will it indeed be for me to die!"

"The dream of my life," said Lady Annabel, in a tone of infinite distress, "was that she, at least, should never know unhappiness. It was indeed a dream."

There was now a silence of several minutes. Lady Annabel remained in exactly the same position. Venetia standing at a little distance from her, looking resigned and sorrowful.

"Venetia," at length said Lady Annabel, "why are you silent?"

"Mother, I have no more to say. I pretend not to act in this life; it is my duty to follow you."

"And your inclination?" inquired Lady Annabel.

"I have ceased to have a wish upon any subject," said Venetia.

"Venetia," said Lady Annabel with a great effort, "I am miserable."

This unprecedented confession of suffering from the strong mind of her mother, melted Venetia to the heart. She advanced, and threw her arms round her mother's neck, and buried her weeping face in Lady Annabel's bosom.

"Speak to me, my daughter," said Lady Annabel; "counsel me, for my mind trembles; anxiety has weakened it. Nay, I beseech you, speak. Speak, speak, Venetia. What shall I do?"

"Mother, I will never say any thing again but that I love you."

"I see the holy father in the distance. Let us walk to him, my child, and meet him."

Accordingly Lady Annabel, now leaning on Venetia, approached the monk. About five minutes elapsed before they reached him, during which not a word was spoken.

"Holy father," said Lady Annabel in a tone of firmness that surprised her daughter and made her tremble with anticipation, "you know the writer of this letter?"

"He is my friend of many years, lady," replied the Armenian: "I know him in America. I owe to him my life, and more than my life. There breathes not his equal among men."

A tear started to the eye of Lady Annabel; she recalled the terms in which the household at Arquà had spoken of Herbert. "He is in Venice!" she inquired.

"He is within these walls," the monk replied.

Venetia, scarcely able to stand, felt her mother start. After a momentary pause, Lady Annabel said, "Can I speak with him, and alone?"

Nothing but the most nervous apprehension of throwing any obstacle in the way of the interview could have sustained Venetia. Quite pale, with her disengaged hand clenched, not a word escaped her lips. She hung upon the answer of the monk.

"You can see him, and alone," said the monk. "He is now in the sacristy. Follow me."

"Venetia," said Lady Annabel, "remain in this garden. I will accompany this holy man. Stop! embrace me before I go, and," she added, in a whisper, "pray for me."

It needed not the admonition of her mother to induce Venetia to seek refuge in prayer, in this agony of her life. But for its salutary and stilling influence, it seemed to her that she must have forfeited all control over her mind. The suspense was too terrible for human aid to support her. Seated by the sea-side, she covered her face with her hands, and invoked the Supreme assistance. More than an hour passed away. Venetia looked up. Two beautiful birds, of strange form and spotless plumage, that perhaps had wandered from the Egean, were hovering over her head, bright and glancing in the sun. She accepted their appearance as a good omen. At this moment she heard a voice, and, looking up, observed the monk in the distance, beckoning to her. She arose, and with a trembling step, approached him. He retired, still motioning to her to follow him. She entered, by a low portal, a dark cloister; it led to an ante-chapel, through which he passed; her ear caught the solemn chorus of the brethren. Her step faltered; her sight was clouded; she was as one walking in a dream. The monk opened a door, and retiring waved his hand, as for her to enter. There was a spacious and lofty chamber, scantily furnished, some huge chests, and many sacred garments. At the extreme distance her mother was reclined on a bench, her head supported by a large crimson cushion, and her father kneeling by her mother's side. With a soundless step, and not venturing even to breathe, Venetia approached them, and, she knew not how, found herself embraced by both her parents.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

In a green valley of the Apennines, close to the sea-coast between Genoa and Spezzia, is a marine villa, that once belonged to the Malaspina family, an olden time the friends and patrons of Dante. It is rather a fantastic pile, painted in fresco, but spacious, in good repair, and convenient. Although little more than a mile from Spezzia, a glimpse of the blue sea can only be caught from one particu-

lar spot, so completely is the land locked with hills, covered with groves of chestnut and olive orchards. From the heights, however, you enjoy magnificent prospects of the most picturesque portion of the Italian coast; a lofty, undulating, and wooded shore, with an infinite variety of bays and jutting promontories; while the eye, wandering from Leghorn on one side towards Genoa on the other, traces an almost uninterrupted line of hamlets and casinos, gardens and orchards, terraces of vines, and groves of olive. Beyond them, the broad and blue expanse of the midland ocean, glittering in the meridian blaze, or about to receive perhaps in its glowing waters, the red orb of sunset.

It was in the month of May, in Italy, at least, the merry month of May, and Marmion Herbert came forth from the villa Malaspina, and throwing himself on the turf, was soon lost in the volume of Plato, which he bore with him, he did not move until in the course of an hour he was roused by the arrival of servants, who brought seats and a table, when, looking up, he observed Lady Annabel and Venetia in the portico of the villa. He rose to greet them, and gave his arm to his wife.

"Spring in the Apennines, my Annabel," said Herbert, "is a happy combination. I am more in love each day with this residence. The situation is so sheltered, the air so soft and pure, the spot so tranquil, and the season so delicious, that it realizes all my romance of retirement. As for you, I never saw you look so well; and as for Venetia, I can scarcely believe this rosy nymph could have been our pale-eyed girl, who cost us such anxiety!"

"Our breakfast is not ready. Let us walk to our sea view," said Lady Annabel. "Give me your book to carry, Marmion."

"There let the philosopher repose," said Herbert, throwing the volume on the turf. "Plato dreamed of what I enjoy."

"And of what did Plato dream, papa?" said Venetia.

"He dreamed of love, child."

Venetia took her father's disengaged arm.

They had now arrived at their sea view, a glimpse of the Mediterranean between two tall crags.

"A sail in the offing!" said Herbert. "How that solitary sail tells, Annabel!"

"I feel the sea breeze, mother. Does not it remind you of Weymouth?" said Venetia.

"Ah! Marmion," said Lady Annabel, "I would that you could see Masham once more. He is the only friend that I regret."

"He prospers, Annabel; let that be our consolation: I have at least not injured him."

They turned their steps; their breakfast was now prepared. The sun had risen above the hill, beneath whose shades they rested, and the opposite side of the valley sparkled in light. It was a cheerful scene. "I have a passion for living in the air," said Herbert; "I always envied the shepherds in Don Quixote. One of my youthful dreams was living among mountains of rosemary, and drinking only goat's milk. After breakfast I will read you Don Quixote's description of the golden age. I have often read it until the tears came into my eyes."

"We must fancy ourselves in Spain," said Lady Annabel; "it is not difficult in this wild green valley; and if we have not rosemary, we have scents as sweet. Nature is our garden here, Venetia; and I do not envy even the statues and cypresses of our villa of the lake."

“We must make a pilgrimage some day to the Maggiore, Annabel,” said Herbert. “It is hallowed ground to me now.”

Their meal was finished, the servants brought their work, and books, and drawings; and Herbert, resuming his natural couch, reopened his Plato, but Venetia ran into the villa, and returned with a volume. “You must read us the golden age, papa,” she said, as she offered him, with a smile, his favourite Don Quixote.

“You must fancy the Don looking earnestly upon a handful of acorns,” said Herbert, opening the book, “while he exclaims, ‘O! happy age which our first parents called the age of gold! not because gold, so much adored in this iron age, was then easily purchased, but because those two fatal words, *meum* and *tuum*, were distinctions unknown to the people of these fortunate times; for all things were in common in that holy age; men, for their sustenance, needed only to lift their hands, and take it from the sturdy oak, whose spreading arms liberally invited them to gather the wholesome savoury fruit: while the clear springs, and silver rivulets, with luxuriant plenty, afforded them their pure refreshing water. In hollow trees, and in the clefts of rocks, the labouring and industrious bees erected their little commonwealths, that men might reap with pleasure and with ease the sweet and fertile harvest of their toils. The tough and strenuous cork-trees did, of themselves, and without other art than their native liberality, dismiss and impart their broad light bark, which served to cover those lowly huts, propped up with rough hewn stakes, that were first built as a shelter against the inclemencies of the air. All then was union, all peace, all love and friendship in the world. As yet no rude ploughshare presumed with violence to pry into the pious bowels of our mother earth, for she without compulsion kindly yielded from every part of her fruitful and spacious bosom, whatever might at once satisfy, sustain, and indulge her frugal children. Then was the time when innocent, beautiful young shepherdesses went tripping over the hills and vales; their lovely hair sometimes plaited, sometimes loose and flowing, clad in no other vestment but what the modesty of nature might require. The Tyrian die, the rich glossy hue of silk, martyred and dissembled into every colour, which are now esteemed so fine and magnificent, were unknown to the innocent simplicity of that age; yet, bedecked with more becoming leaves and flowers, they outshone the proudest of the vain-dressing ladies of our times, arrayed in the most magnificent garbs and all the most sumptuous adornings which idleness and luxury have taught succeeding pride. Lovers then expressed the passion of their souls in the unaffected language of the heart, with the native plainness and sincerity in which they were conceived, and divested of all that artificial contexture which enervates what it labours to enforce. Imposture, deceit, and malice had not yet crept in, and imposed themselves unbribed upon mankind in the disguise of truth: justice, unbiassed either by favour or interest, which now so fatally pervert it, was equally and impartially dispensed; nor was the judge’s fancy law, for then there were neither judges nor causes to be judged. The modest maid might then walk alone. But, in this degenerate age, fraud and a legion of ills infecting the world, no virtue can be safe, no honour be secure; while wanton desires

diffused into the hearts of men, corrupt the strictest watches and closest retreats, which, though as intricate and unknown as the labyrinth of Crete, are no security for chastity. Thus, that primitive innocence being vanished, the oppression daily prevailing, there was a necessity to oppose the torrent of violence; for which reason the order of knight-hood errant was instituted, to defend the honour of virgins, protect widows, relieve orphans, and assist all that are distressed. Now I myself am one of this order, honest friends; and, though all people are obliged by the law of nature to be kind to persons of my character, yet since you, without knowing any thing of this obligation, have so generously entertained me, I ought to pay you my utmost acknowledgment, and accordingly return you my most hearty thanks.”

“‘Here,” said Herbert, as he closed the book, in a fit of enthusiasm. “In my opinion, Don Quixote was the best man that ever lived.”

“But he did not ever live,” said Lady Annabel, smiling.

“He lives to us,” said Herbert. “He is the same to this age as if he had absolutely wandered over the plains of Castile and watched in the Sierra Morena. We cannot, indeed, find his tomb; but he has left us his great example. In his hero, Cervantes has given us the picture of a great and benevolent philosopher, and in his Sancho a complete personification of the world, selfish and cunning, and yet overawed by the genius that he cannot comprehend: alive to all the material interests of existence, yet sighing after the ideal; securing his four young foals of the she ass, yet indulging in dreams of empire.”

“But what do you think of the assault on the windmills, Marmion?” said Lady Annabel.

“In the outset of his adventures, as in the outset of our lives, he was misled by his enthusiasm,” replied Herbert, “without which, after all, we can do nothing. But, the result is, Don Quixote was a redresser of wrongs, and therefore the world esteemed him mad.”

In this vein, now conversing, now occupied with their pursuits, and occasionally listening to some passage which Herbert called to their attention, and which ever served as the occasion for some critical remarks, that were ever as striking from their originality as they were happy in their expression, the freshness of the morning disappeared, the sun now crowned the valley with his meridian beam, and they re-entered the villa. The ladies returned to their cool saloon, and Herbert to his study.

It was there he amused himself by composing the following lines:—

SPRING IN THE APENNINES.

I

Spring in the Apennine now holds her court
 Within an amphitheatre of hills,
 Clothed with the blooming chestnut; musical
 With murmuring pines, waving their light green cones,
 Like youthful Bacchants; while the dewy grass,
 The myrtle and the mountain violet,
 Blend their bright odours with the fragrant trees,
 And sweeten the soft air. Above us spreads
 The purple sky, bright with the unseen sun
 The hills yet screen, although the golden beam
 Touches the topmost boughs, and tints with light
 The gray and sparkling crags. The breath of morn
 Still lingers in the valley; but the bee
 With restless passion hovers on the wing,
 Waiting the opening flower, of whose embrace
 The sun shall be the signal. Poised in air,

The winged minstrel of the liquid dawn,
The lark pours forth his lyric, and responds
To the fresh chorus of the sylvan doves,
The stir of branches and the fall of streams:
The harmonies of nature!

II.

Gentle Spring!

Once more, O! yes! once more I feel thy breath,
And charm of renovation! To the sky
Thou bringest light, and to the glowing earth,
A garb of grace: but sweeter than the sky
That hath no cloud, and sweeter than the earth
With all its pageantry, the peerless boon
Thou bearest to me—a temper like thine own;
A spring-like spirit, beautiful and glad!
Long years—long years of suffering and of thought
Deeper than wo, had dimmed the eager eye
Once quick to catch thy brightness, and the ear
That lingered on thy music, the harsh world
Had jarred. The freshness of my life was gone,
And hope no more an omen in thy bloom
Found of a fertile future! There are minds
Like lands but with one season, and that drear;
Mine was eternal winter!

III.

A dark dream,

Of hearts estranged, and of an Eden lost
Entranced my being, one absorbing thought,
Which, if not torture, was a dull despair
That agony were light to. But while sad
Within the desert of my life I roamed,
And no sweet springs of love guided forth to greet
My wearied heart—behold two spirits came
Floating in light, seraphic ministers,
The semblance of whose splendour on me fell
As on some dusky stream the main ray
Touching the gloomy waters with its life.
And both were fond and one was merciful!
And to my home long forfeited they bore
My vagrant spirit, and the gentle hearth
I reckless fled, received me with its shade
And pleasant refuge. And our softened hearts
Were like the twilight, when our very bliss
Calls tears to soothe our rapture; as the stars
Steal forth, then shining smiles their trembling ray
Mixed with our tenderness; and love was there
In all his manifold forms; the sweet embrace,
And thrilling pressure of the gentle hand,
And silence speaking with the melting eye!

IV.

And now again I feel thy breath, O Spring!
And now the seal hath fallen from my gaze,
And thy wild music in my ready ear
Finds a quick echo! The discordant world
Mars not thy melodies; thy blossoms now
Are emblems of my heart; and through my veins
The flow of youthful feeling long pent up
Glides like thy sunny streams! In this fair scene,
On forms still fairer I my blessing pour;
On her the beautiful, the wise, the good,
Who learned the sweetest lesson to forgive;
And on the bright-eyed daughter of our love,
Who soothed a mother, and a father saved!

CHAPTER II.

BETWEEN the reconciliation of Lady Annabel Herbert with her husband, at the Armenian convent at Venice, and the spring morning in the Apennines, which we have just described, half a year had intervened. The political position of Marmion Herbert rendered it impossible for him to remain in any city where there was a representative of his Britannic Majesty. Indeed it was scarcely safe for him to be known out of America. He had quitted that country shortly after the struggle was over, chiefly from considerations for his health. His energies had been fast failing him; and a retired life and change of climate had been recommended by his physicians. His own feelings induced him to visit Italy, where he had once intended to pass his life, and where he now repaired to await death. Assuming a feigned name, and living in strict seclusion, it is probable that his pre-

sence would never have been discovered; or if detected, would not have been noticed. Once more united with his wife, her personal influence at the court of St. James', and her powerful connexions might secure him from annoyance; and Venetia had even indulged in a vague hope of returning to England. But Herbert could only have found himself again in his native country as a prisoner on parole. It would have been quite impossible for him to mix in the civil business of his native land, or enjoy any of the rights of citizenship. If a mild sovereign in his mercy had indeed accorded him a pardon, it must have been accompanied with rigorous and mortifying conditions; and his presence, in all probability, would have been confined to his country residence and its immediate neighbourhood. The pride of Lady Annabel herself recoiled from this sufferance; and although Herbert—keenly conscious of the sacrifice which a permanent estrangement from England entailed upon his wife and child—would have submitted to any restrictions, however humiliating, provided they were not inconsistent with his honour, it must be confessed that, when he spoke of this painful subject to his wife, it was with no slight self-congratulation that he had found her resolution to remain abroad under any circumstances was fixed with her habitual decision. She communicated, indeed, both to the Bishop of ***** and to her brother, the unexpected change that had occurred in her condition, and she had reason to believe that a representation of what had happened would be made to the royal family. Perhaps both the head of her house and her reverend friend anticipated that time might remove the barrier that presented itself to Herbert's immediate return to England: they confined their answers, however to congratulations on the reconciliation, to their confidence in the satisfaction it would occasion her, and to the expression of their faithful friendship; and neither alluded to a result which both, if only for her sake, desired.

The Herberts had quitted Venice a very few days after the meeting on the Island of St. Lazaro; had travelled by slow journeys, crossing the Apennines, to Genoa; and only remained in that city until they engaged their present residence. It combined all the advantages which they desired: seclusion, beauty, comfort, and the mild atmosphere that Venetia had seemed to require. It was not, however, the genial air that had recalled the rose to Venetia's cheek and the sunny smile to her bright eye, or had inspired again that graceful form with all its pristine elasticity. It was a heart content; a spirit at length at peace. The contemplation of the happiness of those most dear to her, that she hourly witnessed; and the blissful consciousness that her exertions had mainly contributed to, if not completely occasioned, all this felicity, were remedies of far more efficacy than all the consultations and prescriptions of her physicians. The conduct of her father repaid her for all her sufferings, and realized all her dreams of domestic tenderness and delight. Tender, grateful, and affectionate, Herbert hovered round her mother like a delicate spirit who had been released by some kind mortal from a tedious and revolting thralldom, and who believed he could never sufficiently testify his devotion. There was so much respect blended with his fondness, that the spirit of her mother was utterly subdued by his irresistible demeanour. All her sadness and reserve, her distrust and her fea-

had vanished; and rising confidence mingling with the love she had ever borne to him, she taught herself even to seek his opinion, and be guided by his advice. She could not refrain, indeed, from occasionally feeling—in this full enjoyment of his love—that she might have originally acted with too much precipitation; and that, had she only bent for a moment to the necessity of conciliation, and condescended to the excusable artifices of affection, their misery might have been prevented. Once when they were alone, her softened heart would have confessed to Herbert this painful conviction, but he was too happy and too generous to permit her for a moment to indulge in such a remorseful retrospect. All the error, he insisted, was his own; and he had been fool enough to have wantonly forfeited a happiness which time and experience had now taught him to appreciate.

“We married too young, Marmion,” said his wife.

“It shall be that then, love,” replied Herbert; “but for all that I have suffered, I would not have avoided my fate on the condition of losing the exquisite present!”

It is perhaps scarcely necessary to remark, that Herbert avoided with the most scrupulous vigilance the slightest allusion to any of those peculiar opinions, for which he was unhappily too celebrated. Musing over the singular revolutions which had already occurred in his habits and his feelings towards herself, Lady Annabel indeed did not despair that his once self-sufficient soul might ultimately bow to that blessed faith which to herself had ever proved so great a support and so exquisite a solace. It was, indeed, the inexpressible hope that lingered at the bottom of her heart; and sometimes she even indulged in the delightful fancy that his mild and penitent spirit had by the gracious mercy of Providence, been already touched by the bright sunbeam of conviction. At all events, his subdued and chastened temperament was no unworthy preparation for still greater blessings. It was this hallowed anticipation which consoled, and alone consoled, Lady Annabel for her own estrangement from the communion of her national church. Of all the sacrifices which her devotion to Herbert entailed upon her, this was the one which she felt most constantly and most severely. Not a day elapsed but the Chapel at Cherbury rose before her; and when she remembered that neither herself nor her daughter might again kneel round the altar of their God, she almost trembled at the step which she had taken, and almost esteemed it a sacrifice of heavenly to earthly duty, which no considerations perhaps warranted. This apprehension, indeed, was the cloud in her life, and one which Venetia, who felt all its validity, found difficulty in combating.

Otherwise, when Venetia beheld her parents, she felt ethereal, and seemed to move in air; for her life, in spite of its apparent tranquillity, was to her all excitement. She never looked upon her father, or heard his voice, without a thrill. His society was as delightful as his heart was tender. It seemed to her that she could listen to him forever. Every word he spoke was different to the language of other men; there was not a subject on which his richly cultivated mind could not pour forth instantaneously a flood of fine fancies and deep intelligence. He seemed to have read every book in every language, and to have mused over every line he

had read. She could not conceive how one, the tone of whose mind was so original that it suggested on every topic some conclusion that struck instantly by its racy novelty, could be so saturated with the learning and the views of other men. Although they lived in unbroken solitude, and were almost always together, not a day passed that she did not find herself musing over some thought or expression of her father, and which broke from his mind without effort, and as if by chance.

Literature to Herbert was now only a source of amusement and engaging occupation. All thought of fame had long fled his soul. He cared not for being disturbed; and he would throw down his Plato for Don Quixote, or close his *Æschylus* and take up a volume of Madame de Sévigné without a murmur, if reminded by any thing that occurred of a passage which might contribute to the amusement and instruction of his wife and daughter. Indeed, his only study now was to contribute to their happiness. For him they had given up their country and society, and he sought by his vigilant attention, and his various accomplishments, to render their hours as light and pleasant as, under such circumstances, was possible. His muse, too, was only dedicated to the celebration of any topic which their life or themselves suggested. He loved to lie under the trees, and pour forth sonnets to Lady Annabel; and encouraged Venetia, by the readiness and interest with which he invariably complied with her intimations, to throw out every fancy which occurred to her for his verse. A life passed without the intrusion of a single evil passion, without a single expression that was not soft, and graceful, and mild, and adorned with all the resources of a most accomplished and creative spirit, required not the distractions of society. It would have shrunk from it—from all its artificial excitement and vapid reaction. The days of the Herberts flowed on in one bright, continuous stream of love, and literature, and gentle pleasures. Beneath them was the green earth, above them the blue sky. Their spirits were as clear, and their hearts as soft as the clime.

The hour of twilight was approaching, and the Herberts were preparing for their daily walk. Their simple repast was finished, and Venetia held the verses which her father had written in the morning, and which he had presented to her.

“Let us descend to Spezzia,” said Herbert to Lady Annabel; “I love an ocean sunset.”

Accordingly they proceeded through their valley to their craggy path which led down to the bay. After passing through a small ravine, the magnificent prospect opened before them. The sun was yet an hour above the horizon, and the sea was like a lake of molten gold; the colour of the sky nearest to the sun of a pale green, with two or three burnished streaks of vapour, quite still, and so thin you could almost catch the sky through them, fixed, as it were, in this gorgeous frame. It was now a dead calm, but the sail that had been hovering the whole morning in the offing, had made the harbour in time, and had just cast anchor near some coasting craft and fishing boats, all that now remained where Napoleon had projected forming one of the arsenals of the world.

Tracing their way down a mild declivity, covered with spreading vineyards, and quite fragrant with the blossom of the vine, the Herberts proceeded through a wood of olives, and emerged on a terrace raised directly above the shore, leading to Spezzia,

and studded here and there with rugged groups of aloes.

"I have often observed here," said Venetia, "about a mile out at sea—there now, where I point—the water rise. It is now a calm, and yet it is more troubled, I think, than usual. Tell me the cause, dear father, for I have often wished to know."

"It passes my experience," said Herbert; "but here is an ancient fisherman; let us inquire of him."

He was an old man, leaning against a rock, and smoking his pipe in contemplative silence; his face bronzed with the sun and the roughness of many seasons, and his gray hairs not hidden by his long blue cap. Herbert saluted him, and pointing to the phenomenon, requested an explanation of it.

"'Tis a fountain of fresh water, signor, that rises in our gulf," said the old fisherman, "to the height of twenty feet."

"And is it constant?" inquired Herbert.

"'Tis the same in sunshine and in storm, in summer and in winter, in calm or in breeze," said the old fisherman.

"And has it always been so?"

"It came before my time."

"A philosophic answer," said Herbert, "and deserves a paul. Mine was a crude question. Adio, good friend."

"I should like to drink of that fountain of fresh water, Annabel," said Herbert. "There seems to me something wondrous fanciful in it. Some day we will row there. It shall be calm like this."

"We want a fountain in our valley," said Lady Annabel.

"We do," said Herbert; "and I think we must make one; we must inquire at Genoa. I am curious in fountains. Our fountain should, I think, be classical; simple, compact, with a choice inscription, the altar of a Naiad."

"And mamma shall make the design, and you shall write the inscription," said Venetia.

"And you shall be the nymph, child," said Herbert.

They were now within a bowshot of the harbour, and a jutting cliff of marble, more graceful from a contiguous bed of myrtles, invited them to rest, and watch the approaching sunset.

"Say what they like," said Herbert, "there is a spell in the shores of the Mediterranean Sea which no others can rival. Never was such a union of natural loveliness and magical associations! On these shores have risen all that interests us in the past:—Egypt and Palestine, Greece, Rome, and Carthage, Moorish Spain, and feudal Italy. These shores have yielded us our religion, our arts, our literature, and our laws. If all that we have gained from the shores of the Mediterranean was erased from the memory of man, we should be savages. Will the Atlantic ever be as memorable? Its civilization will be more rapid, but will it be as refined? and, far more important, will it be as permanent? Will it not lack the racy vigour and the subtle spirit of aboriginal genius? Will not a colonial character cling to its society? Feeble, inanimate, evanescent. What America is deficient in, is creative intellect. It has no nationality. Its intelligence has been imported like its manufactured goods. Its inhabitants are a people, but are they a nation? I wish that the empire of the Incas, and the kingdom of Montezuma, had not been sacrificed. I wish that

the republic of the Puritans had blended with the tribes of the wilderness."

The red sun was now hovering over the horizon; it quivered for an instant, and then sank. Immediately the high, and undulating coast was covered with a crimson flush; the cliffs, the groves, the bays and jutting promontories, each straggling sail and tall white tower, suffused with a rosy light. Gradually that rosy tint became a bright violet, and then faded into purple. But the glory of the sunset long lingered in the glowing west, streaming with every colour of the Iris—while a solitary star glittered with silver light amid the shifting splendour.

"Hesperus rises from the sunset like the fountain of fresh water from the sea," said Herbert. "The sky and the ocean have two natures like ourselves."

At this moment the boat of the vessel, that had anchored about an hour back, put to shore.

"That seems an English brig," said Herbert "I cannot exactly make out its trim; it scarcely seems a merchant vessel."

The projection of the shore hid the boat from their sight as it landed. The Herberts rose, and proceeded towards the harbour. There was some rude steps cut in the rock which led from the immediate shore to the terrace. As they approached these, two gentlemen in sailors' jackets mounted suddenly. Lady Annabel and Venetia simultaneously started as they recognised Lord Cadurcis and his cousin. They were so close, that neither party had time to prepare themselves. Venetia found her hand in that of Plantagenet, while Lady Annabel saluted George. Infinite were their mutual inquiries and congratulations, but it so happened that, with one exception, no name was mentioned. It was quite evident, however, to Herbert, that these were very familiar acquaintances of his family, for, in the surprise of the moment, Lord Cadurcis had saluted his daughter by her christian name. There was no slight emotion, too, displayed on all sides. Indeed, independent of the agitations which so unexpected a encounter was calculated to produce, the presence of Herbert, after the first moments of recognition, not a little excited the curiosity of the young men, and in some degree occasioned the embarrassment of all. Who was this stranger on whom Venetia and her mother were leaning with such fondness? He was scarcely too old to be the admirer of Venetia, and if there were a greater disparity of years between them than is usual, his distinguished appearance might well reconcile the lady to her lot, or even justify her choice. Had, then, Cadurcis again met Venetia only to find her the bride or the betrothed of another?—a mortifying situation, even an intolerable one, if his feelings remained unchanged; and if the eventful year that had elapsed since they parted, had not replaced her image in his susceptible mind by another more cherished, and, perhaps, less obdurate. Again, to Lady Annabel the moment was one of great awkwardness, for the introduction of her husband to those with whom she was recently so intimate, and who were then aware that the name of that husband was never even mentioned in her presence, recalled the painful past with a disturbing vividness. Venetia, indeed, did not share these feelings fully, but she thought it ungracious to anticipate her mother in the announcement.

The Herberts turned with Lord Cadurcis and his cousin; they were about to retrace their steps on the terrace, when Lady Annabel, taking advantage of the momentary silence, and summoning all her energy, with a pale check, and a voice that slightly faltered, said, "Lord Cadurcis, allow me to introduce you to Mr. Herbert, my husband," she added, with emphasis.

"Good God!" exclaimed Lord Cadurcis, starting; and then outstretching his hand, he contrived to add, "have I, indeed, the pleasure of seeing one I have so long admired?"

"Lord Cadurcis!" exclaimed Herbert, scarcely less surprised. "Is it Lord Cadurcis? This is a welcome meeting."

Every one present felt overwhelmed with confusion or astonishment; Lady Annabel sought refuge in presenting Captain Cadurcis to her husband. This ceremony, though little noticed even by those more immediately interested in it, nevertheless served, in some degree, as a diversion. Herbert, who was only astonished, was the first who rallied. Perhaps Lord Cadurcis was the only man in existence whom Herbert wished to know. He had read his works with rapture; at least those portions which foreign journals had afforded him. He was deeply impressed with his fame and genius; but what perplexed him at this moment, even more than his unexpected introduction to him, was the singular, the very extraordinary circumstances, that the name of their most celebrated countryman should never have escaped the lips either of his wife or his daughter, although they appeared, and Venetia especially, to be on terms with him of even domestic intimacy.

"You arrived here to-day, Lord Cadurcis?" said Herbert. "From whence?"

"Immediately from Naples, where we last touched," replied his lordship; "but I have been residing at Athens."

"I envy you," said Herbert.

"It would be a fit residence for you," said Lord Cadurcis. "You were, however, in some degree my companion, for a volume of your poems was one of the few books I had with me. I parted with all the rest, but I retained that. It is in my cabin; and full of my scribblement. If you would condescend to accept it, I would offer it you."

Mr. Herbert and Lord Cadurcis maintained the conversation along the terrace. Venetia, by whose side her old companion walked, was quite silent. Once her eyes met those of Cadurcis; his expression of mingled harshness and astonishment was irresistible. His cousin and Lady Annabel carried on a more suppressed conversation, but on ordinary topics. When they had reached the olive grove, Herbert said, "Here lies our way homeward, my lord. If you and your cousin will accompany us, it will delight Lady Annabel and myself."

"Nothing I am sure will give George and myself greater pleasure," he replied. "We had, indeed, no purpose when you met us, but to enjoy our escape from imprisonment; little dreaming we should meet our kindest and oldest friends," he added.

"Kindest and oldest friends!" thought Herbert to himself. "Well, this is strange indeed."

"It is but a slight distance," said Lady Annabel, who thought it necessary to enforce the invitation. "We live in the valley, of which yonder hill forms a part."

"And there we have passed our winter and our

spring," added Venetia, "almost as delightfully as you could have done at Athens."

"Well!" thought Cadurcis to himself, "I have seen many of the world's marvels, but this day is a miracle."

When they had proceeded through the olive wood, and mounted the acclivity, they arrived at a path which permitted the ascent of only one person at a time. Cadurcis was last, and followed Venetia. Unable any longer to endure the suspense, he was rather irritated that she kept so close to her father; he himself loitered a few paces behind, and breaking off a branch of laurel, he tossed it at her. She looked round and smiled; he beckoned to her to fall back. "Tell me, Venetia," he said, "what does all this mean?"

"It means that we are at last all very happy," she replied. "Do you not see my father?"

"Yes; and I am very glad to see him, but this company is the very last in which I expected to have that pleasure."

"It is too long a story to tell now; you must imagine it."

"But are you glad to see me?"

"Very."

"I don't think you care for me the least."

"Silly Lord Cadurcis!" she said, smiling

"If you call me Lord Cadurcis, I shall immediately go back to the brig, and set sail this night for Athens."

"Well then, silly Plantagenet!"

He laughed, and they ran on.

CHAPTER III.

"WELL, I am not surprised that you should have passed your time delightfully here," said Lord Cadurcis to Lady Annabel, when they had entered the villa; "for I never beheld so delightful a retreat. It is even more exquisite than your villa on the lake, of which George gave me so glowing a description. I was almost tempted to hasten to you. Would you have smiled on me?" he added, rather archly, and in a coaxing tone.

"I am more gratified that we have met here," said Lady Annabel.

"And thus," added Cadurcis.

"You have been a great traveller since we last met?" said Lady Annabel, a little embarrassed.

"My days of restlessness are over," said Cadurcis. "I desire nothing more dearly than to settle down in the bosom of these green hills as you have done."

"This life suits Mr. Herbert," said Lady Annabel. "He is fond of seclusion, and you know I am accustomed to it."

"Ah! yes," said Cadurcis, mournfully. "When I was in Greece, I used often to wish that none of us had ever left dear Cherbury; but I do not now."

"We must forget Cherbury," said Lady Annabel.

"I cannot—I cannot forget her who cherished my melancholy childhood. Dear Lady Annabel," he added in a voice of emotion, and offering her his hand, "forget all my follies, and remember that I was your child, once as dutiful as you were affectionate."

Who could resist this appeal? Lady Annabel, not without agitation, yielded him her hand, which

he pressed to his lips. "Now I am again happy," said Cadurcis; "now we are all happy. Sweetest of friends, you have removed in a moment the bitterness of years."

Although lights were in the saloon, the windows opening on the portico were not closed. The evening air was soft and balmy, and, though the moon had not risen, the distant hills were clear in the twilight. Venetia was standing in the portico conversing with George Cadurcis.

"I suppose you are too much of a Turk to drink our coffee, Lord Cadurcis," said Herbert. Cadurcis turned and joined them, together with Lady Annabel.

"Nay," said Lord Cadurcis, in a joyous tone, "Lady Annabel will answer for me that I always find every thing perfect under her roof."

Captain Cadurcis and Venetia now re-entered the villa: they clustered round the table, and seated themselves.

"Why, Venetia," said Cadurcis, "George met me in Sicily, and quite frightened me about you. It is the air of the Apennines that has worked these marvels, for really you appear to me exactly the same as when we learned the French vocabulary together ten years ago."

"The French vocabulary together, ten years ago!" thought Herbert; "not a mere London acquaintance, then. This is very strange."

"Why, indeed, Plantagenet," replied Venetia, "I was very unwell when George visited us; but I really have quite forgotten that I ever was an invalid, and I never mean to be again."

"Plantagenet!" soliloquized Herbert. "And this is the great poet of whom I have heard so much! My daughter is tolerably familiar with him."

"I have brought you all sorts of buffooneries from Stamboul," continued Cadurcis; "sweetmeats, and slippers, and shawls, and daggers worn only by sultanas, and with which if necessary they can keep 'the harem's lord' in order. I meant to have sent them with George to England, for really I did not anticipate our meeting here."

"Sweetmeats and slippers," said Herbert to himself, "shawls and daggers! What next?"

"And has George been with you all the time?" inquired Venetia.

"O! we quarrelled now and then, of course. He found Athens dull, and would stay at Constantinople, chained by the charms of a fair Perote, to whom he wanted me to write sonnets in his name. I would not, because I thought it immoral. But, on the whole, we got on very well; a sort of Pylades and Orestes, I assure you; we never absolutely fought."

"Come, come," said George, "Cadurcis is always ashamed of being amiable. We were together much more than I ever intended or anticipated. You know mine was a sporting tour; and therefore, of course, we were sometimes separated. But he was exceedingly popular with all parties, especially the Turks, whom he rewarded for their courtesy by writing odes to the Greeks to stir them up to revolt."

"Well, they never read them," said Cadurcis. "All we, poor fellows, can do," he added, turning to Herbert, "is to wake the Hellenistic raptures of May-fair; and that they call fame; as much like fame as a toadstool is like a truffle."

"Nevertheless, I hope the muse has not slumber-

ed," said Herbert; "for you have had the happiest inspiration in the climes in which you have resided; not only are they essentially poetic, but they offer a virgin vein."

"I have written a little," replied Cadurcis; "I will give it you, if you like, some day to turn over. Yours is the only opinion that I really care for. I have no great idea of the poetry; but I am very strong in my costume. I feel very confident about that. I fancy I know how to hit off a pasha, or touch in a Greek pirate now. As for all the things I wrote in England, I really am ashamed of them. I got up my orientalism from books, and sultans and sultanas at masquerades," he added, archly. "I remember I made my heroines always wear turbans; only conceive my horror when I found that a Turkish woman would as soon think of putting my hat on as a turban, and that it was an article of dress entirely confined to a Bond-street milliner."

The evening passed in interesting and diverting conversation; of course, principally contributed by the two travellers, who had seen so much. Inspired by his interview with Lady Annabel, and her gracious reception of his overtures, Lord Cadurcis was in one of those frolic humours, which we have before noticed was not unnatural to him. He had considerable powers of mimicry, and the talent that had pictured to Venetia, in old days, with such liveliness, the habits of the old maids of Morpeth, was now engaged on more considerable topics; an interview with a pasha, a peep into a harem, a visit to a pirate's isle, the slave market, the bazaar, the barracks of the janissaries; all touched with irresistible vitality, and coloured with the rich phrases of unrivalled force of expression. The laughter was loud and continual; even Lady Annabel joined zealously in the glee. As for Herbert, he thought Cadurcis by far the most hearty and amusing person he had ever known, and could not refrain from contrasting him with the picture which his works and the report of the world had occasionally enabled him to sketch to his mind's eye; the noble, young, and impassioned bard, pouring forth the eloquent tide of his morbid feelings to an idolizing world, from whose applause he nevertheless turned with an almost misanthropic melancholy.

It was now much past the noon of night, and the hour of separation, long postponed, was inevitable. Often had Cadurcis risen to depart, and often, without regaining his seat, had he been tempted by his friends, and especially Venetia, into fresh narratives. At last, he said, "Now we must go. Lady Annabel looks good night. I remember the look," he said, laughing, "when we used to beg for a quarter of an hour more. O! Venetia, do not you remember that Christmas, when dear old Masham read Julius Cæsar, and we were to sit up until it was finished. When he got to the last act I hid his spectacles. I never confessed it until this moment. Will you pardon me, Lady Annabel?" and he pressed his hands together in a mockery of supplication.

"Will you come and breakfast with us to-morrow?" said Lady Annabel.

"With delight," he answered. "I am used, you know, to walks before breakfast. George—I do not think George can do it, though. George likes his comforts; he is a regular John Bull. He was always calling for tea when we were in Turkey!"

At this moment Mistress Pauncefort entered the

room, ostensibly on some little affair of her mistress, but really to reconnoitre.

"Ah! Mistress Pauncefort; my old friend, Mistress Pauncefort, how do you do?" exclaimed his lordship.

"Quite well, my lord, please your lordship; and very glad to see your lordship again, and looking so well too."

"Ah! Mistress Pauncefort, you always flattered me!"

"O! dear, my lord, your lordship, no," said Mistress Pauncefort, with a simper.

"But you, Pauncefort," said Cadureis, "why there must be some magic in the air here. I have been complimenting your lady and Miss Venetia, but really, you, I should almost have thought it was some younger sister."

"O! my lord, you have such a way," said Mistress Pauncefort, retreating with a slow step that still lingered for a remark.

"Pauncefort, is that an Italian cap?" said Lord Cadureis; "you know, Pauncefort, you were always famous for your caps." Mistress Pauncefort disappeared in a flutter of delight.

And now they had indeed departed. There was a pause of complete silence after they had disappeared, the slight and not painful reaction after the mirthful excitement of the last few hours. At length Herbert, dropping, as was his evening custom, a few drops of orange-flower into a tumbler of water, said, "Annabel, my love. I am rather surprised that neither you nor Venetia, should have mentioned to me that you knew so intimately, a man like Lord Cadureis."

Lady Annabel appeared a little confused; she looked even at Venetia, but Venetia's eyes were on the ground. At length she said, "In truth, Marmion, since we met we have thought only of you."

"Cadureis Abbey, papa, is close to Cherbury," said Venetia.

"Cherbury!" said Herbert, with a faint blush, "I have never seen it, and now I shall never see it. No matter, my country is your mother and yourself. Some find a home in their country, I find a country in my home. Well," he added, in a gayer tone, "it has gratified me much to meet Lord Cadureis. We were happy before, but now we are even gay. I like to see you smile, Annabel, and hear Venetia laugh. I feel, myself, quite an unusual hilarity. Cadureis! It is very strange how often I have mused over that name. A year ago it was one of my few wishes to know him; my wishes then, dear Annabel, were not very ambitious. They did not mount so high as you have since permitted them. And now I do know him, and under what circumstances? Is not life strange? But is it not happy? I feel it so. Good night, sweet wife; my darling daughter, a happy, happy night!" He embraced them ere they retired; and opening a volume composed his mind after the novel excitement of the evening.

CHAPTER IV.

CADUREIS left the brig early in the morning alone, and strolled towards the villa. He met Herbert half-way to Spezzia, who turned back with him towards home. They sat down on a crag opposite

the sea; there was a light breeze, the fishing boats were out, and the view was as animated as the fresh air was cheering.

"There they go," said Cadureis, smiling, "catching John Dory, as you and I try to catch John Bull. Now if these people could understand what two great men were watching them, how they would stare! But they don't care a sprat for us, not they! They are not part of the world—the three or four thousand civilized savages for whom we sweat our brains, and whose fetid breath perfumed with musk is fame. Pah!"

Herbert smiled. "I have not cared much myself for this same world, my lord."

"Why, no; you have done something, and shown your contempt for them. No one can deny that. I will some day, if I have an opportunity. I owe it them; I think I can show them a trick or two still.* I have got a Damascus blade in store for their thick hides. I will turn their flanks yet."

"And gain a victory where conquest brings no glory. You are worth brighter laurels, Lord Cadureis."

"Now is not it the most wonderful thing in the world that you and I have met?" said Cadureis. "Now I look upon ourselves as something like, eh! Fellows with some pith in them. By Jove, if we only joined together, how we could lay it on. Crack, crack, crack! I think I see them wincing under the thong; the pompous poltroons! If you only knew how they behaved to me! By Jove, sir, they hooted me going to the House of Lords, and nearly pulled me off my horse. The ruffians would have massacred me if they could; and then they all ran away from a drummer-boy and a couple of grenadiers, who were going the rounds to change guard. Was not that good? Fine, eh? A brutish mob in a fit of morality about to immolate a gentleman, and then scampering off from a sentry. I call that human nature!"

"As long as they leave us alone, and do not burn us alive, I am content," said Herbert, "I am callous to what they say."

"So am I," said Cadureis. "I made out a list the other day of all the persons and things I have been compared to. It begins well, with Alcibiades, but it ends with the Swiss giantess or the Polish dwarf, I forget which. Here is your book. You see it has been well thumbed. In fact, to tell the truth, it was my cribbing book, and I always kept it by me when I was writing at Athens, like a gradus, a *gradus ad Parnasum*, you know. But although I erub, I am candid, and you see I fairly own it to you."

"You are welcome to all I have ever written," said Herbert. "Mine were but crude dreams. I wished to see man noble and happy; but if he will persist in being vile and miserable, I must even be content. I can struggle for him no more."

"Well, you open my mind," said Cadureis, "I owe you every thing; but I quite agree with you that nothing is worth an effort. As for philosophy and freedom, and all that, they tell devilish well in a stanza; but men have always been fools and slaves, and fools and slaves they always will be."

"Nay," said Herbert, "I will not believe that. I will not give up a jot of my conviction of a great and glorious future for human destinies; but its

* "I think I know a trick or two would turn your flanks."—DON JUAN.

consummation will not be as rapid as I once thought, and in the mean time I die."

"Ah! Death," said Lord Cadurcis, "that is a botherer. What can you make of death? There are those poor fishermen now; there will be a white squall some day, and they will go down with those lateen sails of theirs, and be food for the very prey they were going to catch; and, if you continue living here, you may eat one of your neighbours in the shape of a snail of red mullets, when it is the season. The great secret—we cannot penetrate that with all our philosophy, my dear Herbert. 'All that we know is, nothing can be known.' Barren, barren, barren! And yet what a grand world it is! Look at this bay, these blue waters, the mountains, and these chestnuts—devilish fine! The fact is, truth is veiled, but, like the Shechinah over the tabernacle, the veil is of dazzling light!"

"Life is the great wonder," said Herbert, "in which all that is strange and startling resolves itself. The mist of familiarity obscures from us the miracle of our being. Mankind are constantly starting at events which they consider extraordinary. But a philosopher acknowledges only one miracle, and that it is life. Political revolutions, changes of empire, wrecks of dynasties and the opinions that support them, these are the marvels of the vulgar, but these are only transient modifications of life. The origin of existence is, therefore, the first object which a true philosopher proposes to himself. Unable to discover it, he accepts certain results from his unbiassed observation of its obvious nature, and on them he establishes certain principles to be our guides in all social relations, whether they take the shape of laws or customs. Nevertheless, until the principle of life be discovered, all theories and all systems of conduct founded on theory must be considered provisional."

"And do you believe that there is a chance of its being discovered?" inquired Cadurcis.

"I cannot, from any reason in my own intelligence, find why it should not," said Herbert.

"You conceive it possible that a man may attain earthly immortality?" inquired Cadurcis.

"Undoubtedly."

"By Jove," said Cadurcis, "if I only knew how, I would purchase an immense annuity directly."

"When I said undoubtedly," said Herbert, smiling, "I meant only to express that I know no invincible reason to the contrary. I see nothing inconsistent with the existence of a supreme Creator in the annihilation of death. It appears to me an achievement worthy of his omnipotence. I believe in the possibility, but I believe in nothing more. I anticipate the final result, but not by individual means. It will of course, be produced by some vast, and silent, and continuous operation of nature, gradually effecting some profound and comprehensive alteration in her order—a change of climate, for instance, the great enemy of life—so that the inhabitants of the earth may attain a patriarchal age. This renovated breed may in turn produce a still more vigorous offspring, and so we may ascend the scale from the three score and ten of the Psalmist, to the immortality of which we speak. Indeed I, for my own part, believe the operation has already commenced, although thousands of centuries may elapse before it is consummated; the threescore and ten of the Psalmist is already obsolete; the whole world is talking of the general change of its seasons and its atmosphere. If the

origin of America were such as many profound philosophers suppose, viz., a sudden emersion of a new continent from the waves, it is impossible to doubt that such an event must have had a very great influence on the climate of the world. Besides, why should we be surprised that the nature of man should change? Does not every thing change? Is not change the law of nature? My skin changes every year, my hair never belongs to me a month, the nail on my hand is only a passing possession. I doubt whether a man at fifty is the same material being that he is at twenty-five."

"I wonder," said Lord Cadurcis, "if a creditor brought an action against you at fifty for goods delivered at five-and-twenty, one could set up the want of identity as a plea in bar. It would be a consolation to an elderly gentleman."

"I am afraid mankind are too hostile to philosophy," said Herbert, smiling, "to permit so desirable a consummation."

"Should you consider a long life a blessing?" said Cadurcis. "Would you like, for instance, to live to the age of Methusalem?"

"Those whom the gods love die young," said Herbert. "For the last twenty years I have wished to die, and I have sought death. But my feelings, I confess, on that head are at present very much modified."

"Youth, glittering youth!" said Cadurcis, in a musing tone; "I remember when the prospect of losing my youth frightened me out of my wits; I dreamed of nothing but gray hairs, a paunch, and the gout or the gravel. But I fancy every period of life has its pleasures, and as we advance in life the exercise of power and the possession of wealth must be great consolations to the majority; we bully our children and hoard our cash."

"Two most noble occupations!" said Herbert; "but I think in this world there is just as good a chance for being bullied by our children first, and paying their debts afterwards."

"Faith! you are right," said Cadurcis, laughing, "and lucky is he who has neither creditors nor offspring, and who owes neither money nor affection; after all, the most difficult to pay of the two."

"It cannot be commanded, certainly," said Herbert. "There is no usury for love."

"And yet it is very expensive, too, sometimes," said Cadurcis, laughing. "For my part sympathy is a puzzler."

"Yo. should read Cabanis," said Herbert, "if, indeed, you have not. I think I may find it here; I will lend it you. It has, from its subject, many errors, but it is very suggestive."

"Now, that is kind, for I have not a book here, and, after all, there is nothing like reading. I wish I had read more, but it is not too late. I envy you your learning, besides so many other things. However, I hope we shall not part in a hurry; we have met at last," he said, extending his hand, "and we were always friends."

Herbert shook his hand very warmly. "I can assure you, Lord Cadurcis, you have not a more sincere admirer of your genius. I am happy in your society. For myself, I now aspire to be nothing better than an idler in life, turning over a page, and sometimes noting down a fancy. You have, it appears, known my family long and intimately, and you were, doubtless, surprised at finding me with them. I have returned to my hearth, and I am content. Once I sacrificed my happiness to my philosophy

and now I have sacrificed my philosophy to my happiness."

"Dear friend!" said Cadurcis, putting his arm affectionately in Herbert's, as they walked along—"for, indeed, you must allow me to style you so—all the happiness and all the sorrow of my life alike flow from your roof!"

In the mean time Lady Annabel and Venetia came forth from the villa to their morning meals in their amphitheatre of hills. Marmion was not there to greet them as usual.

"Was not Plantagenet amusing last night?" said Venetia: "and are not you happy, dear mother, to see him once more?"

"Indeed I am now always happy," said Lady Annabel.

"And George was telling me last night, in this portico, of all their life. He is more attached to Plantagenet than ever. He says it is impossible for any one to have behaved with greater kindness, or to have led, in every sense, a more calm and rational life. When he was alone at Athens, he did nothing but write. George says that all his former works are nothing to what he has written now."

"He is very engaging," said Lady Annabel.

"I think he will be such a delightful companion for papa. I am sure papa must like him. I hope he will stay some time; for, after all, poor dear papa, he must require a little amusement besides our society. Instead of being with his books, he might be walking and talking with Plantagenet. I think, dearest mother, we shall be happier than ever!"

At this moment Herbert, with Cadurcis leaning on his arm, and apparently speaking with great earnestness, appeared in the distance. "There they are," said Venetia; "I knew they would be friends. Come, dearest mother, let us meet them."

"You see, Lady Annabel," said Lord Cadurcis, "it is just as I said: Mr. George is not here; he is having tea and toast on board the brig, I warrant him."

"I do not believe it," said Venetia, smiling.

They seated themselves at the breakfast-table.

"You should have seen our Apennine breakfasts in the autumn, Lord Cadurcis," said Herbert; "every fruit of nature seemed crowded before us. It was indeed a meal for a poet or a painter like Paul Veronese; our grapes, our figs, our peaches, our mountain strawberries—they made a glowing picture. For my part, I have an original prejudice against animal food which I have never quite overcome, and I believe it is only to please Lady Annabel that I have relapsed into the heresy of cutlets."

"Do you think I have grown fatter, Lady Annabel?" said Lord Cadurcis, starting up; "I brought myself down at Athens to bread and olives, but I have been committing terrible excesses lately, but only fish."

"Ah! here is George!" said Lady Annabel.

And Captain Cadurcis appeared, followed by a couple of sailors, bearing a huge case.

"George," said Venetia, "I have been defending you against Plantagenet; he said you would not come."

"Never mind, George, it was only behind your back," said Lord Cadurcis; "and under those legitimate circumstances, why, even our best friends cannot expect us to spare them."

"I have brought Venetia her toys," said Captain Cadurcis, "and she was right to defend me, as I have been working for her."

The top of the case was knocked off, and all the Turkish buffooneries, as Cadurcis called them, made their appearance: slippers, and shawls, and bottles of perfumes, and little hand-mirrors, beautifully embroidered; and fanciful daggers, and rosaries, and a thousand other articles, of which they had plundered the bazaars of Constantinople.

"And here is a Turkish volume of poetry, beautifully illuminated; and that is for you," said Lord Cadurcis, giving it to Herbert. "Perhaps it is a translation of one of our works. Who knows? We can always say it is."

"This is the second present you have made me this morning. Here is a volume of my works," said Herbert, producing the book that Cadurcis had before given him, "and precious from your autograph. I never expected that any thing I wrote would be so honoured. This, too, is the work of which I am the least ashamed, for my wife admired it. There, Annabel, even though Lord Cadurcis is here, I will present it to you; 'tis an old friend."

Lady Annabel accepted the book very graciously, and, in spite of all the temptations of her toys, Venetia could not refrain from peeping over her mother's shoulder at its contents.—"Mother," she whispered, in a voice inaudible save to Lady Annabel, "I may read this?"

Lady Annabel gave it her.

"And now we must send for Pouncefort, I think," said Lady Annabel, "to collect and take care of our treasures."

"Pouncefort," said Lord Cadurcis, when that gentlewoman appeared, "I have brought you a shawl, but I could not bring you a turban, because the Turkish ladies do not wear turbans; but if I had thought we should have met so soon, I would have had one made on purpose for you."

"La! my lord, you always are so polite!"

CHAPTER V.

WHEN the breakfast was over, they wandered about the valley, which Cadurcis could not sufficiently admire. Insensibly he drew Venetia from the rest of the party, on the pretence of showing her a view at some little distance. They walked along by the side of a rivulet, which glided through the hills, until they were nearly a mile from the villa, though still in sight.

"Venetia," he at length said, turning the conversation to a more interesting topic, "your father and myself have disburdened our minds to each other this morning; I think we know each other now as well as if we were as old acquaintances as myself and his daughter."

"Ah! I knew that you and papa must agree," said Venetia; "I was saying so this morning to my mother."

"Venetia," said Cadurcis, with a laughing eye, "all this is very strange, is it not?"

"Very strange, indeed, Plantagenet; I should not be surprised if it appeared to you as yet even incredible."

"It is miraculous," said Cadurcis, "but not incredible; an angel interfered, and worked the miracle. I know all."

Venetia looked at him with a faint flush upon

her cheek; she gathered a flower and plucked it to pieces.

"What a singular destiny ours has been, Venetia!" said Cadurcis. "Do you know I can sit for an hour together and muse over it!"

"Can you, Plantagenet?"

"I have such an extraordinary memory; I do not think I ever forgot any thing. We have had some very remarkable conversations in our time—eh, Venetia! Do you remember my visit to Cherbury before I went to Cambridge, and the last time I saw you before I left England? And now it all ends in this! What do you think of it, Venetia?"

"Think of what, Plantagenet?"

"Why, of this reconciliation!"

"Dear Plantagenet, what can I think of it but what I have expressed!—that it is a very wonderful event, but the happiest in my life."

"You are quite happy now?"

"Quite."

"I see you do not care for me the least?"

"Plantagenet, you are perverse. Are you not here?"

"Did you ever think of me when I was away?"

"You know very well, Plantagenet, that it is impossible for me to cease to be interested in you. Could I refrain from thinking of such a friend?"

"Friend! Poh! I am not your friend; and as for that, you never once mentioned my name to your father, Miss Venetia."

"You might easily conceive that there were reasons for such silence," said Venetia. "It could not arise on my part from forgetfulness or indifference; for even if my feelings were changed towards you, you are not a person that one would, or even could, avoid speaking of, especially to papa, who must have felt such interest in you! I am sure, even if I had not known you, there were a thousand occasions which would have called your name to my lips, had they been uncontrolled by other considerations."

"Come, Venetia, I am not going to submit to compliments from you," said Lord Cadurcis; "no blarney. I wish you only to think of me as you did ten years ago. I will not have our hearts polluted by the vulgarity of fame. I want you to feel for me as you did when we were children. I will not be an object of interest, and admiration, and fiddlestick, to you; I will not submit to it."

"Well, you shall not," said Venetia, laughing. "I will not admire you the least; I will only think of you as a good little boy."

"You do not love me any longer, I see that," said Plantagenet.

"Yes, I do, Plantagenet."

"You do not love me as much as you did the night before I went to Eton, and we sat over the fire? Ah! how often I have thought of that night when I was at Athens!" he added, in a tone of exhortation.

"Dear Plantagenet," said Venetia, "do not be silly. I am in the very highest spirits in the world; I am quite gay with happiness, and all because you have returned. Do not spoil my pleasure."

"Ah! Venetia, I see how it is; you have forgotten me, or worse than forgotten me."

"Well, I am sure I do not know what to say to satisfy you," said Venetia. "I think you very unreasonable, and very ungrateful too, for I have always been your friend Plantagenet, and I am

sure you know it. You sent me a message before you went abroad."

"Darling!" said Lord Cadurcis, seizing her hand, "I am not ungrateful, I am not unreasonable. I adore you. You were very kind then, when all the world was against me. You shall see how I will pay them off, the dogs! and worse than dogs, their betters far; dogs are faithful. Do you remember poor old Marmion! How we were mystified, Venetia! Little did we think then who was Marmion's god-father."

Venetia smiled; but she said, "I do not like this bitterness of yours, Plantagenet. You have no cause to complain of the world, and you magnify a petty squabble with a contemptible coterie into a quarrel with a nation. It is not a wise humour, and, if you indulge it, it will not be a happy one."

"I will do exactly what you wish on every subject," said Cadurcis, "if you will do exactly what I wish on one."

"Well!" said Venetia.

"Once you told me," said Cadurcis, "that you would not marry me without the consent of your father; then, most unfairly, you added to your conditions the consent of your mother. Now both your parents are very opportunely at hand; let us fall down upon our knees and beg their blessing."

"O! my dear Plantagenet, I think it will be much better for me never to marry. We are both happy now; let us remain so. You can live here, and I can be your sister. Will not that do?"

"No, Venetia, it will not."

"Dear Plantagenet!" said Venetia, with a faltering voice, "if you knew how much I had suffered, dear Plantagenet!"

"I know it; I know all," said Cadurcis, taking her arm and placing it tenderly in his. "Now listen to me, sweet girl; I loved you when a child, when I was unknown to the world, and unknown to myself; I loved you as a youth not utterly inexperienced in the world, and when my rising passions had taught me to speculate on the character of women; I loved you as a man, Venetia, with that world at my foot, that world which I scorn, but which I will command; I have been constant, Venetia; your heart assures you of that. You are the only being in existence who exercises over me any influence; and the influence you possess is irresistible and eternal. It springs from some deep and mysterious sympathy of blood which I cannot penetrate. It can neither be increased nor diminished by time. It is entirely independent of its action. I pretend not to love you more at this moment than when I first saw you, when you entered the terrace-room at Cherbury and touched my cheek. From that moment I was yours. I declare to you, most solemnly I declare to you, that I know not what love is except to you. The world has called me a libertine; the truth is, no other woman can command my spirit for an hour. I see through them at a glance, I read all their weakness, frivolity, vanity, affectation, as if they were touched by the revealing rod of Asmodeus. You were born to be my bride. Unite yourself with me, control my destiny, and my course shall be like the sun of yesterday; but reject me, reject me, and I devote all my energies to the infernal gods; I will pour my lava over the earth until all that remains of my fatal and exhausted nature is a black and barren cone, surrounded by bitter desolation."

"Plantagenet, be calm!"

CHAPTER VI.

"I am perfectly calm, Venetia. You talk to me of your sufferings. What has occasioned them? A struggle against nature. Nature has now triumphed, and you are happy. What necessity was there for all the misery that has fallen on your nouse? Why is your father an exile? Do you not think that if your mother had chosen to exert her influence she might have prevented the most fatal part of his career? Undoubtedly despair impelled his actions as much as philosophy, though I give him credit for a pure and lofty spirit, to no man more. But not a murmur against your mother from me! She received my overtures of reconciliation last night with more than cordiality. She is your mother, Venetia, and she once was mine. Indeed, I love her; indeed, you would find that I would study her happiness. For after all, sweet, is there another woman in existence better qualified to fill the position of my mother-in-law? I could not behave unkindly to her; I could not treat her with neglect or harshness; not merely for the sake of her many admirable qualities, but from other considerations, Venetia,—considerations we never can forget. By heavens! I love your mother; I do, indeed, Venetia; I remember so many things—her last words to me, when I went to Eton. If she would only behave kindly to me, you would see what a son-in-law I should make. You would be jealous, that you should, Venetia. I can bear any thing from you, Venetia, but with others, I cannot forget who I am. It makes me bitter to be treated as Lady Annabel treated me last year in London; but a smile and a kind word, and I recall all her maternal love; I do, indeed, Venetia; last night when she was kind I could have kissed her!"

Poor Venetia could not answer, her tears were flowing so plentifully. "I have told your father all, sweetest," said Cadurcis: "I concealed nothing."

"And what said he?" murmured Venetia.

"It rests with your mother. After all that has passed, he will not attempt to control your fate. And he is right. Perhaps his interference in my favour might even injure me. But there is no cause for despair; all I wanted was to come to an understanding with you; to be sure you loved me as you always have done. I will not be impatient. I will do every thing to soothe, conciliate, and gratify Lady Annabel; you will see how I will behave! As you say, too, we are happy because we are together; and therefore, it would be unreasonable not to be patient. I never can be sufficiently grateful for this meeting. I concluded you would be in England, though we were on our way to Milan to inquire after you. George has been a great comfort to me in all this affair, Venetia; he loves you, Venetia, almost as much as I do. I think I should have gone mad during that cursed affair in England, had it not been for George. I thought you would hate me, but when George brought me your message, I cared for nothing; and then his visit to the lake was so devilish kind! He is a noble fellow and a true friend. My sweet, sweet Venetia, dry your eyes. Let us rejoin them with a smile. We have not been long away; I will pretend we have been violet hunting," said Cadurcis, stooping down and plucking up a handful of flowers. "Do you remember our violets at home, Venetia. Do you know, Venetia, I always fancy every human being is like some object in nature; and you always put me in mind of a violet, so fresh, and sweet, and delicate."

"We have been exploring the happy valley," said Lord Cadurcis to Lady Annabel, "and here is our plunder," and he gave her the violets.

"You were always fond of flowers," said Lady Annabel.

"Yes, I imbibed the taste from you," said Cadurcis, gratified by the gracious remark.

He seated himself at her feet, examined and admired her work, and talked of old times, but with such infinite discretion, that he did not arouse a single painful association. Venetia was busied with her father's poems, and smiled often at the manuscript notes of Cadurcis. Lying, as usual, on the grass, leaning his head on his left arm, Herbert was listening to Captain Cadurcis, who was endeavouring to give him a clear idea of the Bosphorus. Thus the morning wore away, until the sun drove them into the villa.

"I will show you my library, Lord Cadurcis," said Herbert.

Cadurcis followed him into a spacious apartment, where he found a collection so considerable that he could not suppress his surprise. "Italian spoils chiefly," said Herbert; "a friend of mine purchased an old library at Bologna for me, and it turned out richer than I imagined: the rest are old friends that have been with me, many of them at least, at college. I brought them back with me from America, for then they were my only friends."

"Can you find Cabanis?" said Lord Cadurcis.

Herbert looked about. "It is in this neighbourhood, I imagine," he said. Cadurcis endeavoured to assist him. "What is this?" he said; "Plato!"

"I should like to read Plato at Athens," said Herbert. "My ambition now does not soar beyond such elegant fortune."

"We are all under great obligations to Plato," said Cadurcis. "I remember, when I was in London, I always professed myself his disciple, and it is astonishing what results I experienced. Platonic love was a great invention."

Herbert smiled; but, as he saw Cadurcis knew nothing about the subject, he made no reply.

"Plato says, or at least I think he says, that life is love," said Cadurcis. "I have said it myself in a very grand way too; I believe I cribbed it from you. But what does he mean? I am sure I meant nothing; but, I dare say, you did."

"I certainly had some meaning," said Herbert, stopping in his search, and laughing; "but I do not know whether I expressed it. The principle of every motion, that is, of all life, is desire or love: at present, I am in love with the lost volume of Cabanis, and, if it were not for the desire of obtaining it, I should not now be affording any testimony of my vitality by looking after it."

"That is very clear," said Cadurcis, "but I was thinking of love in the vulgar sense, in the shape of a petticoat. Certainly, when I am in love with a woman, I feel love is life; but when I am out of love, which often happens, and generally very soon, I still contrive to live."

"We exist," said Herbert, "because we sympathize. If we did not sympathize with the air, we should die. But, if we only sympathized with the air, we should be in the lowest order of brutes, baser than the sloth. Mount from the sloth to the poet. It is sympathy that makes you a poet. It is your desire that the airy children of your brain

should be born anew within another's, that makes you create; therefore, a misanthropical poet is a contradiction in terms."

"But when he writes a lampoon?" said Cadurcis.

"He desires that the majority, who are not lampooned, should share his hate," said Herbert.

"But Swift lampooned the species," said Cadurcis.

"For my part, I think life is hated."

"But Swift was not sincere; for he wrote the *Drapier's Letters* at the same time. Besides, the very fact of your abusing mankind proves that you do not hate them; it is clear that you are desirous of obtaining their good opinion of your wit. You value them, you esteem them, you love them. Their approbation causes you to act, and makes you happy. As for sexual love," said Herbert, "of which you were speaking, its quality and duration depend upon the degree of sympathy that subsists between the two persons interested. Plato believed, and I believe with him, in the existence of a spiritual antetype of the soul, so that when we are born, there is something within us, which, from the instant we live and move, thirsts after its likeness. This propensity develops itself with the development of our nature. The gratification of the senses soon becomes a very small part of that profound and complicated sentiment, which we call love. Love, on the contrary, is a universal thirst for a communion, not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature—intellectual, imaginative, and sensitive. He who finds his antetype, enjoys a love perfect and enduring; time cannot change it, distance cannot remove it; the sympathy is complete. He who loves an object that approaches his antetype, is proportionately happy, the sympathy is feeble or strong, as it may be. If men were properly educated, and their faculties fully developed," continued Herbert, "the discovery of the antetype would be easy; and when the day arrives that it is a matter of course, the perfection of civilization will be attained."

"I believe in Plato," said Lord Cadurcis, "and I think I have found my antetype. His theory accounts for what I could never understand."

CHAPTER VII.

In the course of the evening, Lady Annabel requested Lord Cadurcis and his cousin to take up their quarters at the villa. Independent of the delight which such an invitation occasioned him, Cadurcis was doubly gratified by its being given by her. It was indeed her unprompted solicitation; for neither Herbert nor even Venetia, however much they desired the arrangement, were anxious to appear eager for its fulfilment. Desirous of pleasing her husband and her daughter; a little penitent as to her previous treatment of Cadurcis, now that time and strange events had combined to soften her feelings; and won by his engaging demeanour towards herself, Lady Annabel had of her mere impulse resolved upon the act; and she was repaid by the general air of gayety and content which it diffused through the circle.

Few weeks indeed passed ere her ladyship taught herself even to contemplate the possibility of a union between her daughter and Lord Cadurcis. The change which had occurred in her own feel-

ings and position, had, in her estimation, removed very considerable barriers to such a result. It would not become her again to urge the peculiarity of his temperament as an insuperable objection to the marriage; that was out of the question, even if the conscience of Lady Annabel herself, now that she was so happy, were perfectly free from any participation in the causes which occasioned the original estrangement between Herbert and herself. Desirous, too, as all mothers are, that her daughter should be suitably married, Lady Annabel could not shut her eyes to the very great improbability of such an event occurring, now that Venetia had as it were resigned all connexion with her native country. As to her daughter marrying a foreigner, the very idea was intolerable to her; and Venetia appeared therefore to have resumed that singular and delicate position which she occupied at Cherbury in earlier years, when Lady Annabel had esteemed her connexion with Lord Cadurcis as so fortunate and auspicious. Moreover, while Lord Cadurcis, in birth, rank, country, and consideration, offered in every view of the case so gratifying an alliance, he was perhaps the only Englishman whose marriage into her family would not deprive her of the society of her child. His lordship had a great distaste for England, which he seized every opportunity to express. He continually declared that he would never return there; and his habits of seclusion and study so entirely accorded with those of her husband, that Lady Annabel did not doubt they would continue to form only one family; a prospect so engaging to her, that it would perhaps have alone removed the distrust which she had so unfortunately cherished against the admirer of her daughter; and although some of his reputed opinions occasioned her doubtless considerable anxiety, he was nevertheless very young, and far from emancipated from the beneficial influence of his early education. She was sanguine that this sheep would yet return to the fold where once he had been tended with so much solicitude. When too she called to mind the chastened spirit of her husband, and could not refrain from feeling that had she not quitted him, he might at a much earlier period have attained a mood so full of promise, and to her so cheering, she could not resist the persuasion that, under the influence of Venetia, Cadurcis might speedily free himself from the dominion of that arrogant genius to which, rather than to any serious conviction, the result of a studious philosophy, she attributed his indifference on the most important of subjects. On the whole, however, it was with no common gratification that Lady Annabel observed the strong and intimate friendship that arose between her husband and Cadurcis. They were, indeed, inseparable companions. Independent of the natural sympathy between two highly imaginative minds, there were in the superior experience, the noble character, the vast knowledge, and refined taste of Herbert, charms of which Cadurcis was very susceptible. Cadurcis had not been a great reader himself, and he liked the company of one whose mind was at once so richly cultivated and so deeply meditative: thus he obtained matter and spirit distilled through the alembic of another's brain. Jealousy had never had a place in Herbert's temperament; now he was insensible even to emulation. He spoke of Cadurcis as he thought—with the highest admiration; as one without a rival, and in whose power it was to obtain an

imperishable fame. It was his liveliest pleasure to assist the full development of such an intellect, and to pour to him, with a lavish hand, all the treasures of his taste, his learning, his fancy, and his meditation. His kind heart, his winning manners, his subdued and perfect temper, and the remembrance of the relation which he bore to Venetia, completed the spell which bound Cadurcis to him with all the finest feelings of his nature. It was, indeed, an intercourse peculiarly beneficial to Cadurcis, whose career had hitherto tended rather to the development of the power, than the refinement of his genius; and to whom an active communion with an equal spirit of a more matured intelligence was an incident rather to be desired than expected. Herbert and Cadurcis, therefore, spent their mornings together, sometimes in the library, sometimes wandering in the chestnut woods, sometimes sailing in the boat of the brig, for they were both fond of the sea: in these excursions, George was in general their companion. He had become a great favourite with Herbert, as with everybody else. No one managed a boat so well, although Cadurcis prided himself also on his skill in this respect; and George was so frank and unaffected, and so used to his cousin's habits, that his presence never embarrassed Herbert and Cadurcis, and they read or conversed quite at their ease, as if there were no third person to mar, by his want of sympathy, the full communion of their intellect. The whole circle met at dinner, and never again parted until at a late hour of night. This was a most agreeable life; Cadurcis himself, good humoured because he was happy, doubly exerted himself to ingratiate himself with Lady Annabel, and felt every day that he was advancing. Venetia always smiled upon him, and praised him delightfully for his delightful conduct.

In the evening, Herbert would read to them the manuscript poem of Cadurcis, the fruits of his Attic residence and Grecian meditations. The poet would sometimes affect a playful bashfulness on this head, perhaps not altogether affected, and amuse Venetia, in a whisper, with his running comments; or exclaim with an arch air, "I say, Venetia, what would Mrs. Montague and the Blues give for this, eh? I can fancy Hannah More in decent ecstasies!"

CHAPTER VIII.

"It is an odd thing, my dear Herbert," said Cadurcis to his friend, in one of these voyages, "that destiny should have given you and me the same tutor."

"Masham!" said Herbert, smiling. "I tell you what is much more singular, my dear Cadurcis; it is, that notwithstanding being our tutor, a mitre should have fallen upon his head."

"I am heartily glad," said Cadurcis. "I like Masham very much; I really have a sincere affection for him. Do you know, during my infernal affair about those accursed Montagues, when I went to the House of Lords, and was cut even by my own party,—think of that, the polished ruffians!—Masham was the only person who came forward and shook hands with me, and in the most marked manner. A bishop, too! and the other side! that was good, was it not? But he would

not see his old pupil snubbed; if he had waited ten minutes longer, he might have had a chance of seeing him massacred. And then they complain of my abusing England, my mother country; a step-dame, I take it."

"Masham is in politics a tory, in religion ultra-orthodox," said Herbert. "He has nothing about him of the latitudinarian; and yet he is the most amiable man with whom I am acquainted. Nature has given him a kind and charitable heart, which even his absurd opinions have not succeeded in spoiling."

"Perhaps that is exactly what he is saying of us two at this moment," said Cadurcis. "After all, what is truth? It changes as you change your clime or your country, it changes with the century. The truth of a hundred years ago is not the truth of the present day, and yet it may have been as genuine. Truth at Rome is not the truth of London, and both of them differ from the truth of Constantinople. For my part, I believe every thing."

"Well, that is practically prudent, if it be metaphysically possible," said Herbert, laughing. "Do you know that I have always been of opinion, that Pontius Pilate has been greatly misrepresented by Lord Bacon in the quotation of his celebrated question. 'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate, and would not wait for an answer. Let us be just to Pontius Pilate, who has sins enough surely to answer for. There is no authority for the jesting humour given by Lord Bacon. Pilate was evidently of a merciful and clement disposition; probably an Epicurean. His question referred to a declaration immediately preceding it, that he who was before him came to bear witness to the truth. Pilate inquired what truth?"

"Well, I always have a prejudice against Pontius Pilate," said Lord Cadurcis; "and I think it is from seeing him when I was a child, on an old Dutch tile fireplace at Marringhurst, dressed like a burgomaster. One cannot get over one's early impressions; but when you picture him to me as an Epicurean, he assumes a new character. I fancy him young, noble, elegant, and accomplished; crowned with a wreath and waving a goblet, and enjoying his government vastly."

"Before the introduction of Christianity," said Herbert, "the philosophic schools answered to our present religious sects. You said of a man that he was a Stoic or an Epicurean, as you say of a man now that he is a Calvinist or a Wesleyan."

"I should have liked to have known Epicurus," said Cadurcis.

"I would sooner have known him and Plato than any of the ancients," said Herbert. "I look upon Plato as the wisest and the profoundest of men, and upon Epicurus as the most humorous and gentle."

"Now, how do you account for the great popularity of Aristotle in modern ages?" said Cadurcis; "and the comparative neglect of these, at least his equals. Chance, I suppose, that settles every thing."

"By no means," said Herbert. "If you mean by chance an absence of accountable cause, I do not believe such a quality as chance exists. Every incident that happens, must be a link in a chain. In the present case, the monks monopolized literature, such as it might be, and they exercised their intellect only in discussing words. They, there-

fore, adopted Aristotle and the Peripatetics. Plato interfered with their heavenly knowledge, and Epicurus, who maintained the rights of man to pleasure and happiness, would have afforded a dangerous and seducing contrast to their dark and miserable code of morals."

"I think of the ancients," said Cadurcis, "Alcibiades and Alexander the Great are my favourites. They were young, beautiful, and conquerors: a great combination."

"And among the moderns?" inquired Herbert.

"They don't touch my fancy," said Cadurcis. "Who are your heroes?"

"O! I have many; but I confess I should like to pass a day with Milton, or Sir Philip Sidney."

"Among mere literary men," said Cadurcis, "I should say, Bayle."

"And old Montaigne for me," said Herbert.

"Well, I would fain visit him in his feudal chateau," said Cadurcis. "His is one of the books which give a spring to the mind. Of modern times, the feudal ages of Italy most interest me. I think that was a springtime of civilization; all the fine arts flourished at the same moment."

"They ever will," said Herbert. "All the inventive arts maintain a sympathetic connexion between each other, for, after all, they are only various expressions of one internal power, modified by different circumstances either of the individual or of society. It was so in the age of Pericles; I mean the interval which intervened between the birth of that great man and the death of Aristotle; undoubtedly, whether considered in itself, or with reference to the effects which it produced upon the subsequent destinies of civilized man, the most memorable in the history of the world."

"And yet the age of Pericles has passed away," said Lord Cadurcis, mournfully, "and I have gazed upon the mouldering Parthenon. O! Herbert, you are a great thinker and muse deeply; solve me the problem why so unparalleled a progress was made during that period in literature and the arts, and why that progress, so rapid and so sustained, so soon received a check and became retrograde?"

"It is a problem left to the wonder and conjecture of posterity," said Herbert. "But its solution, perhaps, may principally be found in the weakness of their political institutions. Nothing of the Athenians remains except their genius: but they fulfilled their purpose. The wrecks and fragments of their subtle and profound minds obscurely suggest to us the grandeur and perfection of the whole. Their language excels every other tongue of the western world; their sculptures baffle all subsequent artists; credible witnesses assure us that their paintings were not inferior; and we are only accustomed to consider the painters of Italy as those who have brought the art to its highest perfection, because none of the ancient pictures have been preserved. Yet of all their fine arts, it was music of which the Greeks were themselves most proud. Its traditionary effects were far more powerful than any which we experience from the compositions of our times. And now for their poetry, Cadurcis. It is in poetry, and poetry alone, that modern nations have maintained the majesty of genius. Do we equal the Greeks? Do we even excel them?"

"Let us prove the equality first," said Cadurcis. "The Greeks excelled in every species of poetry. In some we do not even attempt to rival them. We have not a single modern ode or a single

modern pastoral. We have no one to place by Pindar, or the exquisite Theocritus. As for the epic, I confess myself a heretic as to Homer; I look upon the Iliad as a remnant of national songs; the wise ones agree that the Odyssey is the work of a later age. My instinct agrees with the result of their researches. I credit their conclusion. The Paradise Lost is, doubtless, a great production, but the subject is monkish. Dante is national, but he has all the faults of a barbarous age. In general the modern epic is framed upon the assumption that the Iliad is an orderly composition. They are indebted for this fallacy to Virgil, who called order out of chaos; but the Æneid, all the same, appears to me an insipid creation. And now for the drama. You will adduce Shakspeare?"

"There are passages in Dante," said Herbert, "not inferior, in my opinion, to any existing literary composition, but, as a whole, I will not make my stand on him; I am not so clear that, as a lyric poet, Petrarch may not rival the Greeks. Shakspeare I esteem of ineffable merit."

"And who is Shakspeare!" said Cadurcis. "We know of him as much as we do of Homer. Did he write half the plays attributed to him? Did he ever write a single whole play? I doubt it. He appears to me to have been an inspired adapter for the theatres, which were then not as good as barns. I take him to have been a botcher up of old plays. His popularity is of modern date, and it may not last; it would have surprised him marvellously. Heaven knows, at present, all that bears his name is alike admired, and a regular Shakspearean falls into ecstasies with trash which deserves a niche in the Dunciad. For my part, I abhor your irregular geniuses, and I love to listen to the little nightingale of Twickenham."

"I have often observed," said Herbert, "that writers of a very unbridled imagination themselves, admire those whom the world erroneously, in my opinion, and from a confusion of ideas, esteems correct. I am myself an admirer of Pope, though I certainly should not ever think of classing him among the great creative spirits. And you, you are the last poet in the world, Cadurcis, whom one would have fancied his votary."

"I have written like a boy," said Cadurcis. "I found the public bite, and so I baited on with tainted meat. I have never written for fame, only for notoriety; but I am satiated; I am going to turn over a new leaf."

"For myself," said Herbert, "if I ever had the power to impress my creations on my fellow-men, the inclination is gone, and perhaps the faculty is extinct. My career is over; perhaps a solitary echo from my lyre may yet, at times, linger about the world like a breeze that has lost its way. But there is a radical fault in my poetic mind, and I am conscious of it. I am not altogether void of the creative faculty, but mine is a fragmentary mind; I produce no whole. Unless you do this, you cannot last; at least, you cannot materially affect your species. But what I admire in you, Cadurcis, is that, with all the faults of youth, of which you will free yourself, your creative power is vigorous, prolific, and complete; your creations rise fast and fair, like perfect worlds."

"Well, we will not compliment each other," said Cadurcis; "for, after all, it is a miserable craft. What is poetry but a lie, and what are poets but liars?"

"You are wrong, Cadurcis," said Herbert; "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

"I see the towers of Porto Venere," said Cadurcis, directing the sail; "we shall soon be on shore. I think, too, I recognise Venetia. Ah! my dear Herbert, your daughter is a poem that beats all our inspiration!"

CHAPTER IX.

ONE circumstance alone cast a gloom over this happy family, and that was the approaching departure of Captain Cadurcis for England. This had been often postponed, but it could be postponed no longer. Not even the entreaties of those kind friends could any longer prevent what was inevitable. The kind heart, the sweet temper, and the lively and companionable qualities of Captain Cadurcis, had endeared him to every one; all felt that his departure would occasion a blank in their life, impossible to be supplied. It reminded the Herberts also painfully of their own situation, in regard to their native country, which they were ever unwilling to dwell upon. George talked of returning to them, but the prospect was necessarily vague; they felt that it was only one of those fanciful visions with which an affectionate spirit attempts to soothe the pang of separation. His position, his duties, all the projects of his life, bound him to England, from which, indeed, he had been too long absent. It was selfish to wish that, for their sake, he should sink down into a mere idler in Italy; and yet, when they recollected how little his future life could be connected with their own, every one felt dispirited.

"I shall not go boating to-day," said George to Venetia; "it is my last day. Mr. Herbert and Plantagenet talk of going to Lavenza; let us take a stroll together."

Nothing can be refused to those we love on the last day, and Venetia immediately acceded to his request. In the course of the morning, therefore, herself and George quitted the valley, in the direction of the coast towards Genoa. Many a white sail glittered on the blue waters; it was a lively and cheering scene; but both Venetia and her companion were depressed.

"I ought to be happy," said George, and sighed. "The fondest wish of my heart is attained. You remember our conversation on the Lago Maggiore, Venetia? You see I was a prophet, and you will be Lady Cadurcis yet."

"We must keep up our spirits," said Venetia; "I do not despair of our all returning to England yet. So many wonders have happened, that I cannot persuade myself that this marvel will not also occur. I am sure my uncle will do something; I have a secret idea that the bishop is all this time working for papa, I feel assured I shall see Cherbury and Cadurcis again, and Cadurcis will be your home."

"A year ago you appeared dying, and Plantagenet was the most miserable of men," said Captain Cadurcis. "You are both now perfectly well and perfectly happy, living even under the same roof, soon. I feel to be united, and with the cordial approbation of Lady Annabel. Your father is restored to you. Every blessing in the world seems

to cluster round your roof. It is selfish for me to wear a gloomy countenance."

"Ah! dear George, you never can be selfish," said Venetia.

"Yes, I am selfish, Venetia. What else can make me sad?"

"You know how much you contribute to our happiness," said Venetia, "and you feel for our sufferings at your absence."

"No, Venetia, I feel for myself," said Captain Cadurcis with energy; "I am certain that I never can be happy, except in your society and Plantagenet's. I cannot express to you how I love you both. Nothing else gives me the slightest interest."

"You must go home and marry," said Venetia, smiling. "You must marry an heiress."

"Never," said Captain Cadurcis. "Nothing shall ever induce me to marry. 'No! all my dreams are confined to being the bachelor uncle of the family.'"

"Well, now, I think," said Venetia, "of all the persons I know, there is no one so qualified for domestic happiness as yourself. I think your wife, George, would be a very fortunate woman, and I only wish I had a sister, that you might marry her."

"I wish you had, Venetia; I would give up my resolution against marriage directly."

"Alas!" said Venetia, "there is always some bitter drop in the cup of life. Must you indeed go, George?"

"My present departure is inevitable," he replied; "but I have some thoughts of giving up my profession and Parliament, and then I will return, never to leave you again."

"What will Lord — say? That will never do," said Venetia. "No; I should not be content unless you prospered in the world, George. You are made to prosper, and I should be miserable if you sacrificed your existence to us. You must go home, and you must marry, and write letters to us by every post, and tell us what a happy man you are. The best thing for you to do, would be to live with your wife at the abbey: or Cherbury, if you liked. You see I settle every thing."

"I never will marry," said Captain Cadurcis, seriously.

"Yes you will," said Venetia, laughing.

"I am quite serious, Venetia. Now, mark my words and remember this day. I never will marry. I have a reason, and a strong and good one, for my resolution."

"What is it?"

"Because my marriage will destroy the intimacy that subsists between me and yourself—and Plantagenet," he added.

"Your wife should be my friend," said Venetia, laughing.

"Happy woman!" said George.

"Let us indulge for a moment in a dream of domestic bliss," said Venetia, gayly. "Papa and mamma at Cherbury: Plantagenet and myself at the abbey, where you and your wife must remain until we could build you a house; and Dr. Masham coming down to spend Christmas with us. Would it not be delightful? I only hope Plantagenet would be tame. I think he would burst out a little sometimes."

"Not with you, Venetia, not with you," said George; "you have a hold over him which nothing can ever shake. I could always put him in

an amiable mood in an instant by mentioning your name."

"I wish you knew the abbey, George," said Venetia. "It is the most interesting of all old places. I love it. You must promise me when you arrive in England to go on a pilgrimage to Cadurcis and Cherbury, and write me a long account of it."

"I will indeed; I will write to you very often."

"You shall find me a most faithful correspondent, which I dare say Plantagenet would not prove."

"O! I beg your pardon," said George, "you have no idea of the quantity of letters he wrote me when he first quitted England. And such delightful ones! I do not think there is a more lively letter-writer in the world! His descriptions are so vivid; a few touches give you a complete picture; and then his observations, they are so playful! I assure you there is nothing in the world more easy and diverting than a letter of Plantagenet."

"If you could only see his first letter from Eton to me!" said Venetia. "I have always treasured it. It certainly was not very diverting; and if by easy you mean easy to decipher," she added, laughing, "his handwriting must have improved very much lately. Dear Plantagenet, I am always afraid I never pay him sufficient respect; that I do not feel sufficient awe in his presence; but I cannot disconnect him from the playfellow of my infancy; and do you know it seems to me, whenever he addresses me, his voice and air change and assume quite the tone and manner of childhood."

"I have never known him but as a great man," said Captain Cadurcis, "but he was so frank and simple with me from the very first, that I cannot believe that it is not two years since we first met."

"Ah! I shall never forget that night at Ranelagh," said Venetia, half with a smile, and half with a sigh. "How interesting he looked! I loved to see the people stare at him, and to hear them whisper his name."

Here they seated themselves by a fountain, overshadowed by a plane tree, and for a while talked only of Plantagenet.

"All the dreams of my life have come to pass," said Venetia. "I remember when I was at Weymouth, ill, and not very happy, I used to roam about the sands, thinking of papa, and how I wished Plantagenet was like him, a great man, a great poet, whom all the world admired. Little did I think that before a year had passed, Plantagenet, my unknown Plantagenet, would be the admiration of England; little did I think another year would pass, and I would be living with my father and Plantagenet together, and they should be bosom friends. You see, George, we must never despair."

"Under this bright sun," said Captain Cadurcis, "one is naturally sanguine, but think of me alone and in gloomy England."

"It is indeed a bright sun," said Venetia; "how wonderful to wake every morning and be sure of meeting its beam!"

Captain Cadurcis looked around him with a sailor's eye. Over the Apennines towards Genoa, there was a ridge of dark clouds piled up with such compactness, that they might have been mistaken in a hasty survey for part of the mountains themselves.

"Bright as is the sun," said Captain Cadurcis, "we may have yet a squall before night."

"I was delighted with Venice," said his compa-

nion, not noticing his observation; "I think of all places in the world it is the one which Plantagenet would most admire. I cannot believe but that even his delicious Athens would yield to it."

"He did lead the oddest life at Athens you can conceive," said Captain Cadurcis. "The people did not know what to make of him. He lived in the Latin Convent, a fine building, which he had almost to himself, for there are not half a dozen monks. He used to pace up and down the terrace, which he had turned into a garden, and on which he kept all sorts of strange animals. He wrote continually there, indeed he did nothing but write. His only relaxation was a daily ride to Piræus, about five miles over the plain; he told me it was the only time in his life he was ever contented with himself, except when he was at Cherbury. He always spoke of London with disgust."

"Plantagenet loves retirement and a quiet life," said Venetia; "but he must not be marred with vulgar sights, and commonplace duties. That is the secret with him."

"I think the wind has just changed," said Captain Cadurcis. "It seems to me that we shall have a sirocco. There, it shifts again! We shall have a sirocco for certain."

"What did you think of papa when you first saw him?" said Venetia. "Was he the kind of person you expected to see?"

"Exactly," said Captain Cadurcis. "So very spiritual! Plantagenet said to me, as we went home the first night, that he looked like a golden phantom. I think him very like you, Venetia; indeed there can be no doubt you inherited your face from your father."

"Ah! if you had seen his portrait at Cherbury, when he was only twenty!" said Venetia. "That was a golden phantom, or rather he looked like Hyperion. What are you staring at so, George?"

"I do not like this wind," muttered Captain Cadurcis. "There it goes."

"You cannot see the wind, George?"

"Yes, I can, Venetia, and I do not like it at all. Do you see that black spot flitting like a shade over the sea. It is like the reflection of a cloud on the water; but there is no cloud. Well, that is the wind, Venetia, and a very wicked wind, too."

"How strange! Is that indeed the wind!"

"We had better return home," said Captain Cadurcis. "I wish they had not gone to Lavenza."

"But there is no danger?" said Venetia.

"Danger? No! no danger, but they may get a wet jacket."

They walked on; but Captain Cadurcis was rather distraught: his eye was always watching the wind; at last he said, "I tell you, Venetia, we must walk quick; for, by Jove, we are going to have a white squall."

They hurried their pace, Venetia mentioned her alarm again about the boat, but her companion reassured her: yet his manner was not so confident as his words.

A white mist began to curl above the horizon, the blueness of the day seemed suddenly to fade, and its colour became gray; there was a swell on the waters that hitherto had been quite glassy, and they were covered with a scurfy foam.

"I wish I had been with them," said Captain Cadurcis, evidently very anxious.

"George, you are alarmed," said Venetia, earnestly. "I am sure there is danger."

Danger! How can there be danger, Venetia? Perhaps they are in port by this time. I dare say we shall find them at Spezzia. I will see you home and run down to them. Only hurry, for your own sake, for you do not know what a white squall in the Mediterranean is. We have but a few moments."

And even at this very instant, the wind came roaring and rushing with such a violent gust that Venetia could scarcely stand; George put his arm round her to support her. The air was filled with thick white vapour, so that they could no longer see the ocean, only the surf rising very high all along the coast.

"Keep close to me, Venetia," said Captain Cadurcis; "hold my arm and I will walk fast, for we shall not be able to see a yard before us in a minute. I know where we are. We are above the olive wood, and we shall soon be in the ravine. These Mediterranean white squalls are nasty things; I had sooner by half be in a south-wester; for one cannot run before the wind in this bay, the reefs stretch such a long way out."

The danger, and the inutility of expressing fears which could only perplex her guide, made Venetia silent, but she was terrified. She could not divest herself of apprehension about her father and Plantagenet. In spite of all he said, it was evident that her companion was alarmed.

They had now entered the valley: the mountains had in some degree kept off the vapour; the air was more clear. Venetia and Captain Cadurcis stopped a moment to breathe. "Now, Venetia, you are safe," said Captain Cadurcis. "I will not come in; I will run down to the bay at once." He wiped the mist off his face; Venetia perceived him deadly pale.

"George," said she, "conceal nothing from me; there is danger, imminent danger. Tell me at once."

"Indeed, Venetia," said Captain Cadurcis, "I am sure every thing will be quite right. There is some danger, certainly, at this moment, but, of course, long ago, they have run into harbour. I have no doubt they are at Spezzia at this moment. Now, do not be alarmed: indeed there is no cause. God bless you!" he said, and bounded away. "No cause," thought he to himself, as the wind sounded like thunder, and the vapour came rushing up the ravine. "God grant I may be right: but neither between the Tropics nor on the Line have I witnessed a severer squall than this! What open boat can live in this weather! O! that I had been with them! I shall never forgive myself!"

CHAPTER X.

VENETIA found her mother walking up and down the room, as was her custom when she was agitated. She hurried to her daughter. "You must change your dress instantly, Venetia," said Lady Annabel; "where is George?"

"He has gone down to Spezzia to papa and Plantagenet; it is a white squall; it comes on very suddenly in this sea. He ran down to Spezzia instantly, because he thought they would be wet," said the agitated Venetia, speaking with rapidity and trying to appear calm.

"Are they at Spezzia?" inquired Lady Annabel, quickly

"George has no doubt they are, mother," said Venetia.

"No doubt!" exclaimed Lady Annabel, in great distress: "God grant they may be only wet."

"Dearest mother," said Venetia, approaching her, but speech deserted her. She had advanced to encourage Lady Annabel, but her own fear checked the words on her lips.

"Change your dress, Venetia," said Lady Annabel; "lose no time in doing that. I think I will send down to Spezzia at once."

"That is useless now, dear mother, for George is there."

"Go, dearest," said Lady Annabel; "I dare say we have no cause for fear, but I am exceedingly alarmed about your father, about them: I am, indeed. I do not like these sudden squalls, and I never liked this boating; indeed, I never did. George being with them reconciled me to it. Now, go, Venetia, go, my love."

Venetia quitted the room. She was so agitated that she made Pouncefort a confidant of her apprehensions.

"La! my dear miss," said Mistress Pouncefort, "I should never have thought of such a thing! Do not you remember what the old man said at Weymouth, 'there is many a boat will live in a rougher tide than a ship;' and it is such an unlikely thing, it is indeed, Miss Venetia. I am certain sure my lord can manage a boat as well as a common sailor, and master is hardly less used to it than he. La! miss, don't make yourself nervous about any such preposterous ideas. And I dare say you will find them in the saloon when you go down again. Really, I should not wonder. I think you had better wear your twill dress; I have put the new trimming on."

They had not returned when Venetia joined her mother. That, indeed, she could scarcely expect. But in about half an hour, a message arrived from Captain Cadurcis that they were not at Spezzia, but from something he had heard, he had no doubt they were at Sarzana, and he was going to ride on there at once. He felt sure, however, from what he had heard, they were at Sarzana. This communication afforded Lady Annabel a little ease, but Venetia's heart misgave her. She recalled the alarm of George in the morning, which it was impossible for him to disguise, and she thought she recognised in this hurried message and vague assurances of safety something of the same apprehension, and the same fruitless efforts to conceal it.

Now came the time of terrible suspense. Sarzana was nearly twenty miles distant from Spezzia. The evening must arrive before they could receive intelligence from Captain Cadurcis. In the mean time the squall died away; the heavens became again bright, and though the waves were still tumultuous, the surf was greatly decreased. Lady Annabel had already sent down more than one messenger to the bay, but they brought no intelligence—she resolved now to go herself, that she might have the satisfaction of herself cross-examining the fishermen who had been driven in from various parts by stress of weather. She would not let Venetia accompany her, who, she feared might already suffer from the exertions and rough weather of the morning. This was a most anxious hour, and yet the absence of her mother was in

some degree a relief to Venetia; it at least freed her from the perpetual effort of assumed composure. While her mother remained, Venetia had attempted to read, though her eye wandered listlessly over the page, or to draw, though the pencil trembled in her hand; any thing which might guard her from conveying to her mother that she shared the apprehensions which had already darkened her mother's mind. But now that Lady Annabel was gone, Venetia muffling herself up in her shawl, threw herself on a sofa, and there she remained without a thought, her mind a chaos of terrible images.

Her mother returned, and with a radiant countenance. Venetia sprang from the sofa. "There is good news, O mother! have they returned?"

"They are not at Spezzia," said Lady Annabel, throwing herself into a chair panting for breath; "but there is good news. You see I was right to go, Venetia. These stupid people we send only ask questions, and take the first answer. I have seen a fisherman, and he says he heard that two persons, Englishmen, he believes, have put into Lerici in an open boat."

"God be praised!" said Venetia. "O mother, I can now confess to you the terror I have all along felt."

"My own heart assures me of it, my child," said Lady Annabel weeping; and they mingled their tears together, but tears not of sorrow.

"Poor George!" said Lady Annabel, "he will have a terrible journey to Sarzana, and be feeling so much for us! Perhaps he may meet them."

"I feel assured he will," said Venetia; "and perhaps ere long they will all three be here again. Joy! joy!"

"They must never go in that boat again," said Lady Annabel.

"O! they never will, dearest mother, if you ask them not," said Venetia.

"We will send to Lerici," said Lady Annabel.

"Instantly," said Venetia; "but I dare say they have already sent us a messenger."

"No!" said Lady Annabel; "men treat the danger that is past very lightly. We shall not hear from them except in person."

Time now flew more lightly. They were both easy in their minds. The messenger was despatched to Lerici; but even Lerici was a considerable distance, and hours must elapse before his return. Still there was the hope of seeing them, or hearing from them in the interval.

"I must go out, dear mother, said Venetia. "Let us both go out. It is now very fine. Let us go just to the Ravine, for indeed it is impossible to remain here."

Accordingly they both went forth, and took up a position on the coast which commanded a view on all sides. All was radiant again, and comparatively calm. Venetia looked upon the sea, and said, "Ah! I never shall forget a white squall in the Mediterranean, for all this splendour."

It was sunset: they returned home. No news yet from Lerici. Lady Annabel grew uneasy again. The pensive and melancholy hour encouraged gloom; but Venetia, who was sanguine, encouraged her mother.

"Suppose they were not Englishmen in the boat," said Lady Annabel.

"It is impossible, mother. What other two per-

sons in this neighborhood could have been in an open boat? Besides, the man said Englishmen. You remember, he said Englishmen. You are quite sure he did? It must be they. I feel as convinced of it as of your presence."

"I think there can be no doubt," said Lady Annabel. "I wish that the messenger would return."

They messenger did return. No two persons in an open boat had put into Lerici; but a boat, like the one described, with every stitch of canvass set, had passed Lerici just before the squall commenced, and, the people there doubted not, had made Sarzana."

Lady Annabel turned pale, but Venetia was still sanguine. "They are at Sarzana," she said; "they must be at Sarzana; you see George was right. He said he was sure they were at Sarzana. Besides, dear mother, he heard they were at Sarzana."

"And we heard they were at Lerici," said Lady Annabel, in a melancholy tone.

"And so they were, dear mother; it all agrees. The accounts are very consistent. Do not you see how very consistent they are? They were seen at Lerici, and were off Lerici, but they made Sarzana; and George heard they were at Sarzana. I am certain they are at Sarzana. I feel quite easy; I feel as easy as if they were here. They are safe at Sarzana. But it is too far to return to-night. We shall see them at breakfast to-morrow,—all three."

"Venetia, dearest! do not you sit up," said her mother. "I think there is a chance of George returning; I feel assured he will send to-night; but late, of course. Go, dearest, and sleep."

"Sleep!" thought Venetia to herself; but to please her mother she retired.

"Good-night, my child," said Lady Annabel. "The moment any one arrives, you shall be aroused."

CHAPTER XI.

VENETIA, without undressing, lay down on her bed, watching for some sound that might give her hope of George's return. Dwelling on every instant, the time dragged heavily along, and she thought that the night had half passed when Pauncefort entered her room, and she learned, to her surprise, that only an hour had elapsed since she had parted from her mother. This entrance of Pauncefort had given Venetia a momentary hope that they had returned.

"I assure you, Miss Venetia, it is only an hour," said Pauncefort, "and nothing could have happened. Now do try to go to sleep, that is a dear young lady, for I am certain sure that they will all return in the morning, as I am here. I was telling my lady just now, I said, says I, I dare say they are all very wet, and very fatigued."

"They would have returned, Pauncefort," said Venetia, "or they would have sent. They are not at Sarzana."

"La! Miss Venetia, why should they be at Sarzana, why should they not have gone much farther on! For, as Vicenzo was just saying to me, and Vicenzo knows all about the coast,

with such a wind as this, I should not be surprised if they were at Leghorn."

"O! Pauncefort," said Venetia, "I am sick at heart!"

"Now really, Miss Venetia, do not take on so!" said Pauncefort; "for do you not remember when his lordship ran away from the abbey, and went a gipsying, nothing would persuade poor Mrs. Cadurcis, that he was not robbed and murdered, and yet you see he was as safe and sound all the time, as if he had been at Cherbury."

"Does Vicenzo really think they could have reached Leghorn?" said Venetia, clinging to every fragment of hope.

"He is morally sure of it, Miss Venetia," said Pauncefort, "and I feel quite as certain, for Vicenzo is always right."

"I had confidence about Sarzana," said Venetia; "I really did believe they were at Sarzana. If only Captain Cadurcis would return; if he only would return, and say they were not at Sarzana, I would try to believe they were at Leghorn."

"Now, Miss Venetia," said Pauncefort, "I am certain sure that they are quite safe; for my lord is a very good sailor; he is, indeed; all the men say so; and the boat is as seaworthy a boat as boat can be. There is not the slightest fear, I do assure you, Miss."

"Do the men say that Plantagenet is a good sailor?" inquired Venetia.

"Quite professional!" said Mistress Pauncefort; "and can command a ship as well as the best of them. They all say that."

"Hush! Pauncefort, I hear something."

"It's only my lady, Miss. I know her step."

"Is my mother going to bed?" said Venetia.

"Yes," said Pauncefort, "my lady sent me here to see after you. I wish I could tell her you were asleep."

"It is impossible to sleep," said Venetia, rising up from bed, withdrawing the curtain, and looking at the sky. "What a peaceful night! I wish my heart were like the sky. I think I will go to mamma, Pauncefort!"

"O! dear, Miss Venetia, I am sure I think you had better not. If you and my lady, now, would just go to sleep, and forget every thing till morning, it would be much better for you. Besides, I am sure if my lady knew you were not gone to bed already, it would only make her doubly anxious. Now, really Miss Venetia, do take my advice, and just lie down again. You may be sure the moment any one arrives I will let you know. Indeed I shall go and tell my lady that you are lying down, as it is, and very drowsy;" and, so saying, Mistress Pauncefort caught up her candle, and hustled out of the room.

Venetia took up the volume of her father's poems, which Cadurcis had filled with his notes. How little did Plantagenet anticipate, when he thus expressed at Athens the passing impressions of his mind, that ere a year had glided away, his fate would be so intimately blended with that of Herbert! It was impossible, however, for Venetia to lose herself in a volume which under any other circumstances might have compelled her spirit; the very associations with the writers added to the terrible restlessness of her mind. She paused each instant to listen for the wished-for sound, but a mute stillness reigned throughout the house and household. There was something in this deep

unbroken silence, at a moment when anxiety was universally diffused among the dwellers beneath that roof, and the heart of more than one of them was throbbing with all the torture of the most awful suspense, that fell upon Venetia's excited nerves with a very painful and even insufferable influence. She longed for sound—for some noise that might assure her she was not the victim of a trance. She closed her volume with energy and she started at the sound she had herself created. She rose and opened the door of her chamber very softly, and walked into the vestibule. There were caps, and cloaks, and whips, and canes of Cadurcis and her father, lying about in familiar confusion. It seemed impossible but that they were sleeping, as usual, under the same roof. And where were they? That she should live and be unable to answer that terrible question! When she felt the utter helplessness of all her strong sympathy towards them, it seemed to her that she must go mad. She gazed around her with a wild and vacant stare. At the bottom of her heart there was a fear maturing into conviction too horrible for expression. She returned to her own chamber, and the exhaustion occasioned by her anxiety, and the increased coolness of the night, made her at length drowsy. She threw herself on the bed, and slumbered.

She started in her sleep—she awoke—she dreamed they had come home. She rose and looked at the progress of the night. The night was waning fast; a gray light was on the landscape; the point of day approached. Venetia stole softly to her mother's room, and entered it with a soundless step. Lady Annabel had not retired to bed. She had sat up the whole night, and was now asleep. A lamp on a small table was burning at her side, and she held, firmly grasped in her hand, the letter of her husband, which he had addressed to her at Venice, and which she had been evidently reading. A tear glided down the cheek of Venetia as she watched her mother retaining that letter with fondness even in her sleep, and when she thought of all the misery, and heartaches, and harrowing hours that had preceded its receipt, and which Venetia believed that letter had cured for ever. What misery awaited them now? Why were they watchers of the night? She shuddered when these dreadful questions flitted through her mind. She shuddered and sighed. Her mother started, and woke.

"Who is there?" inquired Lady Annabel.

"Venetia."

"My child, have you not slept?"

"Yes, mother, and I woke refreshed as I hope you do."

"I wake with trust in God's mercy," said Lady Annabel. "Tell me the hour?"

"It is just upon dawn, mother."

"Dawn! no one has returned, or come?"

"The house is still, mother."

"I would you were in bed, my child."

"Mother, I can sleep no more. I wish to be with you;"—and Venetia seated herself at her mother's feet, and reclined her head upon her mother's knee.

"I am glad the night has passed, Venetia," said Lady Annabel, in a suppressed yet solemn tone. "It has been a trial." And here she placed the letter in her bosom. Venetia could only answer with a sigh.

"I wish Pauncefort would come," said Lady Annabel; "and yet I do not like to rouse her, she was up so late, poor creature! If it be the dawn I should like to send out messengers again; something may be heard at Spezzia."

"Vicenzo thinks they have gone to Leghorn, mother."

"Has he heard any thing?" said Lady Annabel, eagerly.

"No, but he is an excellent judge," said Venetia, repeating all Pauncefort's consolatory chatter; "he knows the coast so well. He says he is sure the wind would carry them on to Leghorn; and that accounts, you know, mother, for George not returning. They are all at Leghorn."

"Would that George would return," murmured Lady Annabel; "I wish I could see again that sailor who said they were at Lerici. He was an intelligent man."

"Perhaps if we send down to the bay he may be there," said Venetia.

"Hush! I hear a step!" said Lady Annabel.

Venetia sprung up and opened the door, but it was only Pauncefort in the vestibule.

"The household are all up, my lady," said that important personage entering; "'tis a beautiful morning. Vicenzo has run down to the bay, my lady; I sent him off immediately. Vicenzo says he is certain sure they are at Leghorn, my lady—and this time three years, the very same thing happened. They were fishing for anchovies, my lady, close by, my lady, near Sarzana—two young men, or rather one about the same age as master, and one like my lord—cousins, my lady, and just in the same sort of boat, my lady; and there came on a squall, just the same sort of a squall, my lady, and they did not return home; and every one was frightened out of their wits, my lady, and their wives and families quite distracted—and after all they were at Leghorn; for this sort of wind always takes your open boats to Leghorn, Vicenzo says."

The sun rose, the household were all stirring, and many of them abroad; the common routine of domestic duty seemed, by some general yet not expressed understanding to have ceased. The ladies descended below at a very early hour, and went forth into the valley, once the happy valley. What was to be its future denomination! Vicenzo returned from the bay, and he contrived to return with cheering intelligence. The master of a felucca who, in consequence of the squall had put in at Lerici, and in the evening dropped down to Spezzia, had met an open boat an hour before he reached Sarzana, and was quite confident that if it had put into port, it must have been, from the speed at which it was going, a great distance down the coast. No wrecks have been heard of in the neighbourhood. This intelligence, the gladsome time of day, and the non-arrival of Captain Cadureis, which according to their mood was always a circumstance which counted either for good or for evil, and the sanguine feelings which makes us always cling to hope, altogether reassured our friends; Venetia dismissed from her mind the dark thought which for a moment had haunted her in the noon of night; and still it was a suspense, a painful agitating suspense, but only suspense that yet influenced them.

"Time!" said Lady Annabel. "Time! we must wait."

Venetia consoled her mother; she affected even

a gayety of spirit; she was sure that Vicenzo would turn out to be right, after all; Pauncefort said he always was right, and that they were at Leghorn.

The day wore apace; the noon arrived and passed; it was even approaching sunset. Lady Annabel was almost afraid to counter-order the usual meals, lest Venetia should comprehend her secret terror; the very same sentiment influenced Venetia. Thus they both had submitted to the ceremony of breakfast, but, when the hour of dinner approached, they could neither endure the mockery. They looked at each other, and, almost at the same time, they proposed that, instead of dining, they should walk down to the bay.

"I trust we shall at least hear something before the night," said Lady Annabel. "I confess I dread the coming night. I do not think I could endure it."

"The longer we do not hear, the more certain I am of their being at Leghorn," said Venetia.

"I have a great mind to travel there to-night," said Lady Annabel.

As they were stepping into the portico, Venetia recognised Captain Cadureis in the distance. She turned pale; she would have fallen had she not leaned on her mother, who was not so advanced and who had not seen him.

"What is the matter, Venetia?" said Lady Annabel, alarmed.

"He is here, he is here!"

"Marmion?"

"No, George. Let me sit down."

Her mother tried to support her to a chair. Lady Annabel took off her bonnet. She had not strength to walk forth. She could not speak. She sat down opposite Venetia, and her countenance pictured distress to so painful a degree, that at any other time Venetia would have flown to her, but, in this crisis of suspense, it was impossible. George was in sight; he was in the portico; he was in the room.

He looked wan, haggard, and distracted. More than once he essayed to speak, but failed.

Lady Annabel looked at him with a strange, delirious expression. Venetia rushed forward and seized his arm, and gazed intently on his face. He shrank from her glance; his frame trembled.

CHAPTER XII.

LET US return to Captain Cadureis at the moment he quitted Venetia on the morning of the white squall. In the heart of the tempest he traced his way in a sea of vapour with extreme danger and difficulty to the shore. On his arrival at Spezzia, however, scarcely a house was visible, and the only evidence of the situation of the place was the cessation of an immense white surf which otherwise indicated the line of the sea, but the absence of which proved his contiguity to a harbour. In the thick fog he heard the cries and shouts of the returning fishermen, and of their wives and children responding from the land to their exclamations. He was forced, therefore, to wait at Spezzia in an agony of impotent suspense until the fury of the storm was over, and the sky was partially cleared. At length the objects became gradually less obscure; he could trace the outline

of the houses, and catch a glimpse of the water half a mile out; and soon the old castles which guard the entrance of the strait that leads into the gulf, looming in the distance, and now and then a group of human beings in the vanishing vapour. Of these he made some inquiries, but in vain, respecting the boat and his friends. He then made the brig, but could learn nothing, except their departure in the morning. He at length obtained a horse and galloped along the coast towards Lerici, keeping a sharp look out as he proceeded, and stopping at every village in his progress for intelligence. When he had arrived in the course of three hours at Lerici, the storm had abated, the sky was clear, and no evidence of the recent squall remained except the agitated state of the waves. At Lerici he could hear nothing, so he hurried on to Sarzana, where he learned for the first time that an open boat, with its sails set, had past more than an hour before the squall commenced. From Sarzana he hastened on to Lavenza, a little port, the nearest sea-point to Massa, and where the Carrara marble is shipped for England. Here also his inquiries were fruitless, and exhausted by his exertions; he dismounted and rested at the inn, not only for repose but to consider over the course which he should now pursue. The boat had not been seen off Lavenza, and the idea that they had made the coast towards Leghorn now occurred to him. His horse was so wearied that he was obliged to stop some time at Lavenza, for he could procure no other conveyance; the night also was fast coming on, and to proceed to Leghorn by this dangerous route at this hour was impossible. At Lavenza therefore he remained, resolved to hasten to Leghorn at break of day. This was a most awful night. Although physically exhausted, Captain Cadurcis could not sleep, and after some vain efforts, he quitted his restless bed on which he had laid down undressed, and walked forth to the harbour. Between anxiety for Herbert and his cousin, and for the unhappy women whom he had left behind, he was nearly distracted. He gazed on the sea, as if some sail in sight might give him a chance of hope. His professional experience assured him of all the danger of the squall. He could not conceive how an open boat could live in such a sea, and an instant return to port as soon as the squall commenced appeared the only chance of its salvation. Could they have reached Leghorn? It seemed impossible. There was no hope they could now be at Sarzana or Lerici. When he contemplated the full contingency of what might have occurred, his mind wandered, and refused to comprehend the possibility of the terrible conclusion. He thought the morning would never break.

There was a cavernous rock by the sea-shore, that jutted into the water, like a small craggy promontory. Captain Cadurcis climbed to its top, and then descending, reclined himself upon an inferior portion of it, which formed a natural couch, with the wave on each side. There, lying at his length, he gazed upon the moon and stars, whose brightness he thought would never dim. The Mediterranean is a tideless sea, but the swell of the waves, which still set into the shore, bore occasionally masses of sea-weed and other marine formations, and deposited them around him, plashing, as it broke against the shore, with a melancholy and monotonous sound. The abstraction of the

scene, the hour, and the surrounding circumstances brought, however, no refreshment to the exhausted spirit of George Cadurcis. He could not think, indeed he did not dare to think; but the villa of the Appennines and the open boat in the squall flitted continually before him. His mind was feeble, though excited, and he fell into a restless, and yet unmeaning reverie. As long as he had been in action, as long as he had been hurrying along the coast, the excitement of motion, the constant exercise of his senses, had relieved or distracted the intolerable suspense. But this pause—this inevitable pause overwhelmed him. It oppressed his spirit, like eternity. And yet what might the morning bring? He almost wished that he might remain for ever on this rock, watching the moon and stars, and that the life of the world might never recommence.

He started, he had fallen into a light slumber, he had been dreaming, he thought he had heard the voice of Venetia calling him; he had forgotten where he was; he stared at the sea and sky, and recalled his dreadful consciousness. The wave broke with a heavy plash that attracted his attention; it was, indeed, that sound that had awakened him. He looked around; there was some object; he started wildly from his resting-place, sprang over the cavern, and bounded on the beach. It was a corpse; he is kneeling by its side. It is the corpse of his cousin! Lord Cadurcis was a fine swimmer, and had evidently made strong efforts for his life, for he was partly undressed. In all the insanity of hope, still wilder than despair, George Cadurcis seized the body and bore it some yards upon the shore. Life had been long extinct. The corpse was cold and stark, the eyes closed, an expression of energy, however, yet lingering in the fixed jaw, and the hair sodden with the sea. Suddenly Captain Cadurcis rushed to the inn, and roused the household. With a distracted air, and broken speech, and rapid motion, he communicated the catastrophe. Several persons, some bearing torches, others blankets and cordials, followed him instantly to the fatal spot. They hurried to the body, they applied all the rude remedies of the moment, rather from the impulse of nervous excitement than with any practical purposes; for the case had been indeed long hopeless. While Captain Cadurcis leaned over the body, chafing the extremities in a hurried frenzy, and gazing intently on the countenance, a shout was heard from one of the stragglers, who had recently arrived. The sea had washed on the beach another corpse: the form of Marmion Herbert! It would appear that he had made no struggle to save himself, for his hand was locked in his waistcoat, where, at the moment, he had thrust the Phædo, showing that he had been reading to the last, and was meditating on immortality when he died.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

LET us return from those beautiful and celebrated scenes in which we have of late been wandering to the once peaceful bowers of Cherbury. The journals of Europe had circulated the tragical end of Herbert and Cadurcis; and the household

at Cherbury were in daily expectation of the return of their unhappy mistress and her disconsolate daughter.

It was the commencement of autumn. The verdure of summer still lingered on the trees, the sky if not as cloudless was almost as refulgent as Italy; and the pigeons bright and glancing, clustered on the roof of the hall. The steward was in attendance; the household all in deep mourning were assembled; every thing was in readiness for the immediate arrival of Lady Annabel Herbert.

"'Tis nearly four years come Martinmas," said the gray-headed butler, "since my lady left us."

"And no good has come of it," said the housekeeper. "And for my part I never heard of good coming from going to foreign parts."

"I shall like to see Miss Venetia again," said a housemaid. "Bless her sweet face!"

"I never expected to see her, Miss Venetia, again from all we heard," said a footman.

"God's will be done!" said the gray-headed butler, "but I hope she will find happiness at home. 'Tis nigh on twenty years since I first nursed her in these arms."

"I wonder if there is any new Lord Cadurcis," said the footman. "I think he was the last of the line."

It would have been a happy day if I had lived to have seen the poor young lord marry Miss Venetia," said the housekeeper. "I always thought that match was made in heaven."

"He was a sweet-spoken young gentleman," said the housemaid.

"For my part," said the footman, "I should like to have seen our real master, Squire Herbert. He was a famous gentleman by all accounts."

"I wish they had lived quietly at home," said the housekeeper.

"I shall never forget the time when my lord returned," said the gray-headed butler. "I must say I thought it was a match."

"Mistress Pouncefort seemed to think so," said the housemaid.

"And she understands those things," said the footman.

"I see the carriage," said a servant who was at a window in the hall. All immediately bustled about, and the housekeeper sent a message to the steward.

The carriage might be just discovered at the end of the avenue. It was some time before it entered the iron gates that were thrown open for its reception. The steward stood on the steps with his hat off, the servants were ranged in order at the entrance. Touching their horses with the spur, and cracking their whips, the postilions dashed round the circular plot and stopped at the hall-door. Under any circumstances a return home after an interval of years is rather an awful moment; there was not a servant who was not visibly affected. On the outside of the carriage was a foreign servant and Mistress Pouncefort, who was not so profuse as might have been expected in her recognitions of her old friends; her countenance was graver than of yore. Misfortune and misery had subdued even Mistress Pouncefort. The foreign servant opened the door of the carriage; a young man, who was a stranger to the household but who was in deep mourning, alighted, and then Lady Annabel appeared. The steward advanced

to welcome her, the household bowed and courted. She smiled on them for a moment graciously and kindly, but her countenance immediately re-assumed a serious air, and whispering one word to the strange gentleman, she entered the hall alone, inviting the steward to follow her.

"I hope your ladyship is well—welcome home, my lady—welcome again to Cherbury—a welcome return, my lady—hope Miss Venetia is quite well—happy to see your ladyship amongst us again, and Miss Venetia too, my lady." Lady Annabel acknowledged these salutations with kindness, and then saying that Miss Herbert was not very well and was fatigued with her journey, she dismissed her humble but trusty friends. Lady Annabel then turned and nodded to her fellow traveller.

Upon this Lord Cadurcis—if we must, indeed, use a title from which he himself shrank—carried a shrouded form in his arms into the hall, where the steward alone lingered, though withdrawn to the back part of the scene; and Lady Annabel, advancing to meet him, embraced his treasured burthen—her own unhappy child.

"Now, Venetia, dearest Venetia," she said, "'tis past; we are at home."

Venetia leaned upon her mother, but made no reply.

"Up stairs, dearest," said Lady Annabel; "a little exertion, a very little." Leaning on her mother and Lord Cadurcis, Venetia ascended the staircase, and they reached the terrace-room. Venetia looked around her as she entered the chamber,—that scene of her former life, endeared to her by so many happy hours and so many sweet incidents; that chamber where she had first seen Plantagenet. Lord Cadurcis supported her to a chair, and then, overwhelmed by irresistible emotion, she sank back in a swoon.

No one was allowed to enter the room but Pouncefort. They revived her; Lord Cadurcis holding her hand, and touching, with a watchful finger, her pulse. Venetia opened her eyes, and looked around her. Her mind did not wander—she immediately recognised where she was, and recollected all that had happened. She faintly smiled, and said, in a low voice, "You are all too kind, and I am very weak. After our trials, what is this? George," she added, struggling to appear animated, "you are at length at Cherbury."

Once more at Cherbury! It was, indeed, an event that recalled a thousand associations. In the wild anguish of her first grief, when the dreadful intelligence was broken to her, if any one had whispered to Venetia that she would yet find herself once more at Cherbury, she would have esteemed the intimation as mockery. But time and hope will struggle with the most poignant affliction, and their influence is irresistible and inevitable. From her darkened chamber in their Mediterranean villa, Venetia had again come forth, and crossed mountains, and traversed immense plains, and journeyed through many countries. She could not die, as she had supposed at first that she must, and therefore she had exerted herself to quit, and to quit speedily, a scene so terrible as their late abode. She was the very first to propose their return to England, and to that spot where she had passed her early life, and where she now wished to fulfil, in quiet and seclusion, the allotment of her remaining years; to meditate over the marvellous past, and cherish its sweet and bitter recollection.

fions. The native firmness of Lady Annabel, her long exercised control over her emotions, the sadness and subdued tone which the early incidents of her career had cast over her character, her profound sympathy with her daughter, and that religious consolation which never deserted her, had alike impelled and enabled her to bear up against the catastrophe with more fortitude than her child. Tho' arrow, indeed, had struck Venetia with a double barb. She was the victim; and all the cares of Lady Annabel had been directed to soothe and support this stricken lamb. Yet perhaps these unhappy women must have sunk under their unparalleled calamities, had it not been for the devotion of their companion. In the despair of his first emotions, George Cadurcis was nearly plunging himself headlong into the wave that had already proved so fatal to his house. But when he thought of Lady Annabel and Venetia in a foreign land, without a single friend in their desolation, and pictured them to himself with the dreadful news abruptly communicated by some unfeeling stranger; and called upon, in the midst of their overwhelming agony, to attend to all the heart-rending arrangements which the discovery of the bodies of the beings to whom they were devoted, and in whom all their feelings were centred, must necessarily entail upon them—he recoiled from what he contemplated, as an act of infamous desertion. He resolved to live, if only to preserve them from all their impending troubles, and with the hope that his exertions might tend, in however slight a degree, not to alleviate—for that was impossible—but to prevent, the increase of that terrible wo, the very conception of which made his brain stagger. He carried the bodies, therefore, with him to Spezzia, and then prepared for that fatal interview, the commencement of which we first indicated. Yet it must be confessed that, though the bravest of men, his courage faltered as he entered the accustomed ravine. He stopped and looked down on the precipice below; he felt it utterly impossible to meet them; his mind nearly deserted him. Death, some great and universal catastrophe, an earthquake, a deluge, that would have buried them all in an instant and a common fate, would have been hailed by George Cadurcis, at that moment, as good fortune.

He lurked about the ravine for nearly three hours before he could summon up heart for the awful interview. The position he had taken assured him that no one could approach the villa, to which he himself dared not advance. At length, in a paroxysm of energetic despair, he had rushed forward, met them instantly, and confessed with a whirling brain, and almost unconscious of his utterance, that "they could not hope to see them again in this world."

What ensued must neither be attempted to be described, nor even remembered. It was one of those tragedies of life which enfeeble the most faithful memories at a blow, shatter nerves beyond the faculty of revival, cloud the mind for ever, or turn the hair gray in an instant. They carried Venetia delirious to her bed. The very despair, and almost madness of her daughter, forced Lady Annabel to self-exertion, of which it was difficult to suppose that even she was capable. And George, too, was obliged to leave them. He stayed only the night. A few words passed between

Lady Annabel and himself; she wished the bodies to be embalmed, and borne to England. There was no time to be lost, and there was no one to be intrusted except George. He had to hasten to Genoa to make all these preparations, and for two days he was absent from the villa. When he returned Lady Annabel saw him, but Venetia was for a long time invisible. The moment she grew composed, she expressed a wish to her mother instantly to return to Cherbury. All the arrangements necessary devolved upon George Cadurcis. It was his study that Lady Annabel should be troubled upon no point. The household were discharged, all affairs wound up, the felucca hired which was to bear them to Genoa, and in readiness, before he notified to them that the hour of departure had arrived. The most bitter circumstance was looking again upon the sea. It seemed so intolerable to Venetia, that their departure was delayed more than one day in consequence; but it was inevitable; they could reach Genoa in no other manner. George carried Venetia in his arms to the boat, with her face covered with a shawl, and bore her in the same manner to the hotel at Genoa, where their travelling carriage awaited them.

They travelled home rapidly. All seemed to be impelled as it were by a restless desire for repose. Cherbury was the only thought in Venetia's mind. She observed nothing; she made no remark during their journey; they travelled often throughout the night; but no obstacles occurred, no inconveniences. There was one in this miserable society whose only object in life was to support Venetia under her terrible visitation. Silent, but with an eye that never slept, George Cadurcis watched Venetia, as a nurse might a child. He read her thoughts, he anticipated her wishes without inquiring them; every arrangement was unobtrusively made that could possibly consult her comfort.

They passed through London without stopping there. George would not leave them for an instant; nor would he spare a thought to his own affairs, though they urgently required his attention. The change in his position gave him no consolation; he would not allow his passport to be made out with his title; he shuddered at being called Lord Cadurcis; and the only reason that made him hesitate about attending them to Cherbury was its contiguity to his ancestral seat, which he resolved never to visit. There never in the world was a less selfish and more single hearted man than George Cadurcis. Though the death of his cousin had invested him with one of the most ancient coronets in England, a noble residence, and a fair estate, he would willingly have sacrificed his life to have recalled Plantagenet to existence, and to have secured the happiness of Venetia Herbert.

CHAPTER II.

THE reader must not suppose from the irresistible emotion that overcame Venetia at the very moment of her return, that she was entirely prostrated by her calamities. On the contrary, her mind had been employed during the whole of her journey to England, in a silent effort to endure

her lot with resignation. She had resolved to bear up against her misery with fortitude, and she inherited from her mother sufficient firmness of mind to enable her to achieve her purpose. She came back to Cherbury to live with patience and submission; and though her dreams of happiness might be vanished for ever, to contribute as much as was in her power to the content of that dear and remaining relative who was yet spared to her, and who depended in this world only upon the affection of her child. The return to Cherbury was a pang, and it was over. Venetia struggled to avoid the habits of an invalid: she purposed resuming, as far as was in her power, all the pursuits and duties of her life; and if it were neither possible nor even desirable to forget the past, she dwelt upon it neither to sigh nor to murmur, but to cherish in a sweet and musing mood the ties and affections round which all her feelings had once gathered with so much enjoyment and so much hope.

She rose, therefore, on the morning after her return to Cherbury, calm, if not cheerful; and she took an early opportunity, when George and her mother were engaged, and absent from the terrace-room, to go forth alone, and wander amid her old haunts. There was not a spot about the park and gardens, which had been favourite resorts of herself and Plantagenet in their childhood, that she did not visit. They were unchanged; as green, and bright, and still, as in old days, but what was she? The freshness, and brilliancy, and careless happiness of her life, were fled for ever. And here he lived, and here he roamed, and here his voice sounded, now in glee, now in melancholy, now in wild and fanciful amusement, and now pouring into her bosom all his domestic sorrows. It was but ten years since he first arrived at Cherbury, and who could have anticipated that little silent, reserved boy should, ere ten years had passed, have filled a wide and lofty space in the world's thought: that his existence should have influenced the mind of nations, and his death eclipsed their gayety! His death! Terrible and disheartening thought! Plantagenet was no more. But he had not died without a record. His memory was embalmed in immortal verse, and he had breathed his passion to his Venetia in language that lingered in the ear, and would dwell for ever on the lips, of his fellow men.

Among these woods, too, had Venetia first mused over her father; before her rose those mysterious chambers, whose secret she had penetrated at the risk of her life. There were no secrets now. Was she happier? Now she felt that even in her early mystery there was delight, and that hope was veiled beneath its ominous shadow. There was now no future to ponder over; her hope was gone, and memory alone remained. All the dreams of those musing hours of her hidden reveries had been realised. She had seen her father, that surpassing parent, who had satisfied alike her heart and her imagination; she had been clasped to his bosom; she had lived to witness even her mother yield to his penitent embrace. And he too was gone; she could never meet him again in this world—in this world in which they had experienced such exquisite bliss! And now she was once more at Cherbury! O! give her back her girlhood, with all its painful mystery and harassing doubt! Give her again a future!

She returned to the hall; she met George on the

terrace, she welcomed him with a sweet, yet mournful smile. "I have been very selfish," she said, "for I have been walking alone. I mean to introduce you to Cherbury, but I could not resist visiting some old spots." Her voice faltered at these last words. They re-entered the terrace-room together, and joined her mother.

"Nothing is changed, mamma," said Venetia, in a more cheerful tone. "It is pleasant to find something that is the same."

Several days passed, and Lord Cadurcis evinced no desire to visit his inheritance. Yet Lady Annabel was anxious that he should do so, and had more than once impressed upon him the propriety. Even Venetia at length said to him, "It is very selfish in us keeping you here, George. Your presence is a great consolation, and yet—yet, ought you not to visit your home?" She avoided the name of Cadurcis.

"I ought, dear Venetia," said George, "and I will, I have promised Lady Annabel twenty times, but I feel a terrible disinclination. To-morrow, perhaps."

"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow," murmured Venetia to herself, "I scarcely comprehend now what to-morrow means." And then again addressing him, and with more liveliness, he said, "We have only one friend in the world now, George, and I think that we ought to be very grateful that he is our neighbour."

"It is a consolation to me," said Lord Cadurcis, "for I cannot remain here, and otherwise I should scarcely know how to depart."

"I wish you would visit your home, if only for one morning," said Venetia; "if only," she added with a smile, "to know how very near you are to us."

"I dread going alone," said Lord Cadurcis. "I cannot ask Lady Annabel to accompany me, because—" He hesitated.

"Because?" inquired Venetia.

"I cannot ask or wish her to leave you."

"You are always thinking of me, dear George," said Venetia, artlessly. "I assure you, I have come back to Cherbury to be happy. I must visit your home some day, and I hope I shall visit it often. We will all go—soon," she added.

"Then I will postpone my visit to that day," said George. "I am in no humour for business, which I know awaits me there. Let me enjoy a little more repose at dear Cherbury."

"I have become very restless of late, I think," said Venetia, "but there is a particular spot in the garden that I wish to see. Come with me, George."

Lord Cadurcis was only too happy to attend her. They preceded through a winding walk in the shrubberies, until they arrived at a small and open plot of turf, where Venetia stopped. "There are some associations," she said, "of this spot connected with both those friends that we have lost. I have a fancy that it should be in some visible manner consecrated to their memories. On this spot, George, Plantagenet once spoke to me of my father. I should like to raise their busts here; and indeed it is a fit place for such a purpose; for poets," she added, faintly smiling, "should be surrounded with laurels."

"I have some thoughts on this head that I am revolving in my fancy myself," said Lord Cadurcis, "but I will not speak of them now."

"Yes, now, George; for indeed it is a satisfaction to me to speak of them, at least with you, with one who understood them so well, and loved them scarcely less than I did."

George tenderly put his arm into hers and led her away. As they walked along, he explained to her his plans, which yet were somewhat crude, but which greatly interested her; but they were roused from their conversation by the bell of the hall sounding, as if to summon them, and therefore they directed their way immediately to the terrace. A servant running met them; he brought a message from Lady Annabel. Their friend the Bishop of * * * * had arrived.

CHAPTER III.

WELL, my little daughter," said the good Masham, advancing as Venetia entered the room, tenderly embracing her, and affecting a cheerfulness which he did not feel, but which lightened the first painful embarrassment of the interview. Venetia responded to his salutation in the same vein; the kind-hearted old man maintained a conversation on indifferent subjects, with animation, for some minutes; and thus a meeting, the anticipation of which would have cost Venetia hours of pain and anxiety, occurred with feelings which were alike easy and agreeable.

Masham had hastened to Cherbury the moment he heard of the return of the Herberts to England. He did not come to console but to enliven. He was well aware that even his eloquence, and all the influence of his piety, could not soften the irreparable past; and knowing, from experience, how in solitude the unhappy brood over sorrow, he fancied that his arrival, and perhaps his arrival only, might tend in some degree at this moment to their alleviation and comfort. He brought Lady Annabel and Venetia letters from their relations, with whom he had been staying, at their country residence, and who were anxious that their unhappy kinsfolk should find change of scene under their roof.

"They are very affectionate," said Lady Annabel, "but I rather think that neither Venetia nor myself will feel inclined to quit Cherbury at present."

"Indeed, not, mamma," said Venetia. "I hope we shall never leave home again."

"You must come and see me some day," said the bishop; then turning to George, whom he was glad to find here, he addressed him in a hearty tone, and expressed his delight at again meeting him.

Insensibly to all parties this arrival of the good Masham exercised a very beneficial influence on their spirits. They could sympathise with his cheerfulness, because they were convinced that he sympathised with their sorrow. His interesting conversation withdrew their minds from the painful subject on which they were always musing. It seemed profanation to either of the three mourners when they were together alone, to indulge in any topic but the absorbing one, and their utmost effort was to speak of the past with composure: but they all felt relieved, though at first unconsciously, when one, whose interest in their feelings could not be doubted, gave the signal of

withdrawing their reflection from vicissitudes which it was useless to deplore. Even the social forms which the presence of a guest rendered indispensable, and the exercise of the courtesies of hospitality, contributed to this result. They withdrew their minds from the past. And the worthy bishop, whose tact was as eminent as his good humour and benevolence, evincing as much delicacy of feeling as cheerfulness of temper, a very few days had elapsed before each of his companions was aware that his presence had contributed to their increased content.

"You have not been to the abbey yet, Lord Cadurcis," said Masham to him one day, as they were sitting together after dinner, the ladies having retired. "You should go."

"I have been unwilling to leave them," said George, "and I could scarcely expect them to accompany me. It is a visit that must revive painful recollections."

"We must not dwell on the past," said Masham, "We must think only on the future."

"Venetia has no future, I fear," said Lord Cadurcis.

"Why not?" said Masham. "she is yet a girl, and with a prospect of a long life. She must have a future, and I hope, and I believe it will yet be a happy one."

"Alas!" said Lord Cadurcis, "no one can form an idea of the attachment that subsisted between Plantagenet and Venetia. They were not common feelings, or the feelings of common minds, my dear lord."

"No one knew them both better than I did," said Masham, "not even yourself: they were my children."

"I feel that," said George, "and therefore it is a pleasure to us all to see you, and to speak with you."

"But we must look for consolation," said Masham; "to deplore is fruitless. If we live, we must struggle to live happily. To tell you the truth, though their immediate return to Cherbury was inevitable, and their residence here for a time is scarcely to be deprecated, I still hope they will not bury themselves here. For my part, after the necessary interval, I wish to see Venetia once more in the world."

Lord Cadurcis looked very mournful and shook his head.

"As for her dear mother, she is habituated to sorrow and disappointment," said Masham. "As long as Venetia lives Lady Annabel will be content. Besides, deplorable as may be the past, there must be solace to her in the reflection that she was reconciled to her husband before his death, and contributed to his happiness. Venetia is the stricken lamb, but Venetia is formed for happiness, and it is in the nature of things that she will be happy. We must not, however, yield unnecessarily to our feelings. A violent exertion would be unwise, but we should habituate ourselves gradually to the exercise of our duties, and to our accustomed pursuits. It would be well for you to go to Cadurcis. If I were you I would go to-morrow. Take advantage of my presence; and return and give a report of your visit. Habituate Venetia to talk of a spot with which ultimately she must renew her intimacy."

Influenced by his advice, Lord Cadurcis rose early on the next morning and repaired to the seat

of his fathers, where hitherto his foot had never trod. When the circle at Cherbury assembled at their breakfast table, he was missing, and Masham had undertaken the office of apprising his friends of the cause of his absence. He returned to dinner, and the conversation fell naturally upon the Abbey and the impressions he had received. It was maintained at first by Lady Annabel and the Bishop, but Venetia ultimately joined in it and with cheerfulness. Many a trait and incident of former days was alluded to; they talked of Mrs. Cadurcis, whom George had never seen; they settled the chambers he should inhabit; they mentioned the improvements which Plantagenet had once contemplated, and which George must now accomplish.

"You must go to London first," said the bishop; "you have a great deal to do, and you should not delay such business. I think you had better return with me. At this time of the year you need not be long absent; you will not be detained; and when you return, you will find yourself much more at ease; for after all, nothing is more harassing than the feeling, that there is business which must be attended to, and which, nevertheless, is neglected."

Both Lady Annabel and Venetia enforced this advice of their friend; and so it happened that ere a week had elapsed Lord Cadurcis, accompanying Masham, found himself once more in London.

CHAPTER IV.

VENETIA WAS NOW once more alone with her mother; it was as in old times. Their life was the same as before the visit of Plantagenet previous to his going to Cambridge, except indeed that they had no longer a friend at Marringhurst. They missed the sabbath visits of that good man; his successor, indeed, performed the duties of the day, which had been a condition when he was presented to the living, but the friend who knew all the secrets of their hearts was absent. Venetia continued to bear herself with great equanimity, and the anxiety which she observed instantly impressed on her mother's countenance, the moment she fancied there was an unusual gloom on the brow of her child, impelled Venetia doubly to exert herself to appear resigned. And in truth, when Lady Annabel revolved in her mind the mournful past, and meditated over her early and unceasing efforts to secure the happiness of her daughter, and then contrasted her aspirations with the result, she could not acquit herself of having been too often unconsciously instrumental in forwarding a very different conclusion than that for which she had laboured. This conviction preyed upon the mother, and the slightest evidence of reaction in Venetia's tranquillised demeanour occasioned her the utmost remorse and grief. The absence of George made both Lady Annabel and Venetia still more finely appreciate the solace of his society. Left to themselves they felt how much they had depended on his vigilant and considerate attention, and how much his sweet temper and his unflinching sympathy had contributed to their consolation. He wrote, however, to Venetia, by every post, and his letters, if possible, endeared him still more to their hearts. Unwilling to dwell upon

their mutual sorrows, yet always expressing sufficient to prove that distance and absence had not impaired his sympathy, he contrived with infinite delicacy even to amuse their solitude with the adventures of his life of bustle. The arrival of the post was the incident of the day; not merely letters arrived,—one day brought books, another music; continually some fresh token of his thought and affection reached them. He was, however, only a fortnight absent; but when he returned, it was to Cadurcis. He called upon them the next day; and indeed every morning found him at Cherbury: but he returned to his home at night, and so, without an effort, from their guest he had become their neighbour.

Plantagenet had left the whole of his property to his cousin: his mother's fortune, which, as an accessory fund, was not inconsiderable, besides the estate. And George intended to devote a portion of this to the restoration of the abbey. Venetia was to be his counsellor in this operation, and therefore there were ample sources of amusement for the remainder of the year. On a high ridge, which indeed was one of the beacons of the county, and which moreover marked the junction of the domains of Cherbury and Cadurcis, it was his intention to raise a monument to the united memories of Marmion Herbert, and Plantagenet Lord Cadurcis. He brought down a design with him from London; and this was the project which he had previously whispered to Venetia. With George for her companion too, Venetia was induced to resume her rides. It was her part to make him acquainted with the county in which he was so important a resident. Time, therefore, at Cherbury, on the whole flowed on in a tide of tranquil pleasure, and Lady Annabel observed with interest and fondness the continual presence beneath her roof of one who, from the first day she had met him, had engaged her fine feelings, and had since become intimately endeared to her.

The end of November was, however, now approaching, and Parliament was about to re-assemble. Masham had written more than once to Lord Cadurcis, impressing upon him the propriety and expediency of taking his seat. He had shown these letters, as he showed every thing, to Venetia, who was his counsellor on all subjects, and Venetia agreed with their friend.

"It is right," said Venetia; "you have a duty to perform, and you must perform it. Besides, I do not wish the name of Cadurcis to sink again into obscurity. I shall look forward with interest to Lord Cadurcis taking the oath and his seat. It will please me; it will indeed."

"But, Venetia," said George, "I do not like to leave this place. I am happy, if we may be happy. This life suits me. I am a quiet man. I dislike London. I feel alone there."

"You can write to us; you will have a great deal to say. And I shall have something to say to you now. I must give you a continual report how they go on at the abbey. I will be your steward, and superintend every thing."

"Ah!" said George, "what shall I do in London without you—without your advice? There will be something occurring every day, and I shall have no one to consult. Indeed I shall feel quite miserable; I shall indeed."

"It is quite impossible that, with your station,

and at your time of life, you should bury yourself in the country," said Venetia. "You have the whole world before you, and you must enjoy it. It is very well for mamma and myself to lead this life. I look upon ourselves as two nuns. If Cadurcis is an abbey, Cherbury is now a convent."

"How can a man wish to be more than happy? I am quite content here," said George. "What is London to me!"

"It may be a great deal to you, more than you think," said Venetia. "A great deal awaits you yet. However, there can be no doubt you should take your seat. You can always return if you wish. But take your seat, and cultivate dear Masham. I have the utmost confidence in his wisdom and goodness. You cannot have a friend more respectable. Now mind my advice, George."

"I always do, Venetia.

CHAPTER V.

TIME and Faith are the great consolers: and neither of these precious sources of solace were wanting to the inhabitants of Cherbury. They were again living alone, but their lives were cheerful; and if Venetia no longer indulged in a worldly and blissful future, nevertheless in the society of her mother, in the resources of art and literature, in the diligent discharge of her duties to her humble neighbours, and in cherishing the memory of the departed, she experienced a life that was not without its tranquil pleasures. She maintained with Lord Cadurcis a constant correspondence; he wrote to her, indeed, every day, and although they were separated, there was not an incident of his life, and scarcely a thought, of which she was not cognisant. It was indeed with great difficulty that George could induce himself to remain in London; but Masham, who soon obtained over him all the influence which Venetia desired, ever opposed his return to the abbey. The good Bishop was not unaware of the feelings with which Lord Cadurcis looked back to the Hall of Cherbury, and himself of a glad and sanguine temperament, he indulged in a belief in the consummation of all that happiness for which his young friend, rather sceptically, sighed. But Masham was aware that time could alone soften the bitterness of Venetia's sorrow, and prepare her for that change of life which he felt confident would alone ensure the happiness both of herself and her mother. He therefore detained Lord Cadurcis in London the whole of the session, so that on his return to Cherbury, his society might be esteemed a novel and agreeable incident in the existence of its inhabitants, and not be associated merely with their calamities.

It was therefore about a year after the catastrophe, which had so suddenly changed the whole tenor of their lives, and occasioned so unexpected a revolution in his own position, that Lord Cadurcis arrived at his ancestral seat, with no intention of again speedily leaving it. He had long and frequently apprised his friends of his approaching presence, and arriving at the abbey late at night, he was at Cherbury early on the following morning.

Although no inconsiderable interval had elapsed since Lord Cadurcis had parted from the Herberts, the continual correspondence that had been main-

tained between himself and Venetia, divested his visit of the slightest embarrassment. They met as if they had parted yesterday, except perhaps with greater fondness. The chain of their feelings was unbroken. He was indeed welcomed, both by Lady Annabel and her daughter, with warm affection; and his absence had only rendered him dearer to them by affording an opportunity of feeling how much his society contributed to their felicity. Venetia was anxious to know his opinion of the improvements at the abbey, which she had superintended; but he assured her that he would examine nothing without her company, and ultimately they agreed to walk over to Cadurcis.

It was a summer day, and they walked through that very wood wherein we described the journey of the child Venetia, at the commencement of this very history. The blue patches of wild hyacinths had all disappeared, but there were flowers as sweet. What if the first feelings of our heart fade, like the first flowers of spring, succeeding years, like the coming summer, may bring emotions not less charming, and, perchance, far more fervent!

"I can scarcely believe," said Lord Cadurcis, "that I am once more with you, I know not what surprises me most, Venetia, that we should be walking once more together in the woods of Cherbury, or that I ever should have dared to quit them."

"And yet it was better, dear George," said Venetia. "You must now rejoice that you have fulfilled your duty, and yet you are here again. Besides, the abbey never would have been finished if you had remained. To complete all our plans, it required a mistress."

"I wish it always had one," said George. "Ah Venetia, once you told me never to despair."

"And what have you to despair about, George?"

"Heigh ho!" said Lord Cadurcis, "I never shall be able to live in this abbey alone."

"You should have brought a wife from London," said Venetia.

"I told you once, Venetia, that I was not a marrying man," said Lord Cadurcis; "and certainly I never shall bring a wife from London."

"Then you cannot accustom yourself too soon to a bachelor's life," said Venetia.

"Ah! Venetia," said George, "I wish I were clever; I wish I were a genius; I wish I were a great man."

"Why, George?"

"Because, Venetia, perhaps," and Lord Cadurcis hesitated, "perhaps you would think differently of me? I mean perhaps your feelings towards me might—ah! Venetia, perhaps you might think me worthy of you—perhaps you might love me."

"I am sure, dear George, if I did not love you, I should be the most ungrateful of beings: you are our only friend."

"And can I never be more than a friend to you, Venetia?" said Lord Cadurcis, blushing very deeply.

"I am sure, dear George, I should be very sorry for your sake, if you wished to be more," said Venetia.

"Why?" said Lord Cadurcis.

"Because I should not like to see you unite your destiny with that of a very unfortunate, if not a very unhappy person."

"The sweetest, the loveliest of women!" said Lord Cadurcis. "O! Venetia, I dare not express

what I feel, still less what I could hope. I think so little of myself, so highly of you, that I am convinced my aspirations are too arrogant for me to breathe them."

"Ah! dear George, you deserve to be happy," said Venetia. "Would that it were in my power to make you."

"Dearest Venetia, it is, it is," exclaimed Lord Cadurcis: then checking himself, as if frightened by his boldness, he added in a more subdued tone, "I feel I am not worthy of you."

Was it an unconscious pressure of his arm that emboldened Lord Cadurcis, and suddenly gifted him with all the flow of passionate eloquence? They stood upon the breezy down that divided the demesnes of Cherbury and the Abbey. Beneath

them rose, "embosomed in a valley of green bowers," the ancient pile lately renovated under the studious care of Venetia.

"Ah!" said Lord Cadurcis, "be no less kind to the master of these towers, than to the roof that you have fostered. You have renovated our halls—restore our happiness! There is a union that will bring consolation to more than one hearth, and baffle all the crosses of adverse fate. Venetia, beautiful and noble-minded Venetia, condescend to fulfil it!"

Perhaps the reader will not be surprised that within a few months of this morning walk, the hands of George, Lord Cadurcis, and Venetia Herbert were joined in the chapel at Cherbury by the good Masham. Peace be with them!

THE END.

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